



Research Paper

Analyzing Faculty Publication Trends and Academic Rank Attainment: Haramaya University in the Spotlight

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Abstract

This study explores into the evolving landscape of faculty publication and academic rank attainment at Haramaya University. A comprehensive analysis was conducted, aligning the university's faculty promotion criteria with the recent Ministry of Education (MoE) standard, with a specific focus on research output. The research methodology comprised a meticulous examination of university records/archival research, including minutes documented by the university's appointment, promotion, and scholarship committee. In addition, the study enriched its insights through in-depth interviews with faculty members. The investigation explored academic promotion, gender dynamics, and the differentiation between native and expatriate faculty. The findings underscored certain disparities, particularly in terms of fields of study, nationality, and gender. A notable discrepancy was observed, with a higher proportion of male faculty members attaining promotions, a phenomenon more pronounced at elevated academic ranks such as Associate Professor and Full Professor. To address these disparities and nurture a more inclusive research environment, Haramaya university promotion policy may partially help as most of the values is given to publication, which was already fixed by the guideline prepared by Ethiopian MoE. A call for transparent promotion standards, robust mentorship programs, and focused support for women in research and leadership roles emerge as a means to bridge the gender gap in staff promotions. Furthermore, additional research and analysis must be undertaken to attain a more profound understanding of the factors influencing publishing trends, facilitate staff promotions, and ultimately advance the promotion of academic excellence.

1. Introduction

During the past ten years, the Ethiopian government has put in place different measures to improve the quality of education, including accreditation of academic programs, curriculum development and review, teacher and staff training, student-centered approach to learning, and quality assurance and monitoring. However, as stated in the Ethiopian integrated education development roadmap (2018-2030), these activities have a negligible impact on the core processes of Higher Learning Institutions (HLI)

quality (MoE, 2018). Ethiopia's master plan aims to elevate higher education to the level of lower middle-income countries by 2030. It proposes strategies, including the classification of institutions to Research Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences, Comprehensive Universities, and Technical and Vocational Education and training (TVET) Colleges (Hunde, et al., 2023). The Research Universities, such as Haramaya University (HrU), like the remaining seven

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in this category, prioritize research alongside education, especially in graduate programs.

Haramaya University performs well in academic achievement, boasting a diverse faculty renowned for publishing extensively in prestigious, peer-reviewed journals. This commitment to research enhances the university's reputation within the academic sphere (Hunde et al., 2023). As one of the leading Ethiopian institutions, the university expects its faculty to continue contributing significantly through scholarly publications. Academic publishing holds substantial weight, shaping a university's ranking and program assessments (Li & Yin, 2023). In the research universities, faculty are encouraged to publish in esteemed venues, elevating both their own scholarly standing and the university's profile (Ogunode, 2020); publications not only bolster a university's reputation but also drive faculty members' professional growth and academic advancements. Table 1 showcases Haramaya University's Scopus indexed publications compared to other research institutions of the country.

Scopus stands as a comprehensive database covering global research across various disciplines, offering tools for research analysis and visualization (Martin-Martin, et al., 2021). According to Table 1, from 2017-2019, Addis Ababa University (AAU) leads in Scopus publications (34.17%), attributed to its status as the oldest, most prestigious institution with a substantial research budget. Despite being the second oldest,

Haramaya University (HrU) has a lower percentage (7.84%) compared to Jimma, Gonder, Mekelle, and Bahir Dar Universities. However, it's vital to note that while Scopus publications are a measure of research output, they don't singularly represent a university's overall research quality or impact (Elen et al., 2007).

Universities might prioritize areas like teaching, community service, or industry collaboration, which aren't always reflected in Scopus publications (Compagnucci and Spigarelli, 2020). Remarkably, the Colleges of Health Sciences at HrU and AAU show higher publication rates (25 and 23.79 %, respectively) compared to other colleges in these research universities. This suggests a robust research culture and dedicated staff within the college at both institutions (Elen et al., 2007). Ogunode (2020) highlighted factors like a substantial number of faculty engaged in research, effective research leadership, and support services as contributors to this trend.

Globally, universities aim to boost research output and academic standing (Nicholas, et al., 2015). However, comprehensive studies on this in Ethiopian universities, especially HrU, are lacking. Despite its prominence, empirical evidence tracking faculty publication trends and academic rank progression over the last decade is scarce for HrU. This data gap hinders assessing research performance, identifying areas for improvement, and devising effective advancement strategies (Teferra and Altbach, 2004).

