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# THE UGANDAN JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY STUDIES

UGANDA MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE
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# THE UGANDAN JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY STUDIES

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UGANDA MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

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## About UJMPPS

The Ugandan Journal of Management and Public Policy Studies is a multidisciplinary high-quality, open access and double-blind peer-reviewed research journal published by Uganda Management Institute (UMI). The Journal aims to provide an in-depth analysis of developments in public administration, business, management, leadership and public policy as they apply to the public, business firms, private and not-for-profit sectors. The UJMPPS also accepts original theoretical and empirical research papers, literature reviews, book reviews, case studies, analytical and simulation models, and technical notes from researchers, academics, practitioners, professionals, and students worldwide. The UJMPPS has been available in print format with an ISSN of 2078-7049 since 2009. Recently, the journal obtained an online ISSN of 2959-4316; therefore, all upcoming journal issues will be accessible in both print and online formats. The UJMPPS does not charge authors Article Processing Charge (APC) for any of the submissions we receive as we believe quality research should be freely accessible to everyone without any financial barriers.

### Target Audience and Scope

The Journal is an important resource for:

a) Management Development Institutions;
b) Social Science Faculties and Research Institutions;
c) Graduate Teachers and Researchers in Management Sciences;
d) Civil Service Practitioners;
e) Students of Management; and
f) All people interested in the practice of Management

Authors are encouraged to submit papers in areas including but not limited to: Public Administration and Governance, Public-Private Partnerships, Public Sector Innovation, Leadership and Organizational Development, Technology and Innovation Management, Comparative Public Administration, Social Entrepreneurship and Corporate Social Responsibility, Urban Planning and Sustainable Cities, Ethics and Accountability in Public Administration, Sustainable Development and Environmental Policy, Public Policy Analysis and Evaluation, Business Management and Strategy, Education Policy and Administration, Gender and Diversity in the Workplace, Public Financial Management, and Human Resource Management.

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# Editorial Note

We are pleased to present Volume 25, Issue 2 (June 2025) of the Ugandan Journal of Management and Public Policy Studies (UJMPPS). This issue features a collection of high-quality scholarship exploring governance frameworks, reform processes, public–private partnerships, and digitalisation in developing-country contexts. The papers in this issue provide both empirical and theoretical insights into how institutions in Africa are adapting to emerging political, economic, and technological challenges, while striving to improve accountability, transparency, and public service delivery.

The first article, "Trends and Patterns in Public–Private Partnership in Developing Countries: A Bibliometric Analysis," by ***Robert Agowt Komakech, Muhiya Tshombe Lukamba, Thekiso Molokwane, Alex Nduhura, Ivan Kiiza Twinomuhwezi, Pascal Siibi Muloosi and Paddy Mugambe,*** undertakes a bibliometric analysis of 509 Scopus-indexed publications from 1983 to 2023 on PPP in developing countries. The analysis reveals that research on PPP has been steadily increasing since the early 2000s and has identified five main themes: PPP dynamics in developing countries; infrastructure and risk; sustainability and PPP; governance and critical success factors for PPP; and water services and corruption challenges. The article adds to the literature by highlighting the growing importance of risk governance and capacity-building issues in PPP, and by suggesting areas for future research, such as digital innovations (AI, blockchain, IoT), long-term outcomes, and policies and regulatory frameworks that support credible collaboration.

In the second article, "The Decentralisation- Recentralisation Paradox in Uganda's Local Governance: Dissecting the Drivers," ***Peter A. Obicci*** analyses the effects of recentralisation trends on the institutional framework established by the 1997 Local Governments Act. The paper argues that re-centralisation measures have eroded the participatory governance and local oversight intended by decentralisation reforms, leading to diminished citizen engagement and weakened service delivery. The author also suggests that institutional reforms to define mandates, resource allocations, and open governance mechanisms (e.g., participatory budgeting and transparent procurement) could help to rebalance central stewardship with local autonomy and responsiveness.

In the third article by ***Nabukeera Madinah*** titled "Governance of Oil and Gas in Uganda," assess the sector's governance based on the Resource Governance Index (2017–2021). The paper finds that although Uganda has a strong legal and regulatory framework for the sector, there is no statistically significant improvement in value realisation, revenue management, and the enabling environment, which underscores an enforcement gap in governance. The article also recommends legal reforms to restrict the discretionary powers of the minister of energy and mines, full publication of contracts, domestication of EITI principles, and enhanced human rights and environmental safeguards.

The final paper in this issue, "Technostress and ICT Adoption among Senior Managers in Ugandan Public Universities," by ***Mary Basaasa Muhenda***, utilises an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design to establish that technostress is multidimensional and that these dimensions differentially influence ICT adoption: while techno-complexity discourages use, overload and invasion appear to have a more positive but paradoxical relationship with use as a coping mechanism. The article also contributes to the literature by introducing stressor-specific adoption pathways and by offering stress-mitigation measures such as training, user-centred design, work boundary policies, and resilient digital infrastructure.

We would like to sincerely thank the authors, anonymous reviewers, and editorial board members for their contributions and service. We also take this opportunity to remind our readers and contributors that we are now inviting papers for **Volume 26, Number 1,** scheduled for publication in **December 2025.** We look forward to your continued support and contributions to advancing management and public policy knowledge.

We are grateful for your continued engagement with the UJMPPS!

Sincerely,

**Chief Editor**

Assoc. Prof. Lazarus Nabaho


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# Trends and Patterns in Public-Private Partnership in Developing Countries: A Bibliometric Analysis

Robert Agwot Komakech*[1], Muhiya Tshombe Lukamba[2], Thekiso Molokwane[3], Alex Nduhura[1], Ivan Kiiza Twinomuhwezi[1], Pascal Siibi Muloosi[4] & Paddy Mugambe[1]
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## Abstract

*This article aims to analyse the trends, patterns, and development of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in developing economies over the years. This study employs bibliometric techniques using data extracted from the Scopus database. Five hundred nine (509) articles were carefully selected and examined using performance analysis, science mapping, and network visualization tools (VOSviewer) to identify trends, collaborative networks, and thematic clusters in PPP research. The research shows that interest in PPPs in developing countries has grown significantly since the early 2000s. Additionally, five (5) thematic clusters emerged: the dynamics of PPPs in developing nations; infrastructure and risk management; sustainable development; governance and critical success factors; and challenges related to water supply and corruption. The study indicates that PPPs are vital for closing infrastructure gaps, while effective risk management, governance, and capacity building are crucial. These insights are relevant to policymakers and practitioners, emphasising PPPs as a strategic approach for closing infrastructure gaps and enhancing service delivery in developing countries. As a result, balanced collaboration between the public and private sectors is essential to tackling challenges in these areas. The study enhances the theoretical understanding of PPPs by identifying key success factors and governance frameworks that promote their effectiveness. It also offers a new bibliometric perspective on PPP research in developing nations, thereby addressing a significant gap in the current literature.*

***Keywords:*** *Public-Private Partnership (PPP), Developing Countries, Bibliometric Analysis, Risk Management, Sustainability*

## 1.0 Introduction

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are viewed as a strategic tool for infrastructure development and public service delivery in many countries. Created during the public sector reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, PPPs were seen as an innovative way to meet growing demand for better infrastructure and efficient public services amid limited government financial resources (Broadbent & Laughlin, 2003; Hodge & Greve, 2007; Chileshe, Kavishe & Edwards, 2023). Studies show that PPPs are helpful when the government lacks enough resources and capabilities to handle large projects (Lam, 1996; Buse & Walt, 2000; Leigland, 2018; Osei-Kyei, & Chan, 2015; Ameyaw & Chan, 2015; Ameyaw & Chan, 2016; Bayliss & Van Waeyenberge, 2018; Ahmadabadi & Heravi, 2019; Muhammad & Johar, 2019). This partnership combines various resources, expertise, and innovation essential for economic growth and development (Jamali, 2004; Zhang, 2005; Leigland, 2018; Ameyaw & Chan, 2016). As a result, the concept and practice of PPPs have evolved to suit various economic, social, and political contexts worldwide.

In essence, developed countries have widely utilized PPPs to build and manage transportation infrastructure such as ports, bridges, railways, roads, airports, and tunnels, along with healthcare facilities, hotels, and schools. These partnerships leverage private sector efficiency to enhance public services (Osborne, 2000; Klijn & Teisman, 2003; Grimsey & Lewis, 2004; Yescombe, 2007). There is significant variation in PPP implementation across regions due to differing market challenges and opportunities. For example, the United Kingdom led the way with successful PPP projects through the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), establishing a model for other European nations (Osborne, 2000; Shaoul, 2005; Yescombe, 2007; Kivleniece & Quelin, 2012). Hodge and Greve (2007) and Broadbent and Laughlin (2003) also note that North America has focused on transportation and municipal services, including initiatives such as the Trans-Canada Highway and the Chicago Skyway. Meanwhile, India and China rely on PPPs to address major infrastructure gaps in transportation and urban development (Zhang, 2005; Liang & Rowlinson, 2010; Farquharson, Mästle, & Yescombe, 2011; Xiong, Whetsell, Zhao, & Cheng, 2021; Asumadu, et al., 2023). These regional and contextual differences emphasize the flexibility of the PPP model to various economic environments and development needs.

