Publish or Perish': A Systematic Review

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Abstract
The 'publish or perish' mantra is a global phenomenon that has been extensively documented and scrutinised in western literature; however, too little has been done in the African context. Using a systemic review, this study sought to identify the constraints facing academics in undertaking research and publication in the African context, and to analyse the ramifications of the 'publish or perish' phenomena on academics in African institutions of higher learning. The researchers carried out a Google Scholar search using the PRISMA model as criteria for selection. The paper reviewed original articles, conference papers, articles published in English, and articles published between 2012 to 2022. Eleven articles were ultimately reviewed as a result of the extraction characteristics. The study concludes that while significant challenges face publication in the African context, individual motivation, collaboration among academics, favorable institutional environment, and supportive government policy could be leveraged to strengthen the dissemination of innovative ideas for socioeconomic development through publications.

Introduction

Research plays a significant role in university ranking, prestige and reputation (Amutuhaire, 2022; Uzobo, 2019). This is because research and publications represent the most distinctive function of academic institutions, in addition to teaching and learning, and community outreach. Research generates new knowledge by confirming, disproving or clarifying existing knowledge; it provides the much-needed scientific evidence for innovations and improved public management. This has ignited the drive for academics to publish as both a professional and a moral obligation (Vurayai & Ndofirepi, 2022); thus, the dilemma to 'publish or perish' (PoP) at any cost is born. To publish is to remain relevant; to perish is to fade into career obscurity (Ssentogo & Draru, 2017).

The phrase 'publish or perish' represents both an attitude and practice within academic institutions that pegs recruitment, retention, promotion, tenure, funding, and often professional success to peer-reviewed journals and other publications; hence, putting enormous pressure on academics to indeed 'publish or perish' with far reaching repercussions (Amutuhaire, 2022). Excessive pressure to publish has long been a norm in academia and can lead to academic impropriety, emphasis on quantity rather than quality, and various malpractices (Lee, 2014). Such malpractices may include forgery, inclusion of trivial studies, piecemeal or multiple reporting, and the inclusion of fake authors (Uzobo, 2019). Therefore, the practice runs the risk of emphasizing 'productivity' at the expense of 'innovation.' It also begets serious possibilities of scientific practice based on flawed evidence (Vurayai & Ndofirepi, 2022; Uzobo, 2019; Yankhomes 2014).

The evidence continues to grow, suggesting that the rising benefits of the pressure to publish is being undermined by unethical practices that compromise the quality and rigour of the research publications (van Dalen, 2021). The debate has been initiated and continues on the benefits against the negative impact of the 'publish or perish' pressure (Moosa, 2018). The question posed is, what exactly is the impact of the pressure to publish on the academic staff of higher learning institutions in the African context? Though several studies have explored the general influence of the 'publish or perish' phenomena in institutions, few have focused on its influence in the African context, the influence of the harsh African context publications by African scholars, particularly among the academics within the university sector (Rotich & Musakali, 2013). Developing nations, chiefly those in Africa, produce less publications than they ought to with regard to their population. In spite of 80% of the world's population and 28% of researchers and scientists living in developing parts of the world, Africa generates only 0.4% of the world's scientific publications (Kana, 2016). Kana (2016) observed that data and studies on the risk and benefits related to the 'publish or perish' philosophy are limited, especially in the African context. He (Kana, 2016), however, suggested that the philosophy might be an incentive to publish and enhance research productivity in Africa. Several reviews and studies have explored the American (Akita, 2022), European (Van Dalen, 2021) and Asian

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(Kurambayev, & Freedman, 2021) contexts. This study review is in response to Kana's (2016) observation that a gap remains in the review on the influence of the 'publish or perish' philosophy in the African context. This was further emphasised by Amutuhaire (2022) after pointing out the low contribution that African scholars have made on the global stage and the inequalities they face. He asserted that,

> "The 'publish or perish' concept ignores the contextual issues that African researchers confront daily." (Amutuhaire, 2022, p.2)

The first aspect of the study examines the literature on what is impeding the 'publish or perish' practice drive in academia, allowing the researchers to understand the constraints to research output. The second aspect examines issues that have arisen as a result of the push for publication among academics. The literature is mapped to document lessons learnt from past debates and discuss potential future scenarios that provide the basis for future agendas. The study aims were: 1) to identify the constraints facing academics in undertaking research and publication in African academic institutions of higher learning, 2) to analyse the ramifications of the 'publish or perish' phenomena on academics in African institutions of higher learning.

Methodology

This study adopted a systemic literature review (SLR) design. A systematic literature review identifies, selects and critically appraises research to answer a formulated question (Dewey & Drahota, 2016). This systemic research permits the amalgamation of evidence into the methodical structure to collect and synthesize research findings to provide a more complete comprehension of a particular phenomenon or problem (Saini & Shlonsky, 2012), particularly, the 'publish or perish' philosophy. The question in this review is framed using the Population, Intervention, Comparator, and Outcome (PICO) method.