Table 1: Publication of Ethiopian research universities over 3 years and across colleges (Source: Hunde et al., 2023)

		Ethiopian Research Universities									
No	Category		AAU	JU	UoG	HU	HrU	MU	AMU	BDU	Total
	Scopus Publication	N ^o	2479	751	1057	548	569	814	232	804	7254
	from 2017- 2019	%	34.17	10.35	14.57	7.55	7.84	11.22	3.23	11.08	100
		Scopus Publication by Colleges									
1	CNCS (%)		20.18	11.09	12.00	12.36	11.45	13.82	nd	19.09	
2	CoA (%)		11.72	16.67	9.71	15.38	22.16	8.61	nd	15.93	
3	CHS (%)		23.79	13.11	10.67	11.42	25.09	10.49	nd	10.67	
4	CBE (%)		20.64	16.97	13.76	12.16	8.72	9.63	nd	20.64	
5	CSS (%)		22.88	19.84	15.48	8.28	10.32	10.85	nd	12.43	

Note: AAU = Addis Ababa University, JU = Jimma University, UoG = University of Gondar, HU = Hawassa University, HrU = Haramaya University, MU = Mekelle University, AMU = Arba Minch University, BDU = Bahir Dar University, CNCS = Colleges of Natural and Computational Sciences, CoA = College of Agriculture, CHS = College of Health Sciences, CBE = College of Business and Economics, CSS = College of Social Sciences, nd = no data, N^o = number

Moreover, potential disparities in publication and academic rank across disciplines within the university haven't been explored. Understanding these differences could reveal specific challenges or advantages, which are crucial for ensuring fair academic growth (Bland et al., 2005).

Faculty development encompasses diverse programs and events to enhance academic staff's skills and professional growth (Condon et al., 2016). It plays a pivotal role in improving teaching, research, and student outcomes. This development involves bolstering teaching effectiveness, nurturing research excellence, staying updated on educational trends, supporting student learning, fostering collaboration, and boosting job satisfaction and retention (Carpenter, et al., 2017). Academic staff promotion, a core aspect, drives individual advancement, institutional growth, and higher education quality. It involves recognizing competence, fostering continuous professional growth, motivating faculty, attracting talent, enhancing institutional reputation, and nurturing excellence (Makulilo, 2021).

Research underscores the link between faculty development and student performance (Austin et al., 2016). Collaborative activities like interdisciplinary workshops and peer mentoring in staff development foster knowledge sharing, idea exchange, and collaborative projects, enhancing the academic environment and promoting continuous improvement. Studies, such as that of Bilal et al. (2019), highlight faculty development's positive impact on work satisfaction. Thus, investing in faculty development promotes excellence in teaching, research, and overall academic environments, leading to enhanced student learning and institutional prestige.

Understanding the factors influencing academic rank disparities among faculty members is crucial for grasping the dynamics of academic growth and shaping policies in faculty development and research capacity (Bland et al., 2005). Additionally, there's an urgent need to systematically explore hurdles and drivers affecting faculty publication at HrU. The impact of institutional elements, like funding accessibility and research support services, on faculty publication remains insufficiently examined. These factors significantly

influence the research environment and faculty productivity.

Faculty members encounter numerous challenges hindering career advancement. Shinkafi (2020) highlighted issues like the lack of mentorship, funding, and laboratory space for early career researchers in Africa. Inadequate mentoring, limited professional development opportunities, and a lack of support for interdisciplinary collaborations pose obstacles to faculty progression. To aid academic growth and promotion, institutions need robust support structures. Deem et al. (2007) underscore the pivotal role of institutional support in career progression. Addressing these challenges demands supportive policies, transparent evaluations, and holistic professional development initiatives from institutions.

This research endeavours to bridge these gaps by analysing publication trends and academic rank achievement among HrU faculty. It seeks to uncover disparities between disciplines, identify factors influencing rank differences, and examine barriers, facilitators, and institutional influences on faculty publication. The study aims to establish a benchmark for Ethiopian universities and contribute to discussions on academic progression in developing country higher education. The empirical evidence it generates on the relationship between these variables fills a significant gap in academic literature.

