Research for publication - A variable of variables: The novice university educator's perspective

Benard Chisiri[1], Moses Jachi[2]*, Nevermind Muchongwe[1], Itai Zvawanda[3], Tafadzwa Hatidani T Machaka[2], Godwin Shumba[2]

[1]*Department of Human Resource Management, Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences, Mutare, Zimbabwe*
[2]*Department of Accounting, Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences, Mutare, Zimbabwe*
[3]*Department of Applied Statistics, Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences, Mutare, Zimbabwe*
*Corresponding Author

Abstract: **This study explore the challenges faced by novice university educators in keeping up with research for publication requirements. Using a qualitative research design, data was obtained from 120 novice university educators from both private and public universities in Zimbabwe. We conclude that research related challenges is the greatest contributor to mental health issues confronting university educators. Unlike prior related literature, this study is an exposé to the existence of more overt and covert challenges facing novice lecturers, the likes of the existence of boundaries of inclusivity, competition superseding collaboration, publication demanding hyperbolization and the free-rider case and the sucker's effect. The study therefore recommends the cultivation of a supportive culture and environment that is enabling to the new entrants within the higher education profession. The research support given to novice lecturers should correspond the relative value placed upon research for publication as a key attribute driving the university lecturer's occupational security and professional progression.**

Keywords: **novice educator; research for publication; covert challenges; overt challenges**

I. INTRODUCTION

The environment within which university educators find themselves impliedly reward research productivity much more than the lecture theatre activities. University educators are faced with a tri-focal functional responsibility of fulfilling research, teaching and community engagement activities as part of their job description (Mbewe et al., 2020). University lecturers are constantly reminded how important it is for their professional development and career progression to produce high quality publications that find space in high impact journals (Botella, 2005). This emphasis is mainly due to the inherent value placed upon research and publications compared to the other pillars of teaching and community engagement, since university quality of education and rankings are largely associated with the institution's research output. Research output as a performance measure, has remained the main criterion for consideration of tenure and promotion of university educators. Universities around the world and Zimbabwe in particular, much emphasize and reward research output much more than the lecture theatre activities (Botella, 2005). However, mental health concerns and poor work-life balance resulting from constant pressure to publish, with little to no success, is a common phenomenon facing the novice university educator.

Lecturers who join Zimbabwean Universities (private or public) soon find themselves subjected to the *'publish or perish'* ordinance as a tenure condition. It is important to emphasise on the importance of research for it is the backbone of academia, however, in the face of new members joining the industry, challenges continue to manifest in different forms regarding publishing quality and acceptable researches. Challenges hampering research and publication range from lack of research literacy skills among practitioners to poor institutional infrastructure and policy frameworks (Majoni, 2014; Mujtaba Alsied & Winis Ibrahim, 2017). Literature specifically points to unavailability of reliable internet connectivity in some institutions (particularly in less economically developed countries like Zimbabwe), lack of library resources, deficient information technology skills and lack of mentorship among other key factors (Amoako et al., 2021). Be that as it may concerning the quantum and extensive coverage in relation to the research and publication challenges, it is only the most obvious and overt challenges that are usually pronounced and repeated as impeding all academic researchers including the novice lecturers in accomplishing the minimum number of publications necessary for them to secure tenure and or promotion. Confronting this challenge from the perspective of the novice educators, this paper presents other unspoken of and covert challenges that have not been widely interrogated that are aiding to the severity and magnitude of research and publication failure in Zimbabwean universities. This paper seeks to unravel and unearth the covert and overt challenges that are not too visible but operate at the background of the institutions, presenting even more detrimental effects to novice educators' research for publication progress.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The iceberg tips

Extensive research has been carried out in relation to problems, challenges and difficulties faced by university educators in as far as research for publication is concerned. In this paper, we refer to these well documented challenges metaphorically as the '*iceberg tip*' pointing to their obvious, overt and visible nature. As an example, Amoako, Boahen and Abaidoo, (2021)

explored the challenges faced by higher education institutions' lecturers in Ghana, their study concluded that, notwithstanding their general appreciation of how to write research articles and their abstracts, educators face challenges in production of monographs and book chapters. Deficient information technology skills, weaker foundational knowledge and skills in research methodology, lack of writing experience and lack of mentorship were some of the specific challenges noted as standing in the way of academic publication success for educators at Ghana College of Education (Amoako et al., 2021). Tierney (2012) attributed the weak research capacity in Africa as a whole to lack of adequate research capabilities, infrastructure and facilities, lack of funding needed to make lecturers active beneficiaries of global knowledge, serious lack of staff to adapt and generate knowledge and innovate. Research skills deficiency challenges goes beyond Africa, however, most institutions in developed countries have capacity, infrastructure and resources advantage, as compared to their African counterparts, which allow them to address the these skills gaps as part of their initial training programs. As an example, a number of institutions in developed countries, including the University of Roehampton offer a Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education course to its early-career academics with particular focus on equipping the new lecturers with action research and teaching capabilities (Hong et al., 2021).