The population is academics in African universities; the problem is the understanding of why there is such a low- and poor-quality level of academic research among the said group; Intervention is the need for more and improved quality publication; Comparison is the 'publish or perish' philosophy of good or bad for academia in Africa; and, the Outcome is the hope to discover avenues to improve quality of publication among academics. Although the PICO format is used principally in the health sciences, it can also be useful for focusing and refining a research question in the social sciences (DeCarlo, 2018).
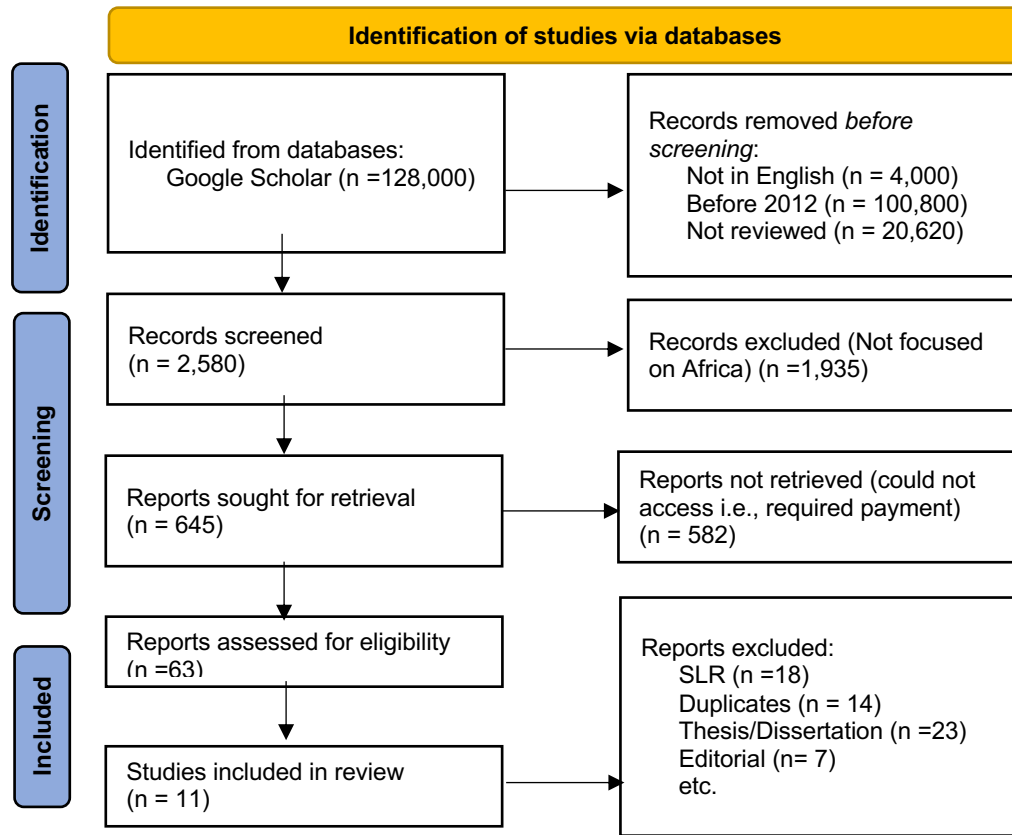
The search strategy was anchored on the Google Scholar database and search for the key terms using the following: "Publish or Perish" and "Publish or Perish Africa." All the search from the database is within a span of 10 years (2012 to 2022), journal articles, conference papers, and research reports published in English.

This criterion for selection were based on the PRISMA model (Moher et al., 2009). The emphasis of the search was mainly on the mapping of the current literature on the 'publish or perish' phenomena, which is dominant in all fields of academia. However, this study's emphasis was more on the field of business, management and economics. Since the search span was from 2012 to 2022, all articles published before 2012 were not included in the review (n = 100,800). The search focused mainly on African countries (academics); therefore, articles on other countries were excluded - a total of 1,935 articles were left out. 645 articles were extracted at

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the first selection stage.