The study's outcomes can shape policies and practices in faculty development and research capacity at HrU and similar institutions. Understanding factors impacting publication and rank achievement will aid in tailored strategies for enhancing research output and academic growth. Facilitating inter-institutional comparisons can stimulate healthy competition in research achievements. Moreover, it will pinpoint disciplines requiring strengthened faculty development initiatives, guiding resource allocation.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Research Design

In this study, a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods, was used. This approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of the publication trends and academic rank attainment of faculty members at HrU, as well as an in-

depth exploration of the factors influencing these outcomes. The quantitative study focused on faculty publications at HrU spanning the period from 2017 to 2023. This timeframe was chosen due to the availability of dependable data on faculty members' promotions and their published work. It was believed to yield valuable insights into the publication patterns of faculty members, encompassing the quantity and caliber of their publications.

The qualitative aspect of the research included document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Through interviews, information on the experiences and viewpoints of faculty members regarding the obstacles and supports they encounter in their publication endeavors, along with the institutional factors that shape their research productivity were collected. The data derived from these interviews was subjected to thematic analysis to pinpoint recurring themes and trends.

2.2. Sources of Data

The primary data sources for this study were centred on the minutes of the Appointment, Promotion, and Scholarship Committee of HrU. Data for this study were collected from all applicants who were faculty members seeking academic promotion. These data were submitted to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The total number of applicants in this study was 614.

A comprehensive review and analysis of a series of meeting minutes spanning the years from 2017 to 2023 were conducted. Additionally, to enhance the reliability and depth of the data obtained through document analysis, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposively chosen group of faculty members. Accordingly, six interviewees were part of this study, comprising three College deans and three Department heads. College Deans, Department heads from the Colleges of Social Sciences and Humanities, Natural and Computational Sciences, and Health and Medical Sciences were participated in the interview process as part of this study. That's because these faculty members

possess a clear understanding of staff promotion criteria and are well-versed in the academic promotion procedures. Moreover, most of them have attained their staff promotions through this process.

2.3. Data Analysis Methods

The data on staff participation and their contributions to publications were meticulously organized into tables and subjected to a thorough analysis to facilitate interpretation and inference. The data analysis involved two distinct approaches. For the quantitative data, the statistical software SPSS version 24 was employed to perform descriptive statistical analysis. This process allowed for the generation of statistical summaries and key findings from the data. In the same way, the qualitative data derived from the interviews was transcribed, and subsequent analysis was conducted using narrative and thematic analysis techniques.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

3.1.1 Findings derived from the document review (meeting minutes)

Table 2 presents data of Haramaya University's staff publication practice across two periods. The table illustrates a rise in the number of publications following the implementation of the New MoE Standard by the Colleges of Natural and Computational Sciences (CNCS), Agriculture (COA), Health and Medical Sciences (CHMS), Business and Economics (CBE) and Institute of Technology (IOT). However, there is no significant change for the Colleges of Social Sciences and Humanities (CSSH), Education and Behavioral Sciences (CEBS) and Veterinary Medicine (CVM), which have limited practice in both era. For the College of Computing and Informatics (CCI), the number of publications remained few and unchanged.

Overall, the New MoE Standard has had a good influence on Haramaya University's staff advancement and publication practices.

Table 2: Haramaya University staff promotion and Publication Practice per college

College	2017-2020 (Before new Promotion)				2021-2023 (After New Promotion)			
	Scopus		WoS		Scopus		WoS	
	N ^o	%	N ^o	%	N ^o	%	N ^o	%
CNCS	68	11.00	40	7.90	88	11.31	58	10.34
CoA	90	14.6	70	13.90	118	15.17	85	15.15
CHMS	400	65.00	350	70.00	496	63.75	365	65.00
CBE	20	3.30	19	3.80	30	3.85	26	4.63
CSSH	4	0.65	2	0.39	5	0.64	2	0.36
IOT	21	3.42	16	3.12	27	3.47	20	3.57
CVM	6	0.98	2	0.39	8	1.02	2	0.35
CCI	1	16.20	1	0.19	1	0.13	1	0.18
CEBS	4	0.65	2	0.39	5	0.64	2	0.36
Total	614	100	502	100	778	100	561	100