Zimbabwe as an African developing country, has an equal share of academic research for publication challenges some of which can be identified, among others, as including lack of computer literacy skills for research, lack of necessary induction and training, research not given space and time allocation that corresponds with the emphasis and value attached to it as universities allocate more time to lecture theatre activities, few local reputable academic publishers, and poor and unrealisable internet connectivity (Majoni, 2014). The challenge of too much workload is a perennial characteristic of newer and small universities whose manpower in the form of academic staff is still lean with their students' enrolment numbers ballooning without a proportional educator increment. This mismatch between numbers of students and lecturers explains the poor student to lecturer ratio characterising Zimbabwean universities. Class size is one of the main problems in higher educational institutions of most developing nations. The President of Ghana's committee on review of education reforms share the assertion that "quality of teaching, learning and research is adversely affected by the high student-teacher ratio" (Republic of Ghana, 2002, p. 19). Too much workload is a product of both the number of teaching modules allocated per educator as well as the class population. This prevails against the backdrop of Finn (1999) who proclaimed that small classes should be the cornerstone of education policy. The teaching workload will already be burdensome to educators before factoring in university service activities (committee activities involvement) and community engagement responsibilities which are mandatory parts of the lecturer's job descriptions.

Covert challenges

Boundaries of Inclusivity in university publication teams and subgroups.

New members joining higher education institutions and the profession usually find it very difficult to join and fit in the existing publication teams and collaboration groups. The existing seasoned educators usually have solid, unbreakable and very difficult- to- join teams with defined roles such as data analyst, accounting related information contributor, human resource content specialist, psychology area reference point. It is thus very difficult for a novice lecturer to find a role in this publishing syndicate. Dobusch (2020) indicated that organisations thrive on inclusivity and no one should be left behind if organisations are to succeed, and, inclusivity in research for publication cannot be overemphasised. McLeod (2019) reiterated that interaction between a skilful tutors and the novice or learners create room for learner observation and practice. Construction of boundaries of exclusion shoots down on Vygotsky's (1934) zone of proximal development tenet which encourages continuous interaction of the more knowledgeable other (MKO) and the novice. The university organisation is composed of heterogeneous and diversified groups of employees in terms of expertise, knowledge, experience, gender, social and financial status, just to mention a few. The aforementioned differences should be celebrated and the thrust of inclusion agenda should be to consider and take everyone aboard on matters that concerns institutional bottom-line including research for publication. Dobusch (2020) also bemoan exclusion in organisations which is evidenced by 'the other autistic and inept' label identifying other people in the organisations against the non-boundary and inclusive arrangements which should characterize organisations in general and academic institutions in particular.

Free rider case and sucker's effect.

Seasoned educators who are more familiar with the system and publishing dynamics might sometimes consider the new entrant to be a research *tabula rasa* who do not have anything to offer at the publication syndicate due of lack of experience. The seasoned educators knowledgeable about research for publication might avoid the novice researcher due to what Schnake (1991) identified as social loafing, which is a deleterious effect on task accomplishment. Individual performance was also found by Kravitz and Martin (1986) to decrease as group size increases. This could be the major reason why the MKO exclude the junior lecturers, among other reasons. The Ringelmann Effect (Steiner, 1972) which explains the problems of coordination and lack of timing of doing the activity, could also be a justification for exclusion of the novice from the publication involvement by the seniors. Novices perceive seasoned colleagues as excluding them, keeping their doors shut, inhibiting networks of joining their formidable teams and regarding them as free riders. Punishment and exclusion deter free riding and invokes higher level of corporation and joint effort from would-be free riders (Price et al., 2002). Whilst novice researchers are confronted with

punitive and exclusive tendencies from their senior researchers, these unfavourable treatments can be serendipitous as they can be capitalised on to take a solo research publishing trial and error journey until one becomes a perfect and celebrated writer. If the new researchers are included in the publication team none of the senior researchers will be patient enough to accord them opportunity to learn meaningfully, and be independent researchers of the future. Vuong (2019) reiterate that freshly-minded and new researcher need to be exposed to the long awaited, harsh and rigorous peer review battles so that their quality of thinking and writing is repeatedly questioned until it passes the celebrated writer litmus test