Figure 1

Literature search flow chart

Identification of studies via databases	
Identification	Identified from databases: Google Scholar (n =128,000)	Records removed *before screening*: Not in English (n = 4,000) Before 2012 (n = 100,800) Not reviewed (n = 20,620)
Screening	Records screened (n = 2,580)	Records excluded (Not focused on Africa) (n =1,935)
	Reports sought for retrieval (n = 645)	Reports not retrieved (could not access i.e., required payment) (n = 582)
Included	Reports assessed for eligibility (n =63)	Reports excluded: SLR (n =18) Duplicates (n = 14) Thesis/Dissertation (n =23) Editorial (n= 7) etc.
	Studies included in review (n = 11)	

Source: Primary data 2022

The study focused on review papers, original articles and conference papers. To ensure quality in the review duplications were carefully checked and removed. A thorough check of abstracts of considered articles was conducted for analysis and purification to ensure both relevance and quality of the literature before inclusion. A more detailed evaluation of the papers was conducted at later stages of the selection. The exclusion was done for papers not written in English (n = 4,000). Furthermore, after the filtration of the duplicated articles, an additional 11 articles were removed from the study. Paper reviews (n =18), editorials (n=7) and thesis or dissertations (n =23) were also excluded. 15 articles remained after the earlier inclusion and exclusion criteria. The PRISMA statement in figure 1 shows the stages of inclusion and exclusion of literature.

In the data extraction phase, 11 articles were chosen and the extraction characteristics included:

1. The reviewed article had to be original and/or conference papers; research reports (thesis or dissertations), systemic reviews and case studies were excluded.
2. The article had to be written in English
3. Only articles published between 2012 to 2022 were extracted.
4. The studies extracted were from or focused on the African context only.

Results

Characteristics of selected articles

The original search on the concept of 'publish or perish' generated 128,000 articles (see appendices 1 to 6). Following the various stages of exclusion 63 articles were eligible, but after closer scrutiny of the abstracts, 11 articles met the full inclusion and quality criteria for the study. Figure 1 details the inclusion and quality criteria. A summary of the included articles in this review is outlined in Table 1 (Appendix 6).

The selected articles were studies carried out in Zambia (1), South Africa (3), Kenya (1), China (1), Germany (1), Uganda (2), Algeria (1) and Nigeria (1). A fourth of the reviewed studies were from South Africa. Several studies focused on multiple African countries. Several studies were conducted outside Africa (China and Germany) with the unit of analysis and/or enquiry being African academics.

Concerning the research methods, the majority of the selected articles (7) were qualitative, three (3) were quantitative and one (1) adopted a mixed methods approach. The most cited article had 56 citations, followed by 26. Several articles, especially the recently published had few or none. Generally, most of the articles had limited citations, which hinted at the gap suggested by Kana (2016). In terms of the study population, all articles focused on African scholars. The choice of scholars varied from senior lecturers and deans to novice academics and postgraduate students in the African context. All articles dealt with the 'publish or perish' phenomena and/or peripheral issues related to it.

The constraints facing academics in undertaking research and publication in African academic institutions of higher learning

The drive to publish has been one that is identified as the core requirement of an academic regardless of location, context, level or field. This requirement has been underpinned as important - linked with the academic's career growth, intellectual calibre and acumen with the academic community. The low and poor productivity of African scholars and institutions when it comes to research and publication has been documented extensively (Mushemeza, 2016; Kwanya, 2020; Vurayai & Ndofirepi, 2022). Several literatures reviewed echoed similar sentiments even in various contexts. Some scholars (Ssentongo & Draru, 2017; Vurayai & Ndofirepi, 2022; Amutuhaire, 2022) argued that the poor research culture, challenges with publication and questionable output attributed to some African universities are due to the British colonial legacy that deliberately sought to undermine the quality of education. This has birthed inequalities concerning research and publications and the limited attention that has been given to African research. If this is truly the case, there is a lot of unlearning to be done.

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Amutuhaire (2022) pointed out that the 'publish or perish' concept disregards the contextual issues faced by African researchers which are typified by limited access to quality studies authored by African researchers and high publication fees that exceed the financial abilities of the academics, resulting in impediment of their progress. Due to the failed scholarly journal system on the continent, African scholars seek to publish in reputable foreign journals which undermines their ability to focus on pertinent local research interests. These efforts are undermined by empty libraries, limited technology, poor pay, high publication fees, no funding for participation in conferences, limited English (English being a second language to most Africans) and low social and economic standing for scholars from a minority group (i.e., tribalism, cronyism, nepotism, etc). Amutuhaire (2022) argued that the longing for African researchers to publish in high-impact and quality journals set to western standards results in the poor application of research findings in the African context.