Note: CNCS = Colleges of Natural and Computational Sciences, CoA = College of Agriculture, CHMS = College of Health and Medical Sciences, CBE = College of Business and Economics, CSSH= College of Social Sciences and Humanities, IOT = Institute of Technology, CVM = College of Veterinary Medicine, CCI = College of Computing and Informatics, CEBS = College of education and Behavioural Sciences, N^o = number

As shown in Table 3, prior to the implementation of the new promotion, a total of 70 assistant professors, 36 associate professors, and 8 full professors were promoted. The number of assistant and associate promotions fell after the new promotion system was established, as 65 assistant professors, 28 associate professors, and 8 full professors were promoted during this time period. Between 2017 and 2023, 135 assistant professors, 64 associate professors, and 16 full professors were promoted. This trend might be attributed to promotions that are currently underway or due to a scenario where individuals who were promoted between 2017 and 2020 have published numerous articles and are awaiting subsequent rounds of promotion in the upcoming years. However, it would be more interesting to dig deeper into the causes behind this

trend and how it affects the university's staff composition and publishing output.

Table 3 also shows the gender-based staff development and publication trends at Haramaya University from 2017 to 2023. There was a drop in the number of male assistant and associate professor promotions between 2021 and 2023. However, only limited number of female were promoted in both periods and across ranks and thus, the effect is not visible.

Table 4 summarizes Haramaya University's staff promotion and publication practices from 2017 to 2023, organized by field of study. Under the new MoE standard, the number of articles published in both Scopus and WoS increased significantly in both Natural and Social Sciences area.

Table 3: Haramaya University 2017-2023 staff promotion and Publication trend based on Gender

Year of promotion	Assistant Professor		Associate Professor		Full Professor	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
2017-2020 (Before new Promotion)	67	3	36	0	8	0
2021-2023 (After new Promotion)	63	2	27	1	8	0
Total	130	5	63	1	16	0

Table 4: Haramaya University 2017-2023 staff promotion and Publication based on fields of study

College	2017-2020 (Previous HrU Guideline)				2021-2023 (New MoE Standard)			
	Scopus		WoS		Scopus		WoS	
	N ^o	%	N ^o	%	N ^o	%	N ^o	%
Natura Sciences (NS)	586	95.43	479	95.41	738	94.85	531	94.65
Social Sciences (SS)	28	4.56	23	4.58	40	5.14	30	5.35
Total	614	100	502	100	778	100	561	100

NS: Natural sciences; SSH: Social Sciences and Humanities; N^o: number

As shown in Table 5, from 2017 to 2020, national staff contributed significantly to publications in Scopus and WoS, making up over 99% of total articles. Expatriate staff had minimal representation, accounting for less than 1% in both databases. Following new MoE requirements from 2021 to 2023, national staff maintained a high publication rate, comprising over 99% in both databases. Expatriate staff remained low in publications, representing less than 1% collectively. Overall, national staff dominated publications in both periods, while expatriate staff had minimal representation, totaling less than 1% of all publications.

3.1.2 Findings derived from interviews with faculty members

In addition to the data drawn from documents, interview extracts from academics (Deans and Department Heads) were taken into account to distinguish factors contributing to disparities in academic rank attainment among faculty members at Haramaya University. Accordingly, the college dean (CD-1) asserted:

Academic rank attainment is heavily influenced by the level of devotion. Academic staffs who devote a significant amount of time to conducting research display high levels of commitment. On the other hand, some staff members emphasize their personal affairs and are uninterested in working alongside the dedicated staff members. As a result, dedicated staff

members publish their work more rapidly and are more likely to be promoted, whereas others may not have the same prospects for promotion. To solve this issue, institutions can create a culture that promotes and rewards commitment to research and scholarly endeavors. This can be accomplished through recognition programs, incentives, and professional development support.

The Department Head (DH-1) from one of the Colleges of HU indicated:

External funding and grants play a crucial effect in determining academic rank attainment variations among Haramaya University staff members. Certain colleges, in particular, CHMS and CoA, have sufficient funds for research and academic activities. This financial edge may allow faculty members in these colleges to participate in more extended research projects, receive funding, and publish their findings more regularly. As a result, they may be more likely to achieve higher academic ranks than staff members in colleges with few resources. To address this, providing training and capacity-building initiatives to faculty members at universities with low resources is necessary. Grant writing, research methodology, and project management skills can all be emphasized in these programs.