Publication demands hyperbolization

Junior educators feel timid and shunned away by the enumerated and exaggerated technical and financial demands of research shared by those already in the field (senior research fellows) and because he/she is without proper understanding of the activity concedes and kowtows to the informational hyperbolization. In Vietnam, this stereotypical image of the academic ivory tower which was created by old researchers is fading away (Vuong, 2019). Inflation of requirements for research publication was one way the old researchers would adopt to guard and secure non-entry of other would-be researchers. In America, literature reveal how black women fought odds and demanded space as students and asserted their voices as educators despite such barriers as discrimination, violence and oppressive campus polices and this contributed significantly to the development of higher education systems in the United States (Baker, 2008). In similar vein, novice lecturers in developing countries such as Zimbabwe should pull down the ivory tower through working together and on their own and produce quality research outcomes against falsified and hyperbolized research demands by their senior research fellows.

Senior educators stepping on the novice's publishing confidence.

Sound and sense-making research suggestions if brushed aside, disregarded and not taken up strips away the confidence of the novice researcher. The pre-conceived mentality of research incapability of the novice lecturer by the seasoned colleagues leads to non-acceptability of research contribution. The most celebrated assistance offered by the More-Knowledgeable-Other (MKO) to the novice in any discipline was to allow the less knowledgeable to stand on the shoulders of the knowledgeable giants. When a student in the zone of proximal development for a certain task provision of appropriate assistance gives the learner sufficient boost to accomplish the task. The mere presence of an individual with more skills and competencies beyond that of the novice scaffolds and supports the learner (Alpert, 2014). Progress in any field of life is dependant primarily on the less capable to acquire experience through standing on the shoulders who have worked and interacted with the matters before (Hilborn & Liermann, 1998). Hong et al. (2021) notes that associate professors and senior professors must also mentor or cooperate with the novice in

applying for scientific research projects, and guide through to the writing and publishing of more than one academic or teaching research paper. Even growth and development of novice teachers is achieved through mentorship growth (Geeraerts et al., 2018). Sir Isaac Newton, as quoted in Scotchmer (1991) remarked that "If I have seen far, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." Research for publication is an activity that succeeds through support, tutorship and mentorship from the giants who have walked the journey longer a time and more rigorously before. Problem statement formulation, conceptual model formulation and statistical data presentation and analysis for example the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), and the use of statistical packages such as 'R' all require the quantitative gurus to take the novices through. Vuong (2019) emphasizes the obligation of seasoned research colleagues to prepare younger researchers for a long academic journey of research and publication.

Competition superseding collaboration

Despite all the functional aspects associated with competition in science which include improvement and advancement in innovation, increase in university research productivity (Anderson et al., 2007), and independent multiple discovery which are incorporated into the current scientific body of knowledge (Hagstrom, 1974) but no matter what gains competition derive, its dark side is more detrimental to research progress. Rivalry and antagonism as Anderson et al., (2007) pointed out, are sensational instances of personal injury. These effects of competition suffocate collaboration, of which it is the strongest foot forward towards achieving more. Literature indicates that in the teaching function, teacher collaboration particularly the mentoring of newly qualified teachers by experienced teachers, has proven important in helping newly qualified teachers to cope with their work as novice teachers benefit from involving themselves in collaborative teaching (Ginns & Watters, 1996; Yost, 2006). Collaborative and supportive superiors are critical pillars for novice educators to kneel on for perceived high self-efficacy achievement on the later (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014). In as much as the level of collegial and superior support and collaboration offered to novice teacher has a positive influence on their output, and so can collaboration and collegiality in research output lead to more research papers being achieved by the novice researchers. Henson (2001) notes that participation in research projects with senior colleagues as a strategy for professional development has a positive impact on the coping mechanisms adopted by juniors. Studies of challenging movements of novice teachers, conclude that educators tend to solve their problems by benefiting from the knowledge and experience of their senior colleagues, and also found that working in groups, rather than being alone, provided novice researchers with the possibility of conducting analytical dialogue with their partners and enhanced the coding process (Åge & Gustavsson, 2016; Çakmak et al., 2019). In similar vein, the climate and practice of collaboration (publication syndicate approach), has no immediate substitute in as far as novice educator's research output is concerned.

The emphasis on research output for university ranking (institutions) is miniaturised at lecturer level (individual contribution) to determine and offer salient research capability indices/index. Silent competition obtaining in university workspaces, closes the door for collaboration and junior educators are left at loss of research association, including mentorship. Negative competition should not find space at institutions of higher learning where knowledge creation is the core activity, instead, systems should encourage knowledge sharing by academics as the academia treat publishing as an act of responsibility and duty for every university educator. The novice researcher in a majority of cases would take the research journey in solo, with obvious effects of failure to meet the minimum number of publications required, particularly for tenure and promotion purposes or failure to meet high impact publishers' standards. Sub groups may get to prop up which in turn thwart the spirit of continuous inquiry in research language.