Callaghan (2016) found that male academics with more dependent children publish significantly fewer journal articles. Female academics, with relatively lower publications, might also be constrained in their career progression in this context, but these constraints might exist over and above the influence of family life. He (Callaghan) noted the 'paper ceiling' where gender undermines the female academics progression despite publication, was not evident in the study (Callaghan, 2016). This issue was possibly influenced by the African cultural values that have been institutionalised. However, female academics with younger children were significantly less likely to make conference presentations, which may impede their career development in the long run. The overarching conclusion held was that it is possible that family–work spill overs may undermine the ability to research and publish, thus, limiting career progression in the study context (South Africa) for both genders. This very sentiment resonated with Ssentongo and Draru (2017) pointing out that,

> "Testimonies of female academics show that the patriarchal dynamics of the Ugandan setting disadvantages them even more than their male counterparts, but that overall, both are victims." (Ssentongo & Draru, 2017, p.81)

Kilonzo and Magak (2013) observed in the context of Kenya that the tripartite problem of access, equity, and quality is deteriorating by the ever-increasing demand for higher education in terms of teaching, research, and publishing. The dual found that the growth of universities in the country resulted in distortion between teaching loads, research, and publishing; thus, placing excessive pressure on lecturers and the system as a whole. The heavy teaching load has resulted in institutions not being able to employ sufficiently qualified staff and has also given staff the license to access as many part-time jobs as they can find to mitigate the low pay. The study similarly found that doctoral students at the two universities (Maseno University and Kenyatta University) were faced with the same challenges as the staff. Other issues identified by Kilonzo and Magak (2013) included tremendously little government and university funding for research and publishing. This is confirmed by the fact that in the studied universities, there was negligible, if any, money allocated for international conferences. The study found that 91% of the researchers who had made the effort to apply for donor funding over the last ten years, were denied. Overwhelmingly, the majority of the

donors were from the West. 3% of the researchers had benefited from the National Science and Technology Council of Kenya which focuses purely on technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education, hence, leaving out the social scientists (Kilonzo & Magak, 2013). The fact that lecturer promotions are mostly pegged on publications (international) has translated into the mass production of large poor-quality research that does not meet the high standards of international peer-reviewed journals and book chapters.

Mushemeza (2016) explored the opportunities and challenges of academic staff in higher education in Africa. He emphasized that Africa was the home to higher learning for several centuries harnessing indigenous, Islamic, Christian and western origins. The colonial era saw the establishment of western universities on the African continent. These, however, were not independent, but semi-autonomous, affiliated with other universities in the mother countries of the colonial masters. Giving a chronology of the evolution of African universities, Mushemeza came up with the question of the quality of the current calibre of African academics. He identified the responsibilities of a university as teaching, research, publishing and outreach. Mushemeza (2016) discussed the legal requirements, the implication of staff profile, academic productivity and development, challenges of retaining quality staff, and interventions. Key issues identified with regards to challenges include, poor government policy regarding universities (public and private) and the ability to retain quality staff that can uphold the mandate of the university.

Rotich and Musakali (2013) observed that in academia, the productivity of scholarly works improves visibility - visibility has a direct, positive, and significant link to better promotion and salary. They (Rotich and Musakali) argued that African scholars have efficiently used the technology in retrieving and disseminating research findings, resulting in a large number of journals from Africa being published online. Online articles are highly cited because they are more accessible to people who have access to the internet, but, there are issues of ownership and copyrights. That said, most African researchers don't get as much visibility because they publish in their own university journals, which might at times be poorly publicised (Rotich & Musakali, 2013).

Yankholmes (2014) focused his study on African scholars with a tourism and hospitality background. The study revealed that Moi University represented the most productive university despite the University of Botswana having more contributing authors. The study confirmed that professors were the most prolific authors, while lower rank faculty members yielded fewer outputs. Yankhome argued that most Africa-based scholars cared less about publishing because they felt 'safe' in their faculty positions. It is argued that the importance of quality teaching in universities which influences staff promotion, was greater than that of quality research publications. Observations by the authors indicated that scholars who were willing to put in effort and time for research and publications were frustrated by the 'old guards' who didn't want to be labelled as irrelevant, or superseded by younger and upcoming scholars (Yankholmes, 2014).

Bellour (2021) conducted a study on the challenges of scholarly publishing in Africa. She established the obsession of academics with publications in particular because it defined their

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status quo and careers (promotions). She also highlighted the fact that scholarly publishing aided to enhance the status of the university, and emphasised that if one cannot publish, he or she will perish and will never achieve any status within the university or the academic community at large (Bellour, 2021). She (Bellour) pointed out that researchers encounter several challenges including, research methodology, and the inability to carry out scientific research. The paper gave guidelines on how to develop quality research papers and how to choose the right journal. She advised authors to consider the pecking order or hierarchy of journals and how it influences rejection rates. She also pointed out that several journals tended to be more inclined to publish works of academics who were already established in the field. This, she argued, led to the inclusion of phoney co-authors whose names and renown can help get the paper accepted. Bellour also highlighted several unethical activities of some authors and some journals (charging for review, unqualified reviewers, delayed publications). The poor level and quality of research publication in Africa were attributed to several universities not giving sufficient scientific research paper training courses. Other issues identified included, lack of time for research, lack of ambition, fear of rejection, lack of writing competence, and the prioritization of teaching over academic writing due to the demands and culture within the universities (Bellour, 2021).