Table 5: Haramaya University 2017-2023 staff promotion and Publication based type of staff

Staff type	2017-2020 (Previous HrU Guideline)				2021-2023 (New MoE Standard)			
	Scopus		WoS		Scopus		WoS	
	N ^o	%	N ^o	%	N ^o	%	N ^o	%
Native	612	99.67	499	99.40	774	99.48	559	99.64
Expatriate	2	0.33	3	0.59	4	0.51	2	0.36
Total	614	100	502	100	778	100	561	100

Furthermore, a college dean (CD- 2) of the university enunciated with the response:

Bias can also affect staff members' motivation to submit proposals for grant contests in the context of funding. Despite producing effective proposals, there is no certainty of receiving a grant, which can be discouraging to some staff. This lack of assurance may deter them from entering grant competitions entirely. To address the discrepancies in academic rank achievements caused by bias and discouragement in grant contests among faculty members, it is imperative that transparent and neutral evaluation systems for grant competitions are established. This should involve the formulation of explicit criteria for reviewing proposals and ensuring that the evaluation committee comprises diverse individuals with relevant expertise. Such measures can effectively reduce bias, instill greater trust among academics in the fairness of the process, and inspire them to be more passionate about their publications.

Furthermore, Institutional factors, both driving and hindering, at play in the context of promoting successful faculty publication practices at Haramaya University were explored through interviews with deans and department heads. In this regard, a college dean (CD-3) of the university asserted:

The availability of resources and assistance, such as research funds and well-equipped facilities, has a positive impact on the quality of research and publishing outcomes. In contrast, academic members' capacity to do research and publish their findings is hampered by lack of resources and high administrative tasks. Institutions should allocate appropriate resources, provide mentorship and assistance, eliminate administrative constraints, and develop a culture that appreciates and promotes research output through recognition programs and incentives to promote successful publication practices.

Likewise, Department Head -2 indicated:

Successful publication processes can be driven by encouraging multidisciplinary cooperation and offering opportunities for faculty members to

communicate their research findings through departmental lectures and conferences.

In general, based on the insights from the interview results, it can be concluded that addressing resource constraints, offering support and mentorship, reducing administrative burdens, and fostering a collaborative research environment are pivotal factors in promoting academic engagement in research and enhancing effective publication practices among faculty members. By implementing these measures, universities can create an environment that not only encourages faculty members to actively participate in research but also enhances their publishing outcomes.

3.2. Discussion

Haramaya University's publication records show significant growth in the number of publications over the years, both in Scopus and WoS, in accordance with prior HU Guideline and New MoE Promotion Standard. This shows the university's dedication to research and scholarly output. Several variables, including the university's emphasis on research, the availability of research funds, and the dedication of faculty members and researchers, can be ascribed to the growth in publications (Yallew and Dereb, 2023). The increase in the number of publications from 2017 - 2020 to 2021-2023 demonstrates that the new MoE standard has had a beneficial influence on the University's research productivity. Yallew and Dereb (2022) analyzed Ethiopian-affiliated research in Scopus and WoS from 2001 to 2020 and then revealed a considerable rise in research output of 19.92% annually for Scopus-indexed research and 20.07% for WoS. It is crucial to highlight, however, that research output does not always represent the quality or impact of the research (Linde et al, 1999).

The findings show that the number of publications increased in different colleges following the implementation of the New MoE Standard. The number of publications increased significantly in the CNCS and the CoA, indicating that the revised promotion standard has had a beneficial influence on research production in both colleges. In contrast, the CHMS experienced a slight decrease in the percentage distribution of publications following the implementation of the New MoE Standard. However, the overall number of publications grew, demonstrating a favorable trend in

CHMS research production. More research is needed to understand the factors influencing the decline in percentage distribution and to assess the quality and impact of the articles. The number of publications in the CBE increased, indicating an improvement in research output. Similarly, after the implementation of the New MoE Standard, the CSSH, IOT and the CVM also demonstrated good developments in publication practices.

The CCI and CEBS, on the other hand, had a steady number of publications both before and after the New MoE Standard. Although the percentage distribution of publications has somewhat decreased, the consistent research output indicates steady academic effort in these colleges. The findings emphasize the need to foster a research culture and offer incentives for academic members to participate in intellectual pursuits.