Conceptually, PPPs are defined as "collaborative arrangements between the public and private sectors to finance, construct, and operate infrastructure such as public transportation systems, parks, and schools" (Koppenjan & Enserink, 2009; Hodge & Greve, 2007; Hai, Toan & Tam, 2022). PPPs leverage the advantages of both sectors to combine private sector capital and operational efficiencies with the government's regulatory oversight and protection of the public's interests (Klijn & Teisman, 2003; Grimsey & Lewis, 2004; Yescombe, 2007; Kwofie, Afram,

& Botchway, 2016; Leigland, 2018). The partnership enables the implementation of large-scale infrastructure projects while promoting innovation and accountability. However, PPPs require careful balancing to address potential conflicts of interest and ensure fair risk distribution, which remains an important area for further research and policy development.

In developing countries, PPPs are vital for closing the infrastructure gap and promoting sustainable development. Governments in these nations have limited financial resources, which restrict their ability to fund large-scale infrastructure projects (Guasch, 2004; Zhang, 2005; Estache, 2006; Babatunde Perera, Zhou & Udeaja, 2015; Chileshe et al., 2023; Komakech & Ombati, 2023). Therefore, PPPs serve as an effective tool to attract private sector investment and professionals for building and maintaining public infrastructure such as roads, hotels, bridges, water supply systems, hospitals, and energy projects (Ameyaw & Chan, 2013; Ameyaw & Chan, 2015a; Osei-Kyei, & Chan, 2015; Koppenjan & Enserink, 2009; Nduhura et al., 2022; Kavishe & Chileshe, 2022; Asumadu, Quaigrain, Owusu-Manu, …, 2023; Komakech & Ombati, 2023). Buse and Walt (2000) and Jamali (2004) highlighted successful PPP projects in developing countries like the Lekki Toll Road in Nigeria and the Queen Mamohato Memorial Hospital in Lesotho, demonstrating that PPPs can deliver high-quality infrastructure and services in resource-limited settings.

Some scholars argue that PPPs benefit both the public and private sectors by combining public oversight with private sector efficiency and innovation (Grimsey & Lewis, 2004; Hodge & Greve, 2007; Yescombe, 2007; Koppenjan & Enserink, 2009; Farquharson, Mästle & Yescombe, 2011; Ahmadabadi & Heravi, 2019). However, there is limited comprehensive knowledge about how these dynamics unfold in different political and economic contexts, especially in developing countries where institutional capacities and regulatory frameworks may be weak. Although the use of PPPs to address critical development challenges in developing countries has increased, the understanding of how they are implemented and their effectiveness remains limited and underexplored in existing studies, which mainly focus on isolated case studies or specific aspects like risk management and key success factors (Jin & Doloi, 2008; Spielman et al., 2011; Ameyaw & Chan, 2013; Heravi & Hajihosseini, 2012; Chang, 2013; Babatunde et al., 2015; Ameyaw & Chan, 2015b; Ahmadabadi & Heravi, 2019; Osei-Kyei & Chan, 2017). The fragmented nature of previous research restricts the ability to develop a comprehensive understanding of broader trends and patterns in public-private partnership (PPP) research.

Yet, PPPs present an opportunity to leverage private sector expertise and capital to meet public infrastructure needs, especially when government resources are limited (Ameyaw & Chan, 2015a; Osei-Kyei & Chan, 2017a). While Asumadu et al. (2023) examined these elements, their insights were fragmented, and they did not provide a comprehensive perspective. The success of PPPs depends on various factors, including governance structures, risk allocation mechanisms, and stakeholder engagement processes. Additionally, studies by Kavishe and Chileshe (2022) and Kukah, Badu, Owusu-Manu, and Edwards (2023) emphasized the importance of international cooperation in enhancing PPP outcomes. However, the ways these collaborations manifest in developing countries and their effects on research productivity and innovation remain poorly understood. To address this gap, this research employed bibliometric analysis to explore four key questions: To address these knowledge gaps, this research uses bibliometric analysis to explore four key research questions: (i) RQ1: How has the volume of PPP research in developing countries changed over time? (ii) RQ2: Which articles and journals are most influential in studying PPPs in developing countries? (iii) RQ3: What is the level of collaboration among researchers and countries in PPP studies across developing nations? and (iv) RQ4: What are the emerging themes and topics in PPP research within developing countries? The article is organized as follows: (a) introduction; (b) research methods and protocols outlining the bibliometric approach; (c) presentation of results (covering RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4); (d) discussion; and (e) finally conclusion, contributions of the study, and future research directions.

## 2.0 Research Methods and Materials

This study primarily employed the bibliometric method/analysis. Researchers (such as Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Kumar, Sharma & Salo, 2019; Fontoura & Coelho, 2020; Linnenluecke et al., 2020; Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, Pandey, & Lim, 2021; Mageto, 2022; Komakech, Ombati & Kikwatha, 2024) frequently apply this approach to examine publication trends, authors' work, and influential scientific publications within a specific field. Initially, it was used in library and information science as a statistical tool to analyse library books and communication (Kumar et al., 2019; Kirby, 2023). This method helps identify gaps and emerging concepts in a specific area of research, providing valuable insights for future studies. Bibliometric analysis has become increasingly popular in business research fields such as logistics (Mageto, 2022), finance (Goyal & Kumar, 2021; Bartolacci, Caputo & Soverchia, 2020; Kumar et al., 2019), supply chain (Farooque, Zhang, Thürer, Qu, & Huisingh, 2019; Fontoura & Coelho, 2020; Komakech et al., 2024), and Smart Factory (Strozzi, Colicchia, Creazza & Noè, 2017). For instance, a study by Donthu et al. (2021) indicates that the number of bibliometric studies in business and social sciences increased from 437 in 2010 to 1950 in 2020, with an annual growth rate of 10-16%. However, despite the crucial role of PPPs in addressing infrastructure and public service challenges in developing countries, there are no bibliometric studies on PPP research in these nations. This reveals a significant gap that this study aimed to address.

Donthu et al. (2021) describe bibliometrics as a popular and thorough method used by researchers and decision-makers to explore and analyse large volumes of scientific data. Bibliometric analysis includes two main techniques: (a) performance analysis, which offers a descriptive overview of research components to understand the field's development, identify research gaps, and suggest future directions (Mageto, 2022; Donthu et al., 2021; Cobo, López-Herrera, Herrera-Viedma, & Herrera, 2011; Farooque et al., 2019; Komakech et al., 2024); and (b) science mapping, which investigates structural connections and intellectual interactions among research elements using methods like co-citation analysis, citation analysis, co-word analysis, bibliographic coupling, and co-authorship analysis (Linnenluecke et al., 2020; Donthu et al., 2021; Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Van Eck & Waltman, 2010; Cobo et al., 2011). These techniques are further developed through three network analysis approaches: network metrics, visualization, and clustering (Mageto, 2022; Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). As a result, researchers follow the four steps outlined by Donthu et al. (2021) to perform bibliometric analysis. These steps include:

**Step 1: Define the Aims and Scope**

The overall goal of this study was to provide a comprehensive overview of PPP research in developing countries, with a focus on identifying trends and patterns. All papers published in Scopus up to 2023 were included in the analysis to ensure relevant literature was not excluded. Scopus was selected as the primary database for this bibliometric analysis because it is a well-established, reputable source that contains reliable academic articles from various disciplines. Farooque et al. (2019) emphasize that Scopus covers more papers than other leading databases, such as Web of Science and Google Scholar. Additionally, previous and current research by scholars such as Farooque et al. (2019), Mageto (2022), Donthu et al. (2021), Kumar et al. (2019), Mokhtar, Genovese, Brint & Kumar (2019), Danese et al. (2020), and Komakech et al. (2024) indicates that Scopus is often the central database used for bibliometric analyses in business and management research. The scope of this content includes examining the number of research articles published (RQ1), identifying the most impactful articles and journals (RQ2), conducting network analysis of authors and countries (RQ3), and uncovering emerging themes in PPP research within developing countries (RQ4).