Mbewe et al. (2019) found that in the Zambian context, some level of research is being conducted; however, most the of research was self-sponsored, with limited grants for their studies. Most of their scholarly efforts, however, did not appear in high-impact journals, because the lecturers (including deans and directors) had to pay for their publications; hence, failure to publish in high-impact journals. They (Mbewe et al., 2019) identified challenges faced by academics relating to research and publication, including insufficient research funds, limited collaboration chances, excessive workloads, limited or no statistical methods of training, lack of mentorship opportunities for young lecturers, excessively long reviews and processing of some journals, language barriers, limited resources (finance included) and over-dependence on western researchers, research and journals (Mbewe et al., 2019).

The studies above confirm that African scholars and academics are faced with several constraints to research and publications. Some are common to all academics, while others are unique to African academics and institutions. These proposed challenges ranged from the purported residue of the colonial legacy in many African nations to the simple fact that some academics simply didn't have any interest in research and publication. The specifics include scarcity of mentors, lack of funding, lack of writing skills, lack of motivation, low demand for research by policymakers, lack of appropriate skills, inadequate data collection sources, and unaffordable analytical tools. In summary, the main challenges and constraints of doing research were, the individual economic, cultural, social and organizational situations as indicated in the literature reviewed in this section.

The ramifications of the 'publish or perish' phenomena on academics in African academic institutions of higher learning.

Scholars and academics have heard the mantra 'publish or perish' for decades. Sharing knowledge and demonstrating excellence through research and publication is one of the key

ways academics display their acumen to their peers. The publications draw attention to both the research and the institution the academics belong to, which translates into better rankings, recognition and all-around prestige (Vurayai & Ndofirepi, 2022). This has ushered in the upsurge of African institutions of high learning incentivising academic staff, especially those in public institutions to publish more. The expression 'publish or perish' places an extensive demand on academicians in the institutions of higher learning to generate publications towards relevance, calibre and career promotion. It is a common assumption that the more papers published, the faster the academic will dart up the ladder to the very top of the ivory tower. This lure of a prosperous career which is the envy of the many academics who are lacking in research and publication has birthed the urge to cut corners and commit various misconducts to make up for their deficiencies. Results range from data falsification in research to deliberately publishing with predatory journals that are purely seeking money to publish any research regardless of the quality (Vurayai & Ndofirepi, 2022). Kilonzo and Magak (2013) pointed out that what some consider low-impact journals and in some cases, predatory is a matter of definition. The same can be said about the definition of "international peer-reviewed journals." Their observation was based on the premise that international peer-reviewed journals appear almost solely to refer to journals from Western Europe and North America. National (Kenyan) and regional journals are avoided, as suggested by most respondents in the study, and are perceived as predatory or low-impact (Kilonzo & Magak, 2013). The drive to publish and not perish has inspired lecturers in the two universities considered in the study to publish online as a group to share the costs. Doctoral students in the institutions also consider the same journal due to the faster speed of publication, which allows them to fulfil the requirement for appearing at the viva voce and completing studies (Kilonzo & Magak, 2013).

The 'publish or perish' philosophy was also explored by Uzobo (2019) in the Nigerian context. The observation made was that pressure to gain recognition through publication has led to the rise of predatory journals that want to cash in on the desperation of academics (Uzobo, 2019). Uzobo defined exploratory journals as ranging from non-western journals to outright exploitative open-access publishing business model that publishes anything for a fee. The sentiment of non-western journals resonated with the partial definition of Amutuhaire (2022) and Kilonzo and Magak (2013). Uzobo (2019) pointed out that the victims of predatory journals span across all academic cadres, from professors to assistant lecturers, though it is more prevalent among young scholars. It was noted that predatory journals damage the scholar's reputation in the long-term, and suggested that institutions should not use publications in international journals as a basis for academics' staff promotion and graduation requirements for doctoral students. He suggested that local and regional journals should be given the same importance as internal journals (Uzobo, 2019).