The academia is a highly fenced territory

In light of the fact that Zimbabwean universities are considerably few in number, junior lecturer find themselves absorbed by either the same universities they were schooled or co-working with their previous /former lecturers., When they join a team of their previous lecturers, these seasoned academics still consider these new entrants as their students; the old lenses are difficult to configure To them, the novice is not a fellow lecturer and colleague, but their old-new product/student. The 'looking down upon' syndrome is very rampant, and often discouraging for the junior colleague.

Conceptual illustration of covert and overt challenges facing novice lecturers

In this paper, the researchers hypothesised the novice university educator's emphasised and overt research for publication challenges as a tip of the iceberg. The greater proportion and most detrimental challenges appear gloomy, somewhat concealed and usually stay hibernated in the shadow and background of the corridors of higher education institutions systems. The conceptual framework and research model of this study can best be explained by the iceberg pictorial depiction below (figure 1), where the iceberg's underneath or bottom's (hidden beneath the surface) influence on research progress is greater than the iceberg tip which is visible (the significantly visible), overt and too obvious. The underneath is the jinx of the matter with much contribution on derailing the novice educator's tenure and promotion requirements. This paper seeks to unravel and unearth the poignant iceberg bottom.
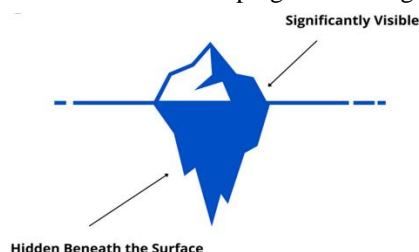

Figure 1: Pictorial illustration of the iceberg concept

III. METHODOLOGY

In this paper, the researchers adopted a qualitative design, mainly aimed at addressing the novice university educator's perspective of research for publication covert challenges. Considering the nature of the study, the researchers considered the qualitative methodology as the best approach as it permits full exploration of the thoughts and feelings of the participant, which helps significantly in interpretation (giving meaning and sense) of responses. The qualitative methodology also allows room for further probing with the goal to further understand the participants' perspectives (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Research participants

Participants for this study were drawn from Zimbabwe's public and private universities. For this study, the researchers define novice educators as junior university lecturers within their first three years of joining the academic industry. The three years mark was motivated by a common clause in Zimbabwe universities 'appointments and promotion' ordinances, which stipulates that academic and teaching personnel are employed on a probation basis for a minimum period of 3 (three) years, after which they will be eligible for tenure consideration subject to satisfying their teaching, research and community service requirements. On the criteria for evaluating satisfactory research, the ordinances specifically require the applicants to produce evidence of at least 5 peer reviewed academic research publications. The population and sample frame consisted of novice lecturers of below three years of service and serving probation at the four purposely selected universities (two public and two private). Snowballing technique was used to select the participants for this study and a sample of 120 novice lecturers was used.

Data collection

For data collection, the researchers made use of interviews and focus group discussions. The interviews and focus group discussions proved to be quicker, efficient and accurate means of soliciting responses from the selected novice lecturers. More so, data on the covert and shadowy challenges and difficulties bedevilling novice educators was not readily available and could be acquired more quickly and efficiently through conducting in-depth interviews and group discussions which allow researchers to further probe the participants in the interest of understanding these deep rooted causes. This proved a convenient way of collecting primary data needed for the study.

Data analysis

During data analysis, the researchers followed the generalised process as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) which involves the conversion of field notes transcribed by the researchers and ranking the information obtained in terms of preferences. The researchers firstly coded the data with established patterns and themes in line with the conceptualised ice berg framework (categorising between overt and covert challenges). The focus group discussions and interview transcripts were analysed in line with the generalised and

specific views of discussants. By reading through all the transcripts, the researchers obtained a grasp of all the key issues raised and arranged them in a logical outline, as advocated by Creswell (1998). The researchers then labelled the data components. This inductive process narrowed the data into fewer themes, allowing identification of overlapping and redundant data.