**Step II: Choosing the Techniques for Bibliometric Analysis**

The second step of the bibliometric analysis involved selecting suitable methods that aligned with the research questions and objectives. Once the specific goals of the analysis, such as mapping research trends and identifying influential works and collaboration patterns, are defined, and the choices of Scopus and period made, appropriate methods are applied. Scopus data was used to evaluate the number of research articles, with science mapping and network analysis employed. The performance analysis assessed research productivity and impact, including publication counts and citations (Donthu et al., 2021; Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Komakech et al., 2024). Science mapping was also used to examine relationships between research elements through co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, co-word analysis, and co-authorship analysis. Finally, network analysis and visualization tools created visual representations of these relationships, illustrating nodes and thematic clusters with VOSviewer. Literature also notes that network analysis is commonly used to explore collaboration patterns among authors and institutions (Komakech et al., 2024; Van Eck & Waltman, 2023; Mageto, 2022; Donthu et al., 2021; Luo et al., 2018; Van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

**Step III: Data Collection and Cleaning**

The data was obtained from the Scopus database using a search strategy that included the keywords "PPP," OR "public private partnership," OR "public-private partnership," OR "public private partnerships," "developing countries," OR "developing nation," OR "low developing countries." This search yielded 673 documents, which were later refined. Articles published after 2023 (07 records), those publications not in English (05 records), and those categorized as "in the press" (19 records) were excluded. Additionally, only journal articles were considered (122 excluded), but all subject areas were included because PPPs are multidisciplinary. The titles, abstracts, and keywords of each paper were then examined, and 11 articles were excluded because they either lacked relevant keywords or were duplicate entries of existing records. The authors carefully cleaned the data to remove duplicates and errors. This process resulted in a dataset of 509 articles for analysis. The bibliometric data, including author names, publication titles, journals, abstracts, keywords, author affiliations, sources, and citations, were exported and saved in BibExcel as a CSV comma-delimited file for analysis with VOSviewer. Scholars (Van Eck & Waltman, 2023; Mageto, 2022; Donthu et al., 2021; Luo et al., 2018) argue that VOSviewer enables precise data analysis and straightforward visualization of results.

**Step IV: Run the Analysis and Report the Findings**

This is the final step of the bibliometric analysis. The analysis aimed to gain valuable insights into PPP research in developing countries. It was conducted using BibExcel and Microsoft Excel, while science mapping and network analysis were performed with VOSviewer. VOSviewer was preferred over other tools like Pajek and Gephi, as it supports three key visual mapping outputs: overlay, density and network visualizations. Van Eck and Waltman (2023) explain that VOSviewer was mainly designed to analyse bibliometric networks, creating, visualizing, and exploring maps based on any network data. This analysis provides a detailed understanding of the research, helps identify significant contributions, and highlights potential future research areas. It also shapes conclusions, guides recommendations, and promotes domain-specific knowledge (Komakech et al., 2024). The results were interpreted to provide insights into the development of PPP research in developing countries, based on an analysis of the network's nodes and links. Each colour in the network signifies a thematic cluster. These clusters group related keywords, thereby identifying specific themes within the research field. Each cluster's nodes indicate thematic areas, while the links reveal their interrelationships, an approach supported by prior bibliometric analyses and science mapping literature (Cobo et al., 2011; Zupic & Čater, 2015; Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Kumar, Sharma, & Salo, 2019; Donthu et al., 2021; Kirby, 2023; Komakech et al., 2024). The subsequent section details and interprets the study's key findings.

## 3.0 Presentation of Results

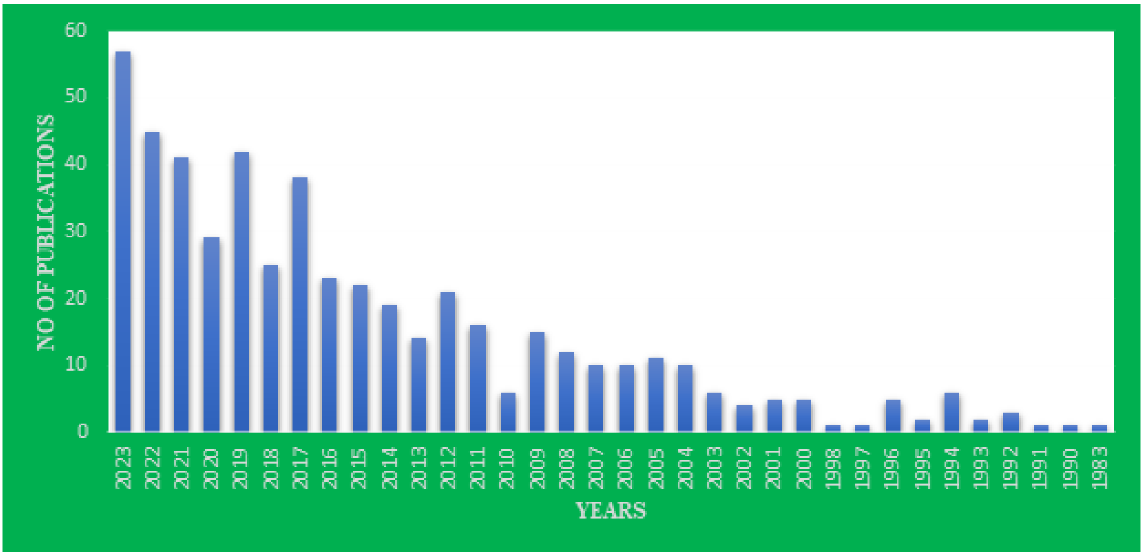
### 3.1 PPPs Publication Trends from 1983-2023

Our first research question (RQ1) sought to identify the publication trends of PPP studies in developing countries.

Graph 1 illustrates the publication trends from 1983 to 2023

Graph 1 shows the trend in publications on PPPs in developing countries from 1983 to 2023. From the graph, we see limited research activity (23 publications) between 1983 and the mid-1990s. There are only a few publications in notable years like 1983, 1990, and 1991, likely due to low academic attention or awareness of PPPs in developing countries. Between 2000 and 2007, the number of publications gradually rose to a peak of 15 in 2009. This period aligns with the increased recognition of PPPs as a viable option for infrastructure development and public service delivery in developing countries through New Public Management (NPM). It indicates growing academic and policy interest in understanding the benefits and challenges of PPPs.

**Graph 1: PPPs Publication Trends from 1983-2023**



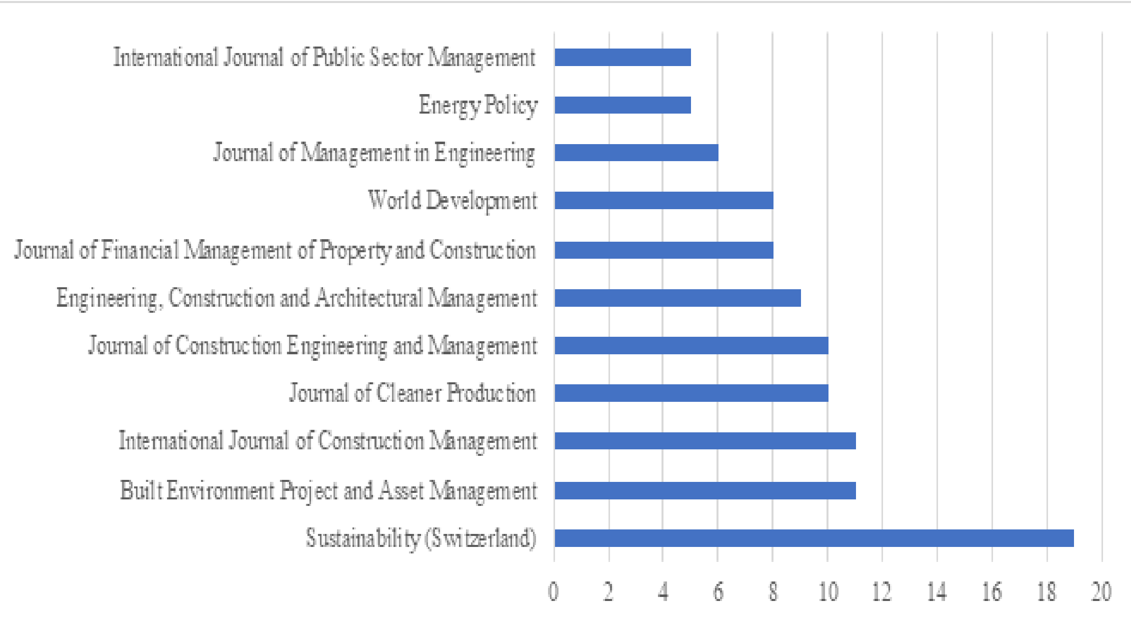

*Source: Extracted from Scopus Data, March 2024,* *N=509*

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, research activity from 2020 to 2023 remained substantial. For instance, 2023 recorded the highest number of publications at 57, followed by 45 in 2022 and 41 in 2021. The increasing number of publications over the past two decades indicates that PPPs are now recognized as a valuable tool for infrastructure development and public service delivery. The increase in publications in recent years underscores the importance of research and collaboration in shaping the role of PPPs in post-pandemic recovery and sustainable development.

### 3.2 Top 11 Influential Journals

Our second research question (RQ2a) identifies the most influential journals in studying PPPs in developing countries. Graph 2 shows an analysis of journal contributions to PPP research in these countries from 1983 to 2023.

**Graph 2: The Top 11 Journals Contributing to the Study**




*Source: Extracted from Scopus Data, March 2024,* *N=283*

Out of 509 papers, 22.0% (102) were published in just 11 journals. Leading the field is Sustainability (Switzerland) with 19 publications, followed by Built Environment Project and Asset Management and International Journal of Construction Management, each with 11 publications. The Journal of Cleaner Production and Journal of Construction Engineering and Management each recorded at least 10 publications during the study period. Energy Policy and International Journal of Public Sector Management had at least five (5) publications each. The distribution of these publications shows that PPP research is complex and multidisciplinary, covering areas such as sustainability, construction management, financial viability, engineering, policy, and governance. The wide range of topics and numerous publications in these journals highlight the complexity and multidisciplinary nature of PPP projects, especially in developing countries.