In terms of staff promotion and publishing trends, the findings provide important insights into promotion trends and dispersion across different academic ranks. The data provided in Table 3 show a decline in the number of staff promotions following the adoption of the new promotion system. This decline in promotions could be attributable to a variety of things. The new promotion system may have stiffer criteria or higher standard for promotion, resulting in a more selective process. More research and analysis are required to fully understand the reasons for a decrease in staff promotions following the implementation of the new promotion system. Examining specific requirements and qualifications for promotion, as well as reviewing the views and experiences of staff members who have gone through the promotion process, could be part of this.

Another topic of discussion was gender-based staff promotion and publication trends; data shows that male staff members are promoted to each academic rank at a higher rate than female staff members. The number of males promoted to higher levels, greatly outnumbers the number of females. There were no female staff members promoted to the rank of Associate Professor or Full Professor between 2017 and 2020. This problem may arise due to small number of female academic staff in the institution and lack of sense of competition. Haramaya University must address these gaps and provide equal opportunities for promotion for both male and female staff members. Although the number of

female staff members promoted to Assistant Professor and Associate Professor increased slightly between 2021 and 2023, the overall gender disparity in promotions remained considerable. The lack of female staff members promoted to Full Professor over this time period underscores the importance of taking aggressive steps to eliminate gender inequity in academic promotions.

Haramaya University should explore developing policies and programs that assist the professional growth and progress of female staff members in order to promote gender equity and diversity. This might involve mentorship programs, training opportunities, and clear, bias-free promotion standards. Furthermore, it is critical to foster an inclusive and supportive work atmosphere that encourages female staff members to participate in research and publication. The university can promote an equitable and a diverse academic community by addressing the underlying reasons that contribute to the gender imbalance in promotions. The statistical analysis resulted from the study conducted by Bentley (2012) demonstrated that, in both time periods, women and men of the same academic rank published at comparable levels, where males significantly outperformed females in terms of publications. Notably, academic rank, possession of a doctorate, the allocation of research time, and engagement in international research collaborations emerged as the most influential factors positively linked to publication productivity. However, women consistently reported lower levels of each of these influential factors. Predictively, institutional and family-related characteristics were found to be relatively poor indicators of publication productivity.

Last but not least, in terms of staff promotion and publication-based native versus expatriate staff, the findings clearly show that national staff members produce the majority of publications. This shows that national faculty members at Haramaya University were more actively involved in research and publication activities. This may be due to variables such as familiarity with the local context, access to resources, and long-term dedication to the institution. The low number of publications by expatriate staff members could be attributed to a variety of issues; including language barriers limited research collaborations, and shorter work periods. Staff from abroad may experience

difficulties adjusting to the local research environment and establishing research networks.

It is critical to provide enough assistance and resources to expatriate staff members to improve their research and publication procedures. Language training, mentorship initiatives, and possibilities for research collaborations with national staff members are examples of this. Haramaya University can encourage the active engagement and contribution of both native and expatriate staff members in research and publication activities by cultivating an inclusive and supportive research environment. More research and analysis are required to acquire a better understanding of the factors impacting publication trends of the expatriate staff members. This can aid in the establishment of focused initiatives and policies to encourage research and publication habits among all staff members, regardless of nationality.

The results of the study have highlighted the significant impact of external funding and grants on the variations in academic rank attainment among Haramaya University staff members. Notably, certain colleges, such as CHMS and COA, enjoy substantial financial resources for research and academic activities. This financial advantage enables faculty members in these colleges to engage in more extensive research projects, secure funding, and publish their findings more frequently. Consequently, they are more likely to achieve higher academic ranks compared to their counterparts in colleges with limited resources. To address this disparity, it is imperative to implement training and capacity-building initiatives for faculty members at universities with fewer resources. These programs can focus on enhancing skills in grant writing, research methodology, and project management. Respondents in interview sessions have underlined the influence of bias on staff members' motivation to participate in grant competitions for funding. Even when they put forward well-structured proposals, there's no guarantee of being awarded a grant, which can be disheartening for some staff. This lack of certainty may lead them to refrain from entering grant competitions altogether. To address the disparities in academic rank achievement stemming from bias and discouragement in grant competitions among faculty members, it's

essential to ensure transparency and impartiality in grant competition evaluation systems

Regarding the challenges associated with academic publications, Jones (2007) emphasized that peer review is a laborious and time-intensive procedure. Reviewers are tasked with meticulously examining and assessing the novelty, originality, and validity of research findings. The growing emphasis on publishing has led to a dramatic surge in academic publications, resulting in a shortage of subject matter experts available to review unpublished manuscripts. Jones suggests that this resource scarcity, coupled with the escalating number of manuscript submissions, contributes to delays in article publication. Harvey and Weinstein (2017) further contend that predatory publishers take advantage of the time constraints inherent in the traditional publication process.