The phenomenon 'publish or perish' has become a focus of academic research itself, as the search for the phrase on google scholar for this study yielded 128,000 documents published over the years. However, the studies focused on this phenomenon in the African context are very limited (n=645) and this is evident by the elimination criteria for this study, as pointed out by Amutuhaire (2022):

"The 'publish or perish' concept ignores the contextual issues that African

researchers confront daily. A case in point is the limited access to quality studies published in internationally recognized journals experienced by African researchers. They certainly do not get chances to benchmark their publications, hence their low quality and failure to appear in high-impact journals. Additionally, the high publication fees which represent a large portion of the monthly payment of a researcher from Africa deters them from producing a desirable number of publications." (Amutuhaire, 2022, p. 2)

Amutuhaire (2022) argued that the 'publish or perish' mantra undermines the advancement of African academics, and weakens the contributions of African intellectuals in the service of their communities. This, he claimed, is due to the western world defining the research agenda and setting the standards for what is acceptable and what is not, thus, there is a disconnect between the contributions of Africans as teachers, administrators, scholars, and researchers in the service of their communities. Amutuhaire further argued that the 'publish or perish' philosophy exposes the inequalities and gaps existing between the African scholarly community and its counterpart in the west (Amutuhaire, 2022). Due to several challenges, some discussed in the prior section of this paper, African researchers are relegated to low-impact journals and sometimes predatory journals which question the quality of research and its findings. A similar issue is observed by Uzobo (2019) who further cautions against the assumption that all published articles in predatory journals are of poor quality:

"Nevertheless, it should be noted that it is not all articles published in predatory journals that are of poor quality. Some very good academic works have been published in these journals due to an honest mistake on the part of the authors" (Uzobo, 2019, p.8)

Mbewe et al. (2019) pointed out that the level of research generated by lecturers is not only used as a criterion for their promotion, but also the reputation and the ranking of the university. The cascading effect is that there would be a corresponding increase in student enrolment and some countries more government grants and donations; the opposite can result in the demise of the institution. Despite the benefits and prestige, the publications bring to all parties, Amutuhaire (2022) observed that most of the knowledge acquired and produced through research in the African context like Uganda, tends to focus more on western and less on local context issues. He further observed that the publish and perish imperative has generally birthed a negative outcome which has been exacerbated by the high levels of inequalities between African scholars and their western counterparts. The thought of not publishing would imply perishing and the possible denial of promotion. This has led many academics who don't have publications to take up excessive teaching loads as a precaution against the possible termination of their contracts.

Some argue that this results in excuses of excessive work or teaching load which would not permit the academic time to research and publish. Yankhomes (2014) argued that lower-ranking academics and young scholars feel the pressure to 'publish or perish' most. This is because they believe that they do not have any publication under their belt, or the skills for research and exposure to the research community; hence, experience a higher level of rejections from reputable journals. In his study, Yankhomes observed that in sub-Saharan

Africa, the 'publish or perish' mantra did not resonate significantly due to the focus on quality teaching rather than quality research as the measure for excellence. This is supported by some of the respondents in the study confirming that staff promotion had little to do with research output or academic excellence, but rather institutional politics, power play and technical 'know who.

Mbewe et al. (2019) acknowledged that several lecturers acknowledged the need to improve funding of research by their institutions in order to better utilise available resources and improve access to literature and library facilities. Lecturers further suggested a specified policy to induce staff to publish at least an article a year, and recognize or offer inducements to encourage academicians who published in high-impact journals (Mbewe et al., 2019). Yankhomes (2014) pointed out the laxity of university administrations to encourage and facilitate staff to publish in a top-tier journal. This could be due to the observations that facilities and policies need to be put in place to encourage the publications and consider them more vital than teaching when one is considered for promotion. However, it has been met with resistance by most faculty members (Yankhomes, 2014).

The review of the literature suggests that the publish and perish mantra does encourage the generation of publications (Mbewe et al., 2019) even though the quality might be questionable in some cases. The mantra has however opened a can of worms regarding research misconduct consisting of plagiarism, falsification and fabrication of data as a whole, as well as, any intentional, treacherous or careless neglect of standard research practices and outright failure to follow established research and publication protocols (Bellour, 2021). Studies observed that 'publish or perish' causes academics to focus on specific generic topics and ignore research originality, choosing a short-term study that brings rapid obvious and positive results rather than long-term studies that can yield value, and resulting in a major decline in qualified publications (Kwanya, 2020). Recycling the same research in different forms (salami slicing), or adding the name of distinguished authors as co-authors for submitted research to be easily accepted. This has led to most of the research that is disconnected from its usefulness in the local context being published in low-impact journals and worst cases, in predatory journals (Yankholmes, 2014). It is vital to note that a lot of these issues are not purely the making of the academics, but, some are a result of their socioeconomic status (Ssentongo & Draru, 2017; Callaghan, 2016), the institution of higher learning (Kilonzo & Magak, 2013) and government policy originating for the colonial legacy (Ssentongo & Draru, 2017; Mushemeza, 2016).