### 3.3 PPPs' Most Influential Articles

Our second research question (RQ2b) aimed to identify the most influential articles in studying PPPs in developing countries. Table 1 shows the 10 most cited papers from 1983 to 2023. Zhang's (2005) article ranks as the most cited publication.

**Table 1: Most Cited Articles in PPPs in Developing Countries between 1983 and 2023**

| S/N | Authors | Title | Year | Citations |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Zhang, X., (2005) | Critical success factors for public-private partnerships in infrastructure development | 2005 | 484 |
| | Jamali, D., (2004) | Success and failure mechanisms of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in developing countries. Insights from the Lebanese context | 2004 | 195 |
| | Ameyaw E.E., & Chan A.P.C., (2015a) | Evaluation and ranking of risk factors in public-private partnership water supply projects in developing countries using fuzzy synthetic evaluation approach | 2015 | 156 |
| | Panayides P.M., Parola F., & Lam J.S.L., (2015) | The effect of Institutional Factors on public-private partnership success in ports | 2015 | 93 |
| | Valipour A., Yahaya N., Md Noor N., Kildiene S., Sarvari H., & Mardani A., (2015) | A fuzzy analytic network process method for risk prioritization in freeway PPP projects: An Iranian case study | 2015 | 79 |
| | Ibrahim A.D., Price A.D.F., & Dainty A.R.J., (2012) | The analysis and allocation of risks in public-private partnerships in infrastructure projects in Nigeria | 2006 | 74 |
| | Osei-Kyei R., & Chan, A.P.C. (2017b) | Developing a project success index for public-private partnership projects in developing countries | 2017 | 68 |
| | Babatunde, S.O., Perera, S., Zhou L., Udeaja C., (2015) | Barriers to public-private partnership projects in developing countries a case of Nigeria | 2015 | 67 |
| | Sharma, C., (2012) | Determinants of PPP in infrastructure in developing economies | 2012 | 64 |
| | Forsyth, T., (2005) | Building deliberative public-private partnerships for waste management in Asia | 2005 | 62 |

*Source: Primary Data, Extracted from Scopus Database, March 2024, N=509*

The article offers a comprehensive examination of the key factors that determine the success of PPP initiatives in developing economies. Through an extensive review of the literature, case studies, and expert interviews, Zhang (2005) study identifies five key success factors: (i) a favourable investment environment, (ii) economic viability, (iii) a reliable concessionaire consortium, (iv) a sound financial package, and (v) appropriate risk allocation through dependable contractual arrangements. The results emphasize the crucial role of efficient procurement processes and strong risk management in achieving sustainable and successful PPP outcomes worldwide. The study contributes to the advancement of infrastructure systems and the efficiency of public service delivery mechanisms. The study by Jamali (2004) ranks second with 195 citations. It focuses on PPPs, especially in the Lebanese telecommunications sector. Jamali notes the growing interest in PPPs because of their potential to enhance public service delivery through private sector involvement. She presents both quantitative and qualitative analyses that highlight the benefits and challenges of PPP initiatives. Jamali outlines advantages such as reduced costs, access to private financing, and improved service delivery, while also recognizing the conceptual ambiguities surrounding PPPs. She stresses that government involvement, strong regulations, and effective communication and coordination among partners are crucial factors for success.

Forsyth (2005) argues that PPPs should serve as platforms for establishing and replicating norms of environmental concern and political accountability. He emphasizes the importance of thorough groundwork, comprehensive feasibility studies, and the development of legal and regulatory frameworks in developing countries to promote effective PPPs. Similarly, Ameyaw and Chan (2015), with 156 citations, studied major risks affecting PPP water supply infrastructure projects and aimed to develop a risk allocation model for such projects in developing countries. An international survey of PPP experts identified the top five risks as foreign exchange rate, corruption, water theft, non-payment of bills, and political interference. Using survey results and fuzzy synthetic evaluation techniques, they found that financial/commercial, legal and socio-political, and technical risks were especially significant in PPP water projects.

Conversely, Valipour, Yahaya Noor, Kildiene, Sarvari, and Mardani (2015) emphasize the importance of careful planning and resource management, highlighting failure factors such as financial mismanagement and inadequate risk assessment. They underscore the need for well-structured contracts to prevent conflicts and achieve project goals. The authors suggest that proper risk allocation between public and private partners could reduce risks and enhance project success. They conclude that effective risk management and allocation are essential for the sustainability of PPP water projects in developing countries. The study by Valipour et al. (2015), which has 97 citations, analyses risk prioritization in Iranian freeway PPP projects. They employ the fuzzy analytic network process (FANP) to account for interdependencies and feedback among risks, which is vital for effective risk management. Their approach includes literature review, interviews, and surveys with 82 stakeholders across public and private sectors, revealing 27 principal risks across financial, legal, political, market, operational, organizational, and force majeure categories. A case study of the Isfahan–Shiraz freeway highlights challenges, including limited capital and poor design, emphasizing the necessity of a robust risk management framework. The results demonstrate the effectiveness of the FANP method in prioritizing risks, primarily financial, legal, and political ones, thereby supporting decision-making. This research provides valuable guidance for stakeholders seeking to improve PPP success in developing economies.

Among key contributions, Osei-Kyei and Chan (2017), with 86 citations, develop a project success index (PSI) for PPP projects in developing countries using fuzzy synthetic evaluation. They recognize the ambiguity of "success" and propose a quantifiable model to measure it. Success is divided into three main categories: (a) meeting cost and technical specifications, (b) profit, and (c) local development and dispute reduction (LDDR). In their study, Osei-Kyei and Chan (2017) employ mean ranking, factor analysis, and fuzzy evaluation to analyse data from PPP practitioners in Ghana. Their findings identify nine key success criteria, grouped into three categories, forming a comprehensive PSI. They emphasize that clear goals, fulfilling stakeholder expectations, comprehensive risk control and strict adherence to project timelines and budgetary allocations are crucial for PPP success.

Ibrahim, Price, and Dainty (2006), with 74 citations, investigate risks in Nigerian infrastructure PPPs. They highlight the growing reliance on PPPs to meet public infrastructure needs due to limited public funds and the need for efficient resource use. Their study identifies and categorizes risk factors into external (exogenous) and internal (endogenous). A survey of Nigerian construction professionals assesses these risks and their allocation across various sectors. The top three risks identified are "unstable government", "inadequate experience in PPP" and "availability of finance”. Their findings align with Ameyaw and Chan’s (2015) study on water projects, emphasizing the necessity of strong risk management to attract private sector involvement. Most endogenous risks should be assigned to the private sector, while political and site acquisition risks should stay with the public sector, and relationship-based risks should be shared. Lastly, Babatunde, Perera, Zhou, and Udeaja (2015), with 67 citations, address specific barriers to PPP implementation in Nigeria, such as political and legal challenges. They propose that overcoming these barriers through policy reforms and capacity building is essential for effectively executing PPP projects. This aligns with Sharma (2012), who, with 64 citations, examines the determinants of PPP and emphasizes the importance of macroeconomic stability and good governance in attracting investments.

### 3.4 Country Collaboration Network

Furthermore, the third research question (RQ3a) investigated country collaboration in studying PPPs in developing regions. Figure 1 illustrates the connections between countries actively engaged in PPP research within developing nations. Only countries with at least five publications are included. The figure highlights the need for increased collaboration to enhance PPP knowledge and practices. The UK and the US are depicted as central hubs, with numerous connections to other countries. UK researchers frequently collaborate with scholars from developed countries, such as Sweden, France, and Spain, as well as developing countries like Nigeria, to share knowledge and adopt best practices. Australia is also a key player, maintaining strong links to Uganda, Tanzania, Russia, Malaysia, Singapore, and the UK. China shows extensive connections within Asia, including Japan, South Korea, and Vietnam. South Africa acts as a significant hub in African PPP research, working closely with Tanzania and Uganda to promote knowledge transfer and capacity building.

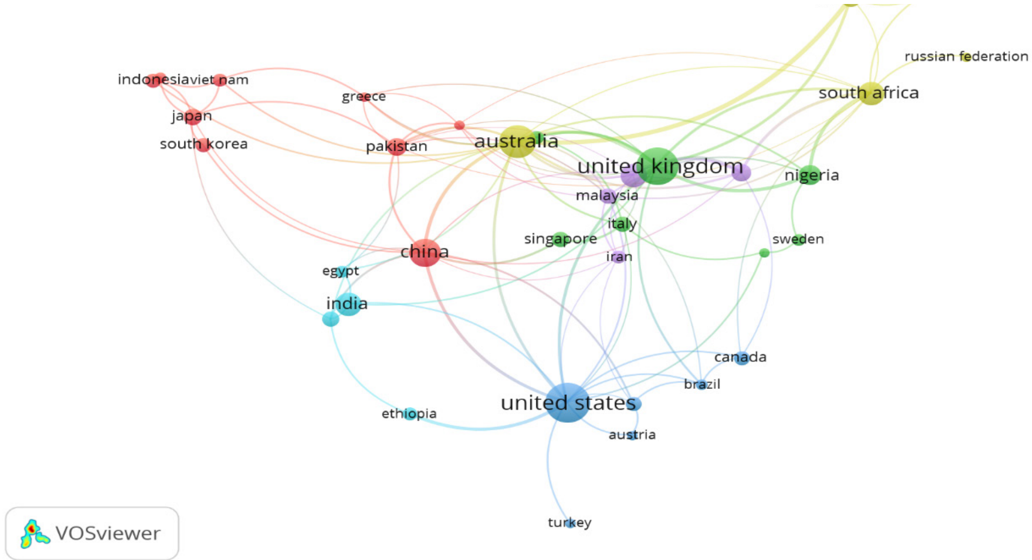



*Fig. 1: Country Network of PPP Research in Developing Countries Author Affiliation*

### 3.5 Co-Authorships Network / Trends

The third research question (RQ3b) investigated emerging themes and trends in PPP research in developing countries. Figure 2 shows the most prolific authors in this area.