IV. FINDINGS

Challenges encountered by novice lecturers

Upon being asked the nature of challenges encountered within their pathway in their research journey, the majority highlighted a quantum of them, bulk of them being easily classified within the broad overt and covert clusters as conceptualised and discussed under literature review. One female novice from one of the public universities in the capital city had the following to say:

> "Research has never been a walk in the park for me. I am a new entrant to both the university system and without someone holding my hand throughout the process I have taken more time peeping in the darkness. I really do not know if my seasoned counterparts know how much I require them in this research activity. For an amateur like me, who is coming from a non-research background, my research capabilities are only limited to basic aspects when publications into my university only recognises Scopus indexed journals. Surely this is a big challenge to me"

Copying strategies employed by novice lecturers

The novice lecturer where asked how they are coping with challenges they are facing as far as research is concerned. They indicated that they are fighting their way out through joining international research platforms which impart knowledge and skills on how to publish and how to write grand winning proposals. One novice lecturer of one and half years of public university service had this to tell the researchers:

> "I am relying on international online platforms a well as our university's research seminars and symposia. I have also enrolled for a Post graduate Diploma in Higher and Tertiary Education with a local private university which has a module on research publication and journal article writing. One of requirements of their research publication journal article writing module is for me to write a publishable manuscript under the assistance of a lecturer who is my supervisor, and article co-author upon completion of the article. While the post graduate pedagogical study's main objective is to make me a good educator, the learning experience has also enhanced my publishing abilities. I am three quarter way towards being an independent journal articles writer"

The bulk of responses given by the novice lectures pertaining to how they are coping with challenges they are facing with regards to research for publication, indicate that little or no effort is being put by the more knowledgeable other to deal with the zone of proximal development. The novices are battling it alone. There are no shoulders for novice lectures to step on so that they can see better the research for publication path ahead of them.

Reactions by novice lecturers when senior academics (Professors and Doctors) in their field show up on their research work and demand first authorship

When the novice researchers were asked how they felt if Doctors and Professors in their field show up to demand first authorship on their research work, a few indicated that they would appreciate to have the senior researches superimpose themselves as fist authors of their manuscripts. Those who agreed indicated that the publishers have higher chance of accepting with no much reviewer comments research work whose first authors have academically decorated titles such as professors and doctors. A greater number who denied indicated that it is very difficult to formulate a convincing research problem as novice researcher and this means more time will be required before they have a journal article which they are fist authors. One female novice lecturer from University C had this to say:

> "Tenure and senior lectureship promotion all require that you have a good research output. For me to secure permanent employment, the requirement is that I achieve at least five journal articles within my three years of probation and my first authorship on the journals articles is even more important for senior lectureship and professorship promotion. This then means that if the first authorship of my journal article is taken away, I feel deprived of senior lectureship promotion"

Perceptions on the benefits of collaboration in research

When asked about the benefits of research collaboration, all the novice lectures were all in agreement to the fact that collaboration was beneficial to them. They all indicated that teamwork was the right foot forward towards achieving not only the adequate number of articles but also achieving the best quality of manuscript which get accepted in high impact journals. A male novice marketing lecturer from a private university who had served for three years and awaiting response for his tenure application had this to say:

> "I have exceeded the five required publications due to collaboration with other junior members from other universities. Our publication teams composed of individuals who belonged to different departments. A collaborated and multi-disciplinary article or book chapter's knowledge is fluid and runs across many departments and therefore attracts the attention of a wider readership which improves the articles' citations. It is not very easy to secure senior partners to collaborate with. As you are new to the system, senior lecturers are not yet confident with your input and it takes your effort to prove that you have something to bring at the research table for you to be collaborated with. I was side-lined and avoided for publication activities by my senior counterparts, only

for them to find my published work in the university repository"

Another female Human Resource Management novice lecturer from one public university indicated that collaboration is the winning formula which does not have any substitute especially for new entrants to the research for publication journey. She bemoaned the often perceived tendency by journal article reviewers to deny and throw away articles whose authorship is not decorated with doctoral and professorship titles. She indicated that some editors somewhat have a tendency of looking down upon manuscripts which are written by junior writers and encouraged the unexperienced writers to incorporate doctors and professors in their teams.

Perceptions on what novice educators consider as the most pressing issues with publications

"Writing a paper alone is quite unimaginable. You just become so nervous and afraid that you can't produce publishable material. You find yourself wanting in several respects; which area should I focus on? With whom can I research? Where can I publish my researches? How can I do publish? I think that fear which grips us many a times can be alleviated through mentorship and pronouncement of a shrewd research culture" (Humanities, N1).

"The research journey to establishing an academic footprint is normally characterised by reality shock, I have met with numerous professors and doctors trying to present my new research concept and to my surprise, many a times several of them have claimed to have worked on a similar concept before. In my view, senior researchers ride on their vast research experience to dissect novel researches brought to them by junior researchers. In so doing, they unknowingly thwart the burning desire at the same time destroying the energy for growth vested in their juniors" (Commerce, N2).