Discussions

As argued by Uzobo (2019), the academic community in Africa is extremely important to the continent and the world by extension, thus, the need to protect, nourish and help it thrive at all costs. The fact remains that, there are still debates about what constitutes a predatory journal, which calls for the need for clarity and avenues for academics, especially young scholars who can easily fall prey to these journals in the African continent (Uzobo, 2019). Conducting research and putting in time and effort, and not being able to publish the work in a decent journal, would be a shame. It is a fact that impedes African academics from generating high quantity and quality research. It is personal to the academic (internal) and

institution, government and other external factors. The biggest challenges are external to academics because in most cases, they have little control of what sadly bears on them (academics). The perception that African journals carry less, institutional policies that do not facilitate, reward or even recognise research and publication efforts, and government policies that undermine the importance of funding and recourse to encourage research and publication nationally, makes it hard for academics to reform. The internal factors that impede research and publications can be overcome through the creation of good policies and cultures within the institutions of higher learning and environments that academics operate in. I dare say that the publish and perish mantra is one of the philosophies that can stimulate research and publication if managed well.

It is a fact that until African universities and institutions of higher learning place more regard on their journals in terms of quality and rigour, the drive to publish will be a failure. This is because western 'international' journals are only willing to accept research that feeds into their research agendas. This means the value of the limited published work in journals (internal journals) in which scholars in Africa publish (Kilonzo & Magak, 2013) will be of little use in the local context. The scholars cannot access the published work at times, but most Africans who can read them might not be able to access them either, and those who can, find that it is not practical to the local context since the research fed more into the agenda of the origin of the journals. Similarly, the effort of African academics regarding research and publication needs to be acknowledged and even endorsed by their respective institutions and university management. This will build more confidence and courage to research and get to the publication process. The review process should facilitate and encourage the quality and level of research to rise, and not undermine its infancy. Mbewe et al. (2019) emphasise that research collaborations between and among different research experts from different institution are crucial in guaranteeing that the research findings are robust. Sadly, collaboration is still low and weak among African academics (Mbewe et al., 2019). As observed by Amutuhaire (2020), it is possible in the African context to publish and still perish due to the poor quality of research and publication that is being generated on the continent as a result of the many challenges and inequities faced.

Conclusion and Way Forward

This review identified the constraints facing academics in undertaking research and publication in African academic institutions of higher learning and analysed the ramifications of the 'publish or perish' phenomena on academics in African institutions of higher learning. As a result, several scholars, researchers and academics (Kilonzo & Magak, 2013) pointed out the challenges faced in undertaking research in academic institutions in the African context. These challenges included: workload pressure; lack of time; administrative work pressure; lack of research networking amongst colleagues; lack of research-oriented culture; lack of research funding; lack of mentoring or guidance concerning methods and techniques for doing research; and, family obligations pressure, among others. These challenges have led to the abuse of the 'publish or perish' paradigm which is being enforced by serval institutions and has in some cases forced researchers to publish in questionable journals. The quality of research in Africa has been undermined, thus the alleged low output on the global scale due to the high rejection rate in high-impact international journals. The need for African journals to

be birthed, especially by African universities, is essential to the growth and development of quality and practically applicable research on the continent. Sadly, even African institutions and universities put more credibility in international journals despite their divergent agenda from that of the practical needs of the African context. Most African journals that are not considered predatory are not visible beyond their university gates. It is, therefore, advisable that African journals embrace technology and the internet to create more visibility. This can specifically be done by listing those journals in databases and adopting electronic publishing by hosting it on the university websites instead of hardbound prints, and starting institutional repositories and listing them under directories of institutional repositories that cut across the continent.

Universities and institutions of higher learning must adopt a strict policy that prompts academic staff to research and publish in a selected group of journals which are not limited to foreign international journals. It is also prudent that universities collaborate within and outside the continent to facilitate research training, reviewing manuscripts and subsidising the fees for publication. This will help build a footing to elevate the quality, volume and applicability of research published on the continent. The collaboration of institutions and academics will help generate research robust findings and strengthen research and a writing culture on both the continental and institutional levels.

It is imperative to re-evaluate the criteria used to recruit and promote academic staff on the continent. Limiting promotions to publications alone will be an injustice because researchers are faced with various challenges about workload, economic status, marital status, and other macro factors such as wars and pandemics. Under the extreme pressure to 'publish or perish,' some might resort to shortcuts that will undermine the quality and credibility of research in the institution. These shortcuts can include, as discussed in this paper, weak research topic, salami slicing, name adding as co-authors and predatory publishing. A mixture of measures should be adopted, such as quality service to the community, experience in teaching, supervision of students and publications. Publications can be rewarded separately to encourage academics, however, when made a 'publish and perish' mantra, many will be tempted to take shortcuts that will be costly eventually for all parties involved. As indicated by Mbewe et al. (2019) research publications can be improved and increased through proper funding and prudent management of resources by university administrations.