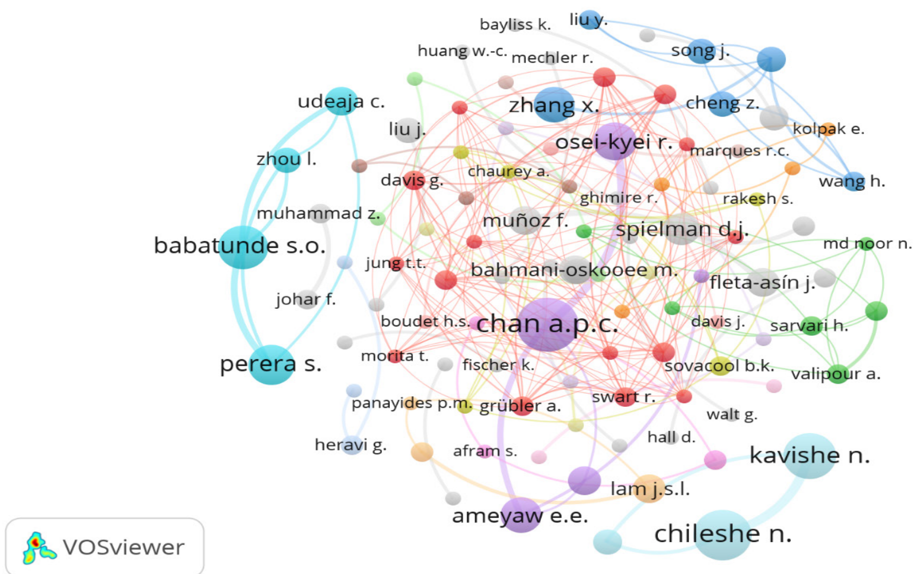



*Fig. 2: Co-Authorship Network in PPP Research in Developing Countries*

The co-authorship network displays collaboration patterns among scholars studying PPPs in developing nations. Node size reflects each author's connectivity, and the lines indicate co-authorship links. Thicker lines represent stronger collaborations. Key researchers in this network include Chan, Chileshe, Kavishe, Babatunde, and Zhang, who have made significant contributions to PPP research in these regions. For example, Chan focuses on risk management and the private sector's role in PPPs, working with colleagues like Ameyaw, Osei-Kyei, and Zhang on empirical studies and best practices across Asia and Africa.

Chileshe is recognized for her work in capacity building, success factors, and governance, especially in Tanzania and other African countries, where she often collaborates with Kavishe and Edwards. Babatunde specializes in sustainability and success factors, mainly in Nigeria and West Africa, working with scholars such as Perera and Udeaja. The network emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration across fields like construction management, finance, governance, and sustainability to deepen understanding and improve PPP implementation. Leading authors such as Chileshe, Chan, and Babatunde, along with emerging scholars including Lam, Edwards, Spielman, Li, Song, and Wang, play vital roles in advancing PPP research and practice. Overall, the network highlights the ongoing need for international and regional cooperation to address emerging challenges and optimize PPP outcomes, fostering sustainable development and infrastructure growth in developing countries.

### 3.6 Author Keywords Co-occurrence

The fourth research question (RQ4) investigated emerging themes and topics in PPP research within developing countries. In Figure 3, we provide an overview of the main topics and relationships that have shaped PPP studies over the past forty years.

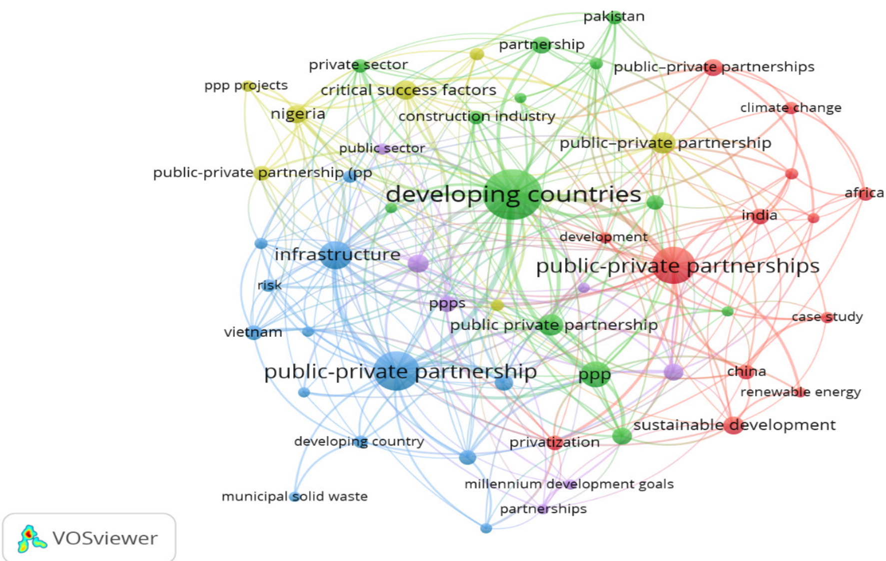



*Fig. 3: Author Keywords Co-occurrence in PPP Research in Developing Countries*

We performed keyword co-occurrence analysis to explore the complexities of these concepts. Out of the 509 articles published between 1983 and 2023, a total of 1,329 author keywords were identified across the collected literature. These keywords appeared with various frequencies, ranging from 1 to 10,000 occurrences. Given the substantial volume of author-supplied keywords (1,329) identified across titles, abstracts, and keyword fields, the researcher applied a minimum occurrence threshold in VOSviewer to visualize the co-occurrence patterns of these keywords. As a result, only terms appearing at least five times were retained, yielding a refined set of 53 keywords for analysis. These 53 keywords with at least five (5) occurrences were used in VoSviewer to create five (5) clusters, as shown in Figure 3. Each cluster is represented by a different colour (Red-1, Green-2, Blue-3, Yellow-4, and Purple-5) and indicates a distinct thematic research area. In the network, each node represents a keyword, and the links between nodes indicate the relationships among the keywords. Based on the data, the researcher performed bibliometric and content analyses to identify, examine, and discuss the clusters.

## 4.0 Analysis of Research Clusters

### 4.1 Cluster One (1): Developing Countries and PPP Dynamics

The term "developing countries" is the main keyword in Cluster 1, emphasizing its significance in PPP research. This keyword is closely connected to other key terms such as public-private partnerships, the construction industry, the private sector, Tanzania, housing, project management, and sustainability. Its prominent position in the network highlights the importance of understanding PPP dynamics within developing nations, where infrastructure development and public service delivery face major challenges. Literature also discusses how PPPs can help solve these issues by utilizing the resources and expertise of the private sector to address limitations within the public sector (Heravi & Hajihosseini, 2012). However, adopting PPPs in developing countries also involves notable political, financial, and operational risks that can hinder project success (Ibrahim et al., 2006; Osei-Kyei & Chan, 2015; Ameyaw & Chan, 2015a). Additionally, Kukah et al. (2023) found that although PPPs are seen as a way to close the infrastructure gap, they still face obstacles because of the public sector's distrust of private motives, which can slow collaborative efforts.

Sustainability is a key factor to consider when implementing PPPs in developing countries. PPPs are often promoted as a way to achieve sustainable development by blending environmental and social goals into infrastructure projects. Babatunde et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of sustainability practices in Nigerian PPP projects and emphasized the need for comprehensive sustainability frameworks within PPP contracts. Valipour et al. (2015) stressed the importance of careful planning and resource management. The authors also emphasized that well-structured agreements are crucial in preventing conflicts and ensuring that performance targets are met. However, Hinton (2022) noted that private entities are profit-driven and that profit motives might conflict with sustainability goals. This dual perspective underscores the importance of striking a balance between profit incentives and sustainability objectives to ensure the long-term success of PPP projects.

The construction industry in developing countries has significantly benefited from the PPP model, as it provides essential investment and expertise for large-scale projects that governments may not be able to afford on their own. Chileshe et al. (2022) identified key success factors for Kenya's PPP infrastructure and housing projects, highlighting effective project management and stakeholder engagement as vital. Conversely, some scholars argue that the complexity of PPP contracts and the lengthy duration of these projects can cause delays and cost overruns. Olojede et al. (2023) examined the roles of public sector organizations in PPP procurement, noting that improved procurement practices could address these issues. This highlights the urgent need for better procurement and project management practices.