"I think Reviewer 2 is the elephant in the room. Their comments normally change the focus, scope and breadth of the paper completely. You end up writing a different paper altogether. They re-write your story. It however depends with your destination choice; with some journals, apart from being too quick to respond, their reviewer comments may not be that texting. But again, journal credibility need not be underscored regardless of its impact factor" (Social Sciences, N3).

Other novice lecturers who were also asked what they consider the most pressing issues with research and publications had interestingly widely varied perceptions. The running thread of issues which most lectures emphasised included senior lecturer's preconceived negative attitudes and perceptions about their junior lecturers' contribution and inexperience with research for publication. This negative counter-research attitude and perception was attributed to the highly fenced nature of academic fraternity in Zimbabwe, especially in the context where the new entrant lecturer gets absorbed by the same institution they attended university education and seek to collaborate with the lecturers who taught them. One second-year lecturer at one private university reiterated that senior lecturers' perception and attitude effect on novice educator's research output and had this to say;

"…the greatest barricade to our research output is neither resource limitation nor the quantum of my workload but negative attitude by the more knowledgeable others towards us, the novice lecturers. Serious efforts need to be made to weed out this perception for enculturation of an accommodative attitude which works in favour of research for publication, especially from combined effort of the seniors and their junior counterparts. Team building activities and sessions may as well go a long way in solving this malaise"

V. DISCUSSION

In this study, the researchers unearthed the covert and hidden behavioural challenges faced by novice lecturers in their research for publication activities as the major stumbling blocks in their endeavour to secure tenure. The study builds on to educational administration and management literature, emphasising the need to cultivate a culture and maintenance of an enabling environment that support mental health and sustainable professional advancement for educators. Study findings indicate that publishing competition obtains at universities and this tend to work against the spirit of collaborative effort. This competition obtains at the backdrop that collaboration with experienced lecturers in writing manuscripts is the best means of helping the novice to produce good quality journal articles on their own. Without senior researcher assistance, the novice lecturer feels disheartened when trying to get their research ideas into practice due to the numerous research demands (Ibrahim et al., 2013). Study findings confirm that lack of support from colleagues has a negative impact on perceived self-efficacy on the educator's function, and is also associated with burnout, and high levels of work-related stress (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014). The researchers conducted this study in the context of Zimbabwe, a Southern African developing country, the study findings however, concur with Western literature which is an indicator that some university research challenges have the same behavioural consequences globally and third world universities' employee behaviour is a behavioural replica of the developed nations' university systems.

As much as novice educators benefit from involving themselves in collaborative teaching (Waters & Ginns, 1997), according to the current study findings, there is no doubt that novice lecturers also have a propensity to immensely benefit out of collaborative research. Competition shoots down on novice lecturer's research for publication endeavour. Substantiating current study findings is the lack of research collaborative support that was also noted as a major setback facing novice researchers in Zambia (Mbewe et al., 2020). This concurrence of collaboration challenges and lack thereof, buttresses the existence of this problem and presents it as a running thread across universities the world over. The

obtaining situation shoots down the merits associated with collaboration. As literature notes, interpersonal research collaboration networks are important for knowledge cross-fertilization and research productivity (Huang, 2014). The egocentric and non-collaborative culture could be born out of competitive mentality by senior academics as they seek to achieve manuscript sole authorship and singular name brand building in the research fraternity. While collaborations were highly rated by participants in this research, Chipeta and Nyambe (2012) underscored it due to non-involvement of other lecturers on either initial stages of the research idea development or discussion of methodology and analysis of data, sometimes due to the dispersed contiguity of lecturers involved (Chipeta & Nyambe, 2012).

Given that together each achieves more in operations and production teams and groups in profit focused organisations, this is also true for research for publication activities in universities and research centres, more manuscripts per head can be achieved through aggregating the total number of publications by the team. The number of collaborators is noted as a strong predictor of publication productivity in research (Lee & Bozeman, 2005). This is a confirmation of one respondent's experience who indicated that he did managed the minimum five publications requirement for securing tenure, out of research collaborations.

Novice lecturers' exclusion tendencies in research for publication activities is another emphasised retard to publication progress by novice university educators. Accommodation and inclusion of new entrant novices and less knowledgeable others reduces the knowledge discrepancy between the knowledgeable senior academics and their novice counterparts. McLeod and Herrington (2017) and Dobusch (2020) pronounced that institutional success is hinged on inclusivity as this creates a conducive platform for learner observation, imitation and practise in line with Bandura's Social learning model (Dobusch, 2021). Experienced teacher involvement was also identified as one of the best principles of novice educator socialisation (Whalen et al., 2019). Exclusion, whether overt or covert, can create serious negative effects on psychological and physical health, as it harms the recipient (Jones et al., 2013). The level of harm, discomfort and anguish caused by exclusivity is even unexplainable as indicated by novice educators whose security of employment is dependent on research output, which is highly dependent on inclusion into already existing research syndicates. The respondents' experiences are also consistent with Mor Barak et al. (2006) who noted that younger workers and those with lower tenure did share the same perception that higher rates of exclusion in organisational activities and informational networks is one reality founding on the ground.