Joseph (2015) introduced the concept of a socioeconomic-political approach to the publishing field, emphasizing the importance of examining the interactions among key players within the field. This approach is crucial for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the contemporary publishing landscape. Consequently, there is a need to redefine the academic publishing landscape by thoroughly assessing the roles and contributions of various stakeholders in this domain. The interviews conducted at Haramaya University have shed light on various factors contributing to the disparities in academic rank achievement among faculty members. These factors encompass qualities like research dedication and commitment, the impact of external funding and grants, and the presence of bias in grant competitions. In response to these findings, the college dean has proposed the development of a culture that encourages and rewards commitment through recognition programs and support for professional development. To bridge the resource gap, there is a recommendation to provide training and capacity-building initiatives for faculty members in colleges with limited resources. Moreover, it has been suggested that grant competitions adopt transparent and unbiased evaluation methods to reduce prejudice. Addressing these multifaceted factors is crucial for minimizing the disparities in academic rank attainment among staff at Haramaya University.

The availability of resources and assistance, such as research funds and well-equipped facilities, has a positive impact on the quality of studies and publishing outcomes. In contrast, academic members' capacity to do research and publish their findings is hampered by a lack of resources, poor assistance, and high administrative tasks. Institutions should allocate appropriate resources, provide mentorship and assistance, eliminate administrative constraints, and develop a culture that appreciates and promotes research output through recognition programs and incentives to promote successful publication practices. The results highlight the importance of successful publication processes, which can be facilitated by promoting multidisciplinary cooperation and providing opportunities for faculty members to disseminate their research findings through departmental lectures and conferences. Therefore, it is crucial to underscore the significance of fostering a collaborative and supportive research atmosphere within the department.

Academic publication has therefore moved beyond being a mere dissemination of research findings, evolving into an important process that has direct links to the social and economic growth of nations. This further establishes that the individual habit of academics publishing their research work at the micro-level is thus guided by socio-economic norms operating at the macro-level. These arguments lead to the conclusion that the publishing habits of academics are related to different economic, social, and governmental factors that influence the field of higher education and research as well as the institutional or organizational structures. Aboagye et al. (2021) have pointed out that the characteristics of the work environment play a pivotal role in explaining both the quality and quantity aspects of academic publication performance. Their research underscores that management practices, leadership, and psychosocial attributes are factors that have a substantial impact on the publication productivity of academics.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of staff promotion and publishing patterns at HrU unveils insights into current processes and research output. The findings can guide future studies and enhance university promotion policies. Examining promotion trends across academic ranks

helps identify biases hindering career advancements. Establishing a robust research funding and incentive structure fosters fairness and equal opportunities. Assessing the impact of New MoE Standard on research productivity reveals a positive influence, evident in increased overall publications. This underscores the importance of nurturing a research culture and incentivizing academic participation. Regularly analyzing and adapting promotion policies, addressing gender disparities, and promoting gender equality are crucial for creating a diverse and supportive academic environment where faculty can thrive in their research and careers.

Understanding disparities in research output across fields and the contributions of native versus expatriate staff can guide improvements in research involvement and collaboration. The study revealed lower research publication rates among expatriate staff, despite their qualifications. Factors like language training, mentorship, and collaboration opportunities with national staff might influence this disparity. Haramaya University can foster an inclusive and supportive research environment to engage both groups actively. These insights are valuable for shaping future research and policy, fostering a vibrant research culture, and advancing staff professional development. Continuously assessing and improving promotion criteria, addressing gender disparities, and encouraging research involvement among academics are pivotal for the university's academic advancement. While the study's findings may not apply universally to other institutions, they offer valuable insights into faculty publication trends and academic rank achievement at HrU, shedding light on the influencing factors.

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