This cluster also emphasized the crucial role of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in infrastructure development across various countries. For example, Asumadu et al. (2023) analysed urban slum infrastructure projects in Ghana, stressing the importance of innovative financing mechanisms alongside traditional methods to overcome financial challenges in PPP initiatives. Meanwhile, Chileshe et al. (2022) discussed significant capacity-building challenges in Tanzanian PPP projects, highlighting the need for strong public sector capabilities to manage and implement these partnerships effectively. This reflects a consensus on the importance of PPPs in infrastructure development while recognizing different perspectives on trust and financing issues.

### 4.2 Cluster Two (2): Infrastructure and Risk Management

The core of cluster two covers various topics, including the need for infrastructure projects, risk allocation, waste in municipalities, risk assessment, and regulation within PPPs in Ghana, Vietnam, and Sri Lanka. For example, Hai et al. (2022) emphasized the issue of risk assessment and how inadequate evaluation contributed to project failures in developing countries with limited institutional capacity. Additionally, public-private partnerships in Ghana and Vietnam have demonstrated that PPPs can generate substantial investment in infrastructure; however, they require careful planning and the implementation of risk-sharing mechanisms to mitigate financial and operational risks. The authors agree with Babatunde et al. (2022) that regulatory frameworks should be established to ensure proper protection and incentives to meet project goals.

Ameyaw and Chan (2015b) emphasized the importance of a comprehensive risk management framework to mitigate political and financial risks in Ghanaian PPPs. Afzal et al. (2023) concluded that effective risk management is a crucial factor in emerging markets for lowering capital costs and increasing project feasibility. On the other hand, in Tanzania Chileshe et al. (2023) identified inadequate skills and knowledge as significant risk factors and further recommended that capacity-building programmes are essential for managing risks. Overall, the literature highlights the vital role of risk management in PPPs for ensuring success and sustainable outcomes in developing countries. Additionally, Sharma (2012) assessed the role of risk management in PPP infrastructure projects, using both qualitative and quantitative approaches, including case studies and statistical analysis. The study highlighted key risks and effective risk management allocation, emphasizing that a well-designed risk management framework is crucial for mitigating failure risks and supporting sustainable development. Furthermore, government support and clear contract management were found to improve risk management practices.

Most research in the area of PPPs concentrates on infrastructure development, where collaboration between public and private sectors is crucial for creating and maintaining key infrastructure such as roads, airports, railways, schools, bridges, public housing, hospitals, water supply systems, and energy projects (Grimsey & Lewis, 2004; Koppenjan & Enserink, 2009; Farquharson et al., 2011; Sovacool, 2013; Ameyaw & Chan, 2015; Kwofie, et al., 2016; Leigland, 2018; Hai et al., 2022; Ruiters & Amadi-Echendu, 2022; Tariq & Zhang, 2022; Nduhura et al., 2022; Kazemi et al., 2023; Komakech & Ombati, 2023; Ricart, 2024). For instance, Kazemi et al. (2023) proposed a new PPP model to enhance energy storage system deployment, which could also serve as a future method for advancing sustainable energy solutions through PPPs.

Evidence indicates that PPPs in the renewable energy sector can encourage sustainable development and deliver clean energy with low carbon emissions. For example, Pandyaswargo et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of socio-techno-economic assessments in designing suitable renewable energy systems for remote areas in developing countries. Additionally, Ameyaw and Chan (2015) and Koppenjan and Enserink (2009) highlighted successful cases, such as the Lekki Toll Road in Nigeria and the Chengdu No. 6 Water Plant in China, demonstrating successful PPP implementations in developing countries. These examples illustrate that PPPs are vital for providing high-quality services in the construction industry.

### 4.3 Cluster 3: Public-Private Partnerships and Sustainable Development

The third cluster addresses the relationship between PPPs and sustainable development, focusing on renewable energy, China, India, climate change, and capacity building. Previous studies (Grimsey & Lewis, 2004; Estache, 2006; Yescombe, 2007; Sovacool, 2013) have shown that PPP projects in renewable energy, waste management, water supply, and conservation include key elements of sustainability, especially environmental sustainability. Koppenjan and Enserink (2009) stressed the importance of integrating sustainability considerations into the planning and implementation of PPP projects. Contributing to this discussion, Buse and Walt (2000), Zhang (2005), and Ameyaw and Chan (2015) advocate for governments to adopt green technologies to boost energy efficiency and reduce negative environmental impacts throughout the project lifecycle. The examples of the As-Samra Wastewater Treatment Plant in Jordan and the Gujarat Solar Park in India serve as good illustrations of environmentally sustainable PPPs. Therefore, PPPs can leverage private sector creativity and investment to develop infrastructure and services that achieve sustainable development goals in developing countries, promoting environmental sustainability by reducing adverse effects and enhancing resource utilization.

Effective capacity building is essential for successful PPP implementation, especially in developing countries where the public sector's capacity is often limited. Chileshe et al. (2022) highlighted significant capacity-building challenges in Tanzanian PPP projects and emphasized the importance of training and development programmes to strengthen public sector capacity. Kukah et al. (2023) advised that capacity-building initiatives should be comprehensive and tailored to the specific needs of each project and country. However, studies indicate that current capacity-building efforts are ineffective and fail to address the fundamental causes of capacity gaps. Therefore, more targeted and effective capacity development strategies need to be incorporated into the knowledge transfer programme.

### 4.4 Cluster 4: Governance and Critical Success Factors

This cluster focuses on governance and critical success factors in PPP projects, especially in countries like Nigeria and Tanzania. Effective governance is vital for the success of PPPs. Research indicates that robust governance structures are crucial for effectively managing PPP projects, promoting transparency, and enhancing accountability. For example, Chileshe and Kavishe (2022) developed a framework to enhance PPP governance in Tanzanian construction projects, emphasizing stakeholder engagement and a robust legal framework. Similarly, Babatunde et al. (2022) stressed the importance of governance in lowering risks and boosting project outcomes in Nigerian PPPs. However, some argue that overly strict governance frameworks could restrict innovation and flexibility, which are essential for adapting to changing project conditions. Identifying the critical success factors (CSFs) for successfully implementing PPP projects is necessary. For instance, Zhang (2005) identified five key CSFs: a supportive investment climate, economic feasibility, a trustworthy concessionaire team, a solid financial package, and proper risk sharing through reliable contracts. Additionally, Chileshe et al. (2022) noted that capacity building and institutional support are crucial for the success of PPPs in developing countries. Although Osei-Kyei and Chan (2017a) recognized the benefits of general CSFs, applying these findings in different settings is limited because each project and context has unique variables.

The effectiveness of procurement processes is vital for the success of PPP projects. Olojede et al. (2023) conducted a study on the involvement of public sector organizations in PPP project procurement. The study emphasized the importance of transparent and efficient procurement processes in ensuring project success and fostering confidence in the private sector. Despite this, procurement in PPPs faces numerous challenges, including bureaucratic delays and limited capacity within public institutions. Zhao et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of enhancing procurement processes through capacity building and adopting best practices to improve the efficiency and success of PPP projects.

### 4.5 Cluster 5: Water Supply, Corruption, and Millennium Development Goals

Cluster 5 includes research on PPPs related to water supply, corruption, public sector involvement, and MDGs. Ruiters and Amadi-Echendu (2022) examined PPPs as an investment model for water infrastructure in South Africa. Their findings highlight the importance of sustainable and transparent partnerships for long-term success. However, PPP initiatives face significant challenges, including corruption and inefficient public sector operations. Tariq and Zhang (2022) conducted a comprehensive analysis of water PPP project failures in sub-Saharan Africa and identified corruption and poor governance as key issues. Corruption remains a major obstacle in implementing PPPs in developing countries. Cuadrado-Ballesteros and Peña-Miguel (2022) analysed the link between corruption and PPPs in infrastructure projects, demonstrating that corruption can significantly reduce project outcomes and efficiency. Babatunde et al. (2022) argued that integrating anti-corruption measures and increasing transparency in PPP contracts can help reduce corruption and improve project results.

Similarly, Chileshe et al. (2022) emphasised that capacity building is a key method for improving the management and execution of PPP projects in developing countries. These findings were supported by Osei-Kyei and Chan (2018), who emphasized that capacity building in the public sector is crucial for the long-term success of PPPs, as it facilitates better oversight and project management. Finally, the fifth cluster illustrates the complexity of PPPs in developing countries. Although PPPs have great potential to fill infrastructure gaps and support sustainable development, their success depends heavily on effective risk management, strong governance, and customized capacity-building programmes. Combining private sector innovation and resources with public sector oversight can lead to more effective PPP project outcomes. However, issues like corruption, limited finances, and other local factors must be carefully managed. The results underscore the importance of adopting a flexible and integrated approach to PPP implementation, enabling the effective advancement of the SDGs in developing nations.