The comments by participants on senior educators trembling upon the novice lecturers' publishing confidence are contrary to what literature indicates should be obtaining at the learning institutions in as far as research promotion is concerned. The senior researchers should offer their shoulders for the less proficient, including novice lecturers, to stand on, if they are to have a clear view of their research path ahead of them. This is in line with Rowe (1990) and Sue (2010) who advocate for confrontational approach on any behavioural and environmental treatment which precipitates and contributes to devaluation of an individuals' contribution.

Innumerable publication requirements which senior academics intimidate their novice counterparts with, are also confirmed by Ibrahim et al (2013) when they mentioned the various issues that novice lecturers need to familiarise with before embarking on research work, which include getting to know the various publishing regulations, filling in all the appropriate forms, choosing the appropriate gateway, and many other commitments.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study aimed at investigating the covert challenges facing novice educators in Zimbabwean higher education institutions. Research for publication has been noted as the most critical pillar determining job security (tenure) and career progression for university lecturers, as compared to other responsibilities like teaching and community service. This huge weight placed on research can be viewed as critical due to its value-relevance in assessment of scholar and institutional rankings. In this regard, this study confirms that most universities perceive research for publication performance as more valuable than the lecture theatre skills and other competencies (Botella, 2005). Majority of related literature sources on challenges facing novice lecturers focus on the most common and easily identifiable factors challenging research output, such as lack of information technology infrastructure and financial support, among other factors (Majoni, 2014). This current study, however, extends and adds on to existing literature by focusing on more hidden factors that are often conceived as posing even more threat to the novice educators' professional security and advancement. Research findings in relation to the hidden and covert challenges are that competition was found to supersede collaboration and this works in detriment to novice educator involvement in research for publication activities. More so, senior academics step on the novice educators' publishing confidence and their research ideas and suggestions are looked down upon and therefore not considered. Some of the covert challenges also identified by novice educators in Zimbabwe include difficulties in joining collaboration teams or groups (Dobusch, 2021), due to negative perception by senior academics towards the ability of the novice members to meaningfully contribute to science (Steiner, 1972), and competition instead of collaboration, among other factors. Free rider case and sucker's effect were also found to be stumbling blocks to research for publication progress as seniors allege social loafing as rampant in those research teams that are largely populated by junior academics (Schnake,1991), which in turn reduces effort and productivity of members working in groups (Kravitz and Martin (1986)

In light of these challenges as identified in related literature, the current study concludes that higher education institutions and

universities the world over, give immense priority to research for publication, as compared to teaching and community service responsibilities (Botella, 2005). As such, universities should place significance on the need to create an enabling environment that supports the same spirit of research for publication, through cultivation of an enabling institutional culture and systems that afford the necessary support to novice educators. A supportive system that is reflective of the relative perceived value placed upon research for publication should be a top priority in Zimbabwean higher education institutions should novice educators be made to achieve the minimum tenure requirements as it all boils down to publication output.

Declaration of interest statement

We declare that there is no conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest associated with this research paper.

REFERENCES

[1] Åge, L. J., & Gustavsson, B. (2016). The art of discovering – experiences of novice researchers. Qualitative Research Journal, 16(2), 125–137. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-04-2015-0024

[2] Alpert, J. S. (2014). Standing on the shoulders of giants. American Journal of Medicine, 127(5), 359–360. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amjmed.2014.01.006

[3] Amoako, I., Boahen, O. E., & Abaidoo, A. (2021). Perceived Challenges of Academic Staff Production of Research Papers in Colleges of Education in Ghana. European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 1(3), 34–40. https://doi.org/10.24018/ejsocial.2021.1.3.39

[4] Anderson, M. S., Ronning, E. A., De Vries, R., & Martinson, B. C. (2007). The perverse effects of competition on scientists' work and relationships. Science and Engineering Ethics, 13(4), 437–461. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11948-007-9042-5

[5] Baker, L. D. (2008). Black women in the ivory tower, 1850–1954: An intellectual history by stephanie y. evans. Souls, 10(2), 179–187. https://doi.org/10.1080/10999940802115518

[6] Botella, J. (2005). Teaching and Research in Higher Education : 2(2).