Future reviews can cast the net wider and consider not only African academics and institutions but, the general south (developing nations). This might provide access to more literature and more robust analysis.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Initial search for 'publish or perish' (n=1280,000)

Appendix 2: Exclusion of Non-English (n=124,000).

Appendix 3: Exclusion of Journals published before 2012 (n=23,200)

Appendix 4: Exclusion of Journals not reviewed (n= 2,580)

Appendix 5: Exclusion of non-African context, unit of analysis, etc (n=645)

Appendix 6
Table 1:

Summary of articles reviewed

No.	Author(s) and year	Citations	Country of study	Study objective(s)	Study Population	Research Design	Study finding(s)
1	Mbewe, et al. (2019)	1	Zambia	1. To establish challenges faced by academic members of staff in publishing their work in scholarly journals; 2. To illuminate the factors that can enhance publication output by members of the academia in Zambia.	Academics in the University of Zambia (Senior Lecturers and Deans)	Qualitative	1. The findings show that lecturers at the University of Zambia were involved in both basic and action research and yet, the publication output was low. 2. Among the challenges identified were lack of research funds, overreliance on western researchers who have their own research agendas, lack of mentorship among young lecturers, lack of visibility of internally generated journals
2	Callaghan (2016)	21	South Africa	The objective of the study was to test the potential influence of family life spill overs on academic research publication	Academic staff of a large South African higher education institution.	Quantitative	Publication is found to be negatively associated with dependent children, but only for male academics, and to be negatively associated with female gender over and above the effect of family life variables in testing.
3	Yankholmes (2014)	26	China	1. The first was a bibliometric analysis of the publication patterns of Africa-based scholars in four leading	Africa based scholars in the field of tourism and hospitality management.	Quantitative	The results suggested that within the 20-year period, very few research articles were published albeit by single authors. The subject content of the journal articles focused on tourist perceptions and behaviour mostly produced by universities

				tourism and hospitality management journals between 1990 and 2010. 2. The second objective identified the challenges to getting research articles published in high-impact journals.			and institutions in South Africa, Kenya and Botswana.
4	Amutuhaire (2022)	0	Germany	Scholars from Africa	African researchers	Qualitative	The significant negative consequence that has been experienced as a result of adopting the 'publish or perish' imperative
5	Mushemeza (2016)	56	Uganda	To analyse the opportunities and challenges of academic staff in higher education in Africa.	Academics in High Education in Africa	Mixed	The paper observes several challenges that face the African Universities today – funding (enhancement of financial base and sustainability), infrastructural demands, inadequate staff remuneration, high student enrolment with low staff-student ratio, and governance/management deficits.
6	Vurayai & Ndofirepi (2022)	2	South Africa	To explore the implications of the varied conceptions of 'Publish or perish' maxim to novice African	Novice African academics	Qualitative	Novice African academics have been marginalised in the production and dissemination of knowledge on a global scale due to weapons such as cultural imperialism,

				academics in the neoliberal context.			linguicide, epistemicide and poor funding
7	Kilonzo & Magak (2013)	13	Kenya	1.To examine the link between teaching, research, and publishing. 2. To explore the challenges of producing relevant and innovative publishable research literature. 3. To make quality research and peer-reviewed publishing relevant to local and global contexts.	University lecturers and postgraduate students in Kenya	Qualitative	The lack of enthusiasm due to workload and meagre research resources and a lack of government funding
8	Bellour (2021)	0	Algeria	Explore scholarly publishing challenges in Africa	African researchers	Qualitative	Many researchers complain about the utter lack of documents and references in the area of their research. There are researchers who do not have sufficient time for writing because of enormous teaching loads, selfishness and envy which often create problems for successful academics.
9	Ssentongo & Draru	5	Uganda	1.To ascertain what	Africa academics	Qualitative	-Research is the cornerstone of

	(2017)			knowledge African academics should generate 2.To ascertain the role/purpose of knowledge 3.To ascertain how the knowledge should be disseminated			academic work -Published research cannot be accessed by the people in the context. -Most research in Uganda does not benefit the context. -Women are more disadvantaged than men
10	Rotich & Musakali (2013)	10	South Africa	The paper reviews and analyses ways and means of remaining academically relevant and visible in Africa by employing several methods in scholarly publishing	African scholars	Qualitative	-Despite the availability of many opportunities, African Scholars are yet to maximize their potential by taking advantage of these opportunities. -Most African academic institutions rarely encourage and provide avenues for making themselves and scholars relevant and visible.
11	Uzobo (2019)	0	Nigeria	To explore the proliferation of predatory journals and how this might affect academic development in Nigeria.	Nigerian university academics	Qualitative	Concluded that predatory journals are fee paying journals that do not provide the necessary editorial service fees paid for. Nigeria in this review is found to be one of the highest destinations for predatory journals.