## 5.0 Conclusion

This extensive bibliometric analysis of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) research in developing countries from 1983 to 2023 uncovers several key insights into the evolving landscape of PPP studies. The research indicates that the number of PPP studies has increased over the past four decades, reflecting the growing recognition of PPPs as a means to address infrastructure gaps and promote sustainable development in resource-constrained settings. The study highlights the rising academic and policy interest in understanding the benefits and challenges of PPPs. The cluster analysis identifies five main themes: developing countries and PPP dynamics, infrastructure and risk management, sustainable development, governance and critical success factors, and water supply and corruption. These themes represent core areas of PPP research, demonstrating the diverse nature of PPP projects. The findings support the notion that PPPs have a multidimensional impact, effectively combining private sector resources and expertise with public oversight to address financial and operational challenges. Notably, the study highlights the importance of robust risk management frameworks, effective stakeholder engagement, and comprehensive sustainability practices in ensuring the success and longevity of PPP initiatives.

Governance is a key theme, emphasizing that robust governance structures are essential for effectively managing PPP projects, ensuring transparency, and maintaining accountability. The literature also emphasizes the importance of dynamic and responsive governance models that can strike a balance between the rigidity necessary for oversight and the flexibility required for innovation. Capacity building is another vital theme, recognized as essential for PPP success, especially in developing countries where public sector expertise and capacity are limited. Therefore, customized capacity-building initiatives are necessary to support more effective PPP implementation by developing the technical and managerial capabilities of public sector personnel.

The analysis also highlights collaboration patterns among researchers and countries, showing a trend toward international and regional cooperation in PPP research. These collaborations are crucial for knowledge sharing, addressing common challenges, and improving PPP frameworks. However, the study also points out challenges such as corruption and inefficiencies in the public sector as major obstacles to PPP success. Therefore, implementing effective anti-corruption measures and ensuring transparency in PPP contracts are essential to gain stakeholder trust and sustain long-term PPP initiatives. Success in PPP depends on good risk management, transparent governance, customized capacity-building efforts, the trust and skills of PPP partners, and the integration of sustainability goals.

### 5.1 Contributions of the Study

The study has several scientific contributions to the body of knowledge on PPPs, including:

The study offers a thorough and systematic bibliometric analysis of PPP research in developing countries over four decades, highlighting key trends, influential works, and collaboration patterns. This extensive time span provides insight into the evolution and dynamics of PPP studies, demonstrating how research focus and output have shifted in response to various socio-economic and political changes.

The research highlights the interdisciplinary nature of PPP research by mapping out the thematic clusters within the literature. The thematic clusters, including developing countries and PPP dynamics, infrastructure and risk management, sustainable development, governance and critical success factors, and water supply and corruption, provide insights into the diverse applications and challenges of PPPs in developing countries. By categorizing and analysing these themes, the study reveals the multidimensional impact of PPPs. It offers a deeper insight into how such partnerships can be leveraged to address targeted development challenges.

The study identifies the importance of collaboration among researchers and countries in advancing PPP knowledge and practices. The network analysis of co-authorship and country collaborations identifies the hubs of research activity and reveals the global nature of PPP studies. This finding is essential for fostering international cooperation and knowledge transfer, which are necessary for tackling the complex and context-specific challenges of PPPs in developing countries.

Finally, the study's methodological contribution lies in applying advanced bibliometric techniques and tools, such as VOSviewer, to visualize and analyse the structural links within the PPP research field. This rigorous approach ensures a high degree of precision and trustworthiness in the results, establishing a benchmark for future bibliometric research in similar areas.

### 5.2 Future Research Directions and Limitations

Further inquiry is warranted into how advanced digital innovations, including blockchain, AI, and IoT, may contribute to optimizing efficiency and fostering transparency in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects across developing economies. Researchers can also conduct long-term empirical investigations to explore the outcome trajectories of PPPs, focusing on sustainability, economic impact, and social risks and benefits, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding. Political and economic stability should be considered when designing resilient frameworks and evaluating the effectiveness of capacity-building programmes and training for public sector officials involved in PPP projects. Exploring innovative financing mechanisms, such as green bonds and social impact bonds, can help identify alternative solutions to financial challenges. Additionally, analysing the policy and regulatory environments that shape the success of PPPs and the effectiveness of capacity-building initiatives for public officials is essential. While the bibliometric method offers a broad overview, it may overlook nuanced and contextual insights provided by qualitative methods. Furthermore, relying solely on Scopus as a database may limit the scope of the literature review. Therefore, future studies should adopt a more diverse and inclusive methodological approach to address these limitations and gain a deeper understanding of PPP dynamics in developing countries.

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# The Decentralisation- Recentralisation Paradox in Uganda's Local Governance: Dissecting the Drivers

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## Abstract

*Uganda's governance framework has witnessed a paradoxical shift between decentralisation and recentralisation since the 1990s, sparking debates among scholars and policymakers. This article examines the intricate factors driving the decentralisation–recentralisation phenomenon in Uganda's governance framework. The study employs a qualitative research approach that analyses secondary data drawn from academic journals, policy documents, and existing studies. The decentralisation–recentralisation dialectic results from power struggles between the central government and local authorities, undermining democratic governance. Decentralisation initially promoted participation and accountability, but recentralisation efforts have eroded these gains. Understanding the decentralisation–recentralisation interplay is crucial for policymakers to inform targeted policy interventions which strengthen decentralisation and democratic governance. This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on decentralisation and recentralisation, providing insights into the paradoxical nature of Uganda's governance framework. It relies on secondary data, but further research is needed to explore the perspectives of local authorities and citizens. Policymakers must prioritise institutional reforms and citizen participation to achieve balanced governance amidst decentralisation dynamics.*

***Keywords:*** *Decentralisation, recentralisation, democratic governance, local autonomy, Uganda's governance framework*

## 1.0 Introduction

Decentralisation, a widely adopted governance reform strategy, promotes participatory governance, accountability, and local service delivery (United Nations, 2015). However, recentralisation tendencies have undermined its effectiveness in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The World Bank and United Nations advocate for decentralisation to improve governance, reduce poverty, and enhance service delivery. This aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (World Bank, 2017; United Nations, 2015). Countries like Indonesia, the Philippines, India, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, have implemented decentralisation, but recentralisation tendencies have emerged (Pinilla-Rodríguez et al., 2024; Lewis, 2023). In African countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana, decentralisation efforts have been undermined as central governments reassert control over local authorities (Rugeiyamu & Msendo, 2025; Makara, 2018; Smoke, 2015; Ndegwa & Levy, 2018).

Uganda's decentralisation policy promotes participatory governance, accountability, and local service delivery (Bataringaya & Mbabazi, 2019). However, the effectiveness of decentralisation has been weakened by growing recentralisation. The central government has tightened its control over local governments by appointing its own officials and restricting financial transfers (Ntayi & Aciro, 2020; Kafuko & Kibirige, 2018; Okidi, 2017).This has resulted in limited autonomy for local governments, hindering their ability to respond to local needs and priorities. Despite these challenges, decentralisation continues to play a central role in Uganda’s democratic reforms, as the government actively pursues initiatives to enhance local governance and promote citizen participation. The central government’s actions have limited the success of decentralisation. Achieving effective service delivery and citizen engagement requires a balance between central control and local autonomy. Decentralisation Uganda's experience highlights the complexities of decentralisation and the need for careful consideration of the roles and responsibilities of different levels of government.

Uganda’s decentralisation experience in the 1990s and 2000s uniquely shaped its governance trajectory. The 1997 Local Governments Act was pivotal, institutionalising decentralisation and establishing district and municipal councils that devolved power and responsibilities to local governments. This enabled local governments to manage their affairs and provide community services, promoting participatory governance and service delivery. Decentralisation contributes to better local service delivery and greater accountability in resource management. It further encourages citizen involvement in the planning and execution of government programmes (Green, 2015; Wunsch, 2018; Lambright, 2017). Scholars argue that transferring decision-making authority to local governments strengthens governance effectiveness by enhancing service delivery and broadening avenues for citizen participation (Fuseini et al., 2025; Larsala & Chaka, 2025; Ndambwa & Moonga, 2024; Gaventa & Barrett, 2016).

Decentralisation promotes active participation by local communities in decision-making processes, thereby enhancing citizen engagement in local council meetings and budgeting (Sjögren, 2015; Gore et al., 2014). This increased participation improves local governments' accountability and responsiveness to local needs (Ogunnubi, 2022). Decentralisation also enhances service delivery in healthcare and education, with notable improvements in rural areas (Kellner et. al., 2024; Be-ere, 2023). Uganda’s decentralisation reforms have led to improved service delivery, higher participation, and stronger accountability (Biryomumeisho et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2021). Nonetheless, the country faces challenges such as limited capacity, inadequate funding, centralised control, and recentralisation tendencies (Galukande-Kiganda et al., 2024; Sjögren, 2015).

Recentralisation tendencies in Uganda are evident in the central government's efforts to consolidate power and control over local governments, undermining the decentralisation policy's effectiveness (Mpiima, 2016; Biryomumeisho et al., 2024). The central government has achieved this through various means, including appointing officials to oversee local government activities, withholding allocated funds, and imposing central policies on local governments (Galukande-Kiganda & Mzini, 2016; Lewis, 2014). These actions have led to a decline in participation, accountability, and service delivery, compromising local autonomy and prioritizing national interests (Galukande-Kiganda et al., 2024). Consequently, decentralisation’s gains—such as community participation, accountability, and efficient service delivery—are diminishing, creating profound implications for governance and development in Uganda (Biryomumeisho et al., 2024; Johnson, 2023).