[7] Çakmak, M., Gündüz, M., & Emstad, A. B. (2019). Challenging moments of novice teachers: survival strategies developed through experiences. Cambridge Journal of Education, 49(2), 147–162. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2018.1476465

[8] Caspersen, J., & Raaen, F. D. (2014). Novice teachers and how they cope. Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 20(2), 189–211. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2013.848570

[9] Chipeta, J., & Nyambe, I. (2012). Publish or perish: Ushering in UNZA-JABS. Journal of Agricultural and Biomedical …, 1(1), 1–4. https://engineering.unza.zm/index.php/JABS/article/view/321

[10] Dobusch, L. (2021). The inclusivity of inclusion approaches: A relational perspective on inclusion and exclusion in organizations. Gender, Work and Organization, 28(1), 379–396. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12574

[11] Esau G. Mbewe, Anderson Hambulo, Dennis Mumba, Vibert Mwiinga, Sophie Kasonde-Ngandu, and S. M.-K. (2020). Publish or Perish: Challenges faced by Academicians in Research Publications at the University of Zambia. Multidisciplinary Journal of Language and Social Sciences Education, 2(2).

[12] Geeraerts, K., Tynjälä, P., & Heikkinen, H. L. T. (2018). Inter-generational learning of teachers: what and how do teachers learn from older and younger colleagues? European Journal of Teacher Education, 41(4), 479–495. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2018.1448781

[13] Ginns, I. S., & Watters, J. J. (1996). Experiences of Novice Teachers: Changes in Self-Efficacy and Their Beliefs about Teaching. Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, 55–80.

[14] Hilborn, R., & Liermann, M. (1998). Standing on the shoulders of giants: learning from experience in fisheries. Reviews in Fish Biology and Fisheries, 8(3), 273–283. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1008877912528

[15] Hong, Y., Abdullah, A., Asimiran, S., & Muhamad, M. M. (2021). How to become experienced? The practice of novice lecturer professional development at a public university. International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 20(10), 117–132. https://doi.org/10.26803/IJLTER.20.10.7

[16] Huang, J. S. (2014). Building Research Collaboration Networks - An Interpersonal Perspective for Research Capacity Building. Journal of Research Administration, 45(2), 89–112. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=110547921&site=ehost-live

[17] Ibrahim, A. B., Mohamad, F., Rom, K. B. M., & Shahrom, S. M. (2013). Identifying Strategies Adopted by Novice Lecturers in the Initial Years of Teaching. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 90, 3–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.07.059

[18] Lee, S., & Bozeman, B. (2005). The impact of research collaboration on scientific productivity. Social Studies of Science, 35(5), 673–702. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312705052359

[19] Majoni, C. (2014). Challenges Facing University Education in Zimbabwe. Greener Journal of Education and Training Studies, 2(1), 020–024. https://doi.org/10.15580/gjets.2014.1.021714111

[20] Mbewe, E. G., Hambulo, A., Mumba, D., Mwiinga, V., Kasonde-Ngandu, S., & Mwanza-Kabaghe, S. (2020). Publish or Perish: Challenges faced by Academicians in Research Publications at the University of Zambia. Multidisciplinary Journal of Language and Social Sciences Education, 2(2).

[21] Mujtaba Alsied, S., & Winis Ibrahim, N. (2017). Exploring Challenges Encountered by EFL Libyan Learners in Research Teaching and Writing. IAFOR Journal of Language Learning, 3(2), 143–158.

[22] Price, M. E., Cosmides, L., & Tooby, J. (2002). Punitive sentiment as an anti-free rider psychological device. Evolution and Human Behavior, 23(3), 203–231. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1090-5138(01)00093-9

[23] Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative research: Data collection, analysis, and management. Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy, 68(3), 226–231. https://doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.v68i3.1456

[24] Vuong, Q. H. (2019). Breaking barriers in publishing demands a proactive attitude. Nature Human Behaviour, 3(10), 1034. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-019-0667-6

[25] Waters, J. J., & Ginns, I. S. (1997). Impact of Course and Program Design Features on the Preparation of Preservice Elementary Science Teachers. The Annual Meeting of the National Association of Research in Science Teaching, 1–18.

[26] Whalen, C., Majocha, E., & Van Nuland, S. (2019). Novice teacher challenges and promoting novice teacher retention in Canada. European Journal of Teacher Education, 42(5), 591–607. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2019.1652906

[27] Yost, D. S. (2006). Reflection and Self-Efficacy: Enhancing the Retention of Qualified Teachers from a Teacher Education Perspective. 33(4), 59–76.