Uganda’s governance system grapples with a decentralisation–recentralisation paradox, as the central government strives to retain control despite local governments’ limited capacity and resources (Biryomumeisho et al., 2024). This paradox manifests through recentralisation tendencies that undermine the stability and legitimacy of the system (Nabaho, 2013). Manifestations of recentralisation include centralised decision-making authority, reduced local government funding and autonomy, and increased central government oversight (Lugada et al., 2022). The quality of service delivery and accountability for government resources at the local level remain challenging due to centralised decision-making (Mayanja & Akunda, 2023). Factors contributing to recentralisation and its implications for governance and development in Uganda require in-depth examination. This investigation centres on the question: What factors drive Uganda’s decentralisation–recentralisation paradox? Recent research provides a foundation for deeper exploration (Aryani et al., 2023).

This study pursues three core objectives to address the central research question. First, it investigates the historical trajectory of decentralisation in Uganda, tracing the development and implementation of related policies over time. Second, it critically analyses the underlying drivers of recentralisation, focusing on political, economic, and institutional dimensions that shape this reversal of power. Third, it explores the implications of the decentralisation-recentralisation paradox for local governance, with particular attention to its effects on community participation, accountability mechanisms, and the delivery of public services. Through a focused examination of these dynamics, the study offers empirically grounded insights into Uganda's evolving governance landscape. Its findings aim to enrich scholarly understanding of the complex interplay between decentralising and recentralising forces, while providing a nuanced perspective relevant to ongoing efforts in promoting democratic governance and effective local administration.

The paper proceeds by presenting, in Section 2, a comprehensive review of relevant literature that critically examines the introduction of decentralisation reforms and evaluates their influence on Uganda’s governance framework. Section 3 details the qualitative literature review methodology adopted for this study. Section 4 presents the key findings, highlighting the underlying drivers of recentralisation and examining their effects on the progress and outcomes of decentralisation efforts. Section 5 provides an in-depth discussion of the implications for Uganda's democratic trajectory. Finally, Section 6 concludes with actionable recommendations, underscoring the need for reforms that bolster local governments and foster democratic governance, and offers valuable insights for policymakers and development practitioners.

## 2.0 Literature Review

Decentralisation and recentralisation constitute core elements of Uganda’s governance framework. This examination synthesises existing literature on these dynamics, identifying key drivers, consequences, and implications. It contextualises the historical evolution of decentralisation, investigates the forces propelling recentralisation, and analyses the effects of the decentralisation–recentralisation paradox on local governance, thereby constructing a comprehensive conceptual framework.

Decentralisation remains a layered and evolving concept, widely examined in the context of democratic governance and local development (Efriandi et al., 2019; Onyango-Delewa, 2016). Scholars frequently frame it as a pathway to strengthen local participation, enhance accountability, and promote efficient service delivery (Smoke, 2015; Wunsch, 2018). Yet, its practice often confronts embedded structural and political constraints that complicate implementation. In Uganda, these tensions are starkly visible through a decentralisation-recentralisation paradox, where efforts to devolve power coexist with mechanisms that pull it back to the centre (Green, 2015; Namatovu & Oonyu, 2021). This dynamic reflects deeper political calculations, including central authorities’ reluctance to relinquish control and persistent deficits in local administrative and fiscal capacities (Lambright, 2018; Muhumuza, 2020). Rather than a linear process, decentralisation in Uganda operates within a feedback loop shaped by conflicting objectives, limited resources, and evolving governance strategies (Chemouni, 2022). As a result, the state continually renegotiates its legitimacy and the role of local governments. This process raises serious concerns about power distribution, institutional coherence, and democratic accountability within the wider governance framework (Lough et al., 2019; Twongyirwe et al., 2023). Grasping the complexities of Uganda’s decentralisation–recentralisation paradox requires a strong foundation in decentralisation theories, particularly those that highlight the interaction between authority, participation, and governance outcomes. Classical decentralisation theory emerges as a relevant and robust framework for interpreting these dynamics, as it foregrounds principles of local autonomy, participatory governance, and administrative efficiency (Green, 2015). These principles align closely with Uganda's stated objectives in adopting decentralisation reforms, which aimed to enhance citizen engagement, improve accountability, and strengthen service delivery at the local level (Lambright, 2018). In this context, classical theory enables a clearer analysis of how shifts in power between central and local governments shape governance structures and influence democratic processes. It offers conceptual tools to examine the tensions between devolution and central control, particularly as recentralisation tendencies reconfigure power relations within Uganda's governance system (Kyohairwe et al., 2024). Empirical insights from Uganda and comparable African contexts reinforce the theory's relevance, revealing how political and institutional factors often complicate intended decentralisation outcomes (Twongyirwe et al., 2023; Wunsch, 2018).

Classical decentralisation theory highlights local autonomy, participation, and efficiency. This offers a critical framework to analyse Uganda's complex governance dynamics involving decentralisation and recentralisation. This theory explains tensions between devolved authority and central government control, emphasising the importance of empowering local governments for improved service delivery and citizen engagement (Nastar et al., 2019; Smith & Mwangi, 2021). Uganda's decentralisation reforms reflect this approach, yet ongoing central interventions complicate governance outcomes (Nalwadda & Byaruhanga, 2020). Critics note that the theory's strong focus on economic efficiency often neglects political realities such as elite capture, power struggles, and informal institutions that influence decentralisation success (Kasozi, 2018; Mukama & Nakayi, 2022). Recent studies emphasise incorporating socio-political factors into classical theory to illuminate Uganda's decentralisation–recentralisation paradox more comprehensively (Nabukenya & Kabonesa, 2023). This integration reveals why decentralisation reforms sometimes fail to enhance participation or service quality, despite formal autonomy. Overall, classical decentralisation theory provides a useful foundation, but requires contextual adaptation to address Uganda's unique political and institutional challenges, ensuring a more comprehensive analysis of governance reforms and their impact on local development.

The decentralisation-recentralisation paradox in Uganda continues to challenge governance, reflecting ongoing tensions between devolving power to local governments and the central state's reassertion of control. Recent research shows that political elites often manipulate decentralisation reforms to maintain patronage networks and consolidate power, limiting genuine local autonomy and democratic participation (Bashaasha et al., 2018; Ssali et al., 2021). Institutional weaknesses further complicate this dynamic, as local governments struggle with inadequate fiscal resources, capacity deficits, and dependency on central government transfers (Namara & Muwonge, 2020; Okello et al., 2019). These structural challenges, combined with uneven implementation and competing interests, reinforce tendencies towards recentralisation and undermine effective decentralisation (Kasimbazi et al., 2017; Kyamusugulwa & Hilhorst, 2016).

Moreover, policymakers have at times exploited district creation - originally meant to bring governance closer to citizens - for political gain. This has deepened fragmentation and weakened the efficiency of service delivery (Bashaasha et al., 2018; Tumushabe et al., 2019). This paradox remains a critical issue in Uganda's governance landscape, illustrating the complex interplay between political control, institutional capacity, and efforts to promote local participation. Recent research reveals that the Ugandan government has actively worked to reestablish central authority over decentralised bodies, often citing goals of enhancing efficiency and accountability (Green, 2018). Notably, the government implemented several policies to tighten control over local government finances, including a revised local government finance framework introduced in 2015 (Ministry of Local Government, 2015). Despite these measures, local officials and civil society actors have pushed back, contending that such centralisation efforts threaten the core principles of decentralisation and local self-governance (Rugeiyami & Msendo, 2025).

This ongoing friction between decentralisation and recentralisation underscores a significant paradox within Uganda's governance landscape. It also illustrates the persistent difficulties in balancing the desire for effective oversight with the need for meaningful local participation. These dynamics reveal the complexities involved in shaping governance systems that are both accountable and inclusive. They also show that central control and local autonomy often coexist uneasily rather than harmoniously. This interplay remains a critical area for understanding governance reforms and their broader social and political implications in Uganda.

Empirical research from recent years demonstrates that decentralisation often enhances participation, accountability, and service delivery, fostering more responsive governance structures (Chen et al., 2021; Lutoti et al., 2015). Nonetheless, these improvements face significant obstacles, particularly in Uganda, where local governments frequently struggle with limited capacity and insufficient resources. This undermines the potential benefits of decentralisation (Nannyonjo & Okot, 2013; Tapscott, 2017). The central government's persistent dominance further complicates efforts to empower local authorities, highlighting structural challenges that impede effective decentralisation (Lutwama, 2012). In contrast, trends toward recentralisation appear to weaken civic engagement and reduce accountability, while service quality suffers as decision-making shifts away from local stakeholders (Resnick, 2014). This shift also reinforces existing power imbalances, intensifying tensions between central and local levels of governance (Lutoti et al., 2015). Therefore, the dynamics between decentralisation and recentralisation reveal complex trade-offs that require careful navigation to balance authority distribution without compromising democratic participation or service effectiveness.

A persistent paradox of decentralisation and recentralisation shapes governance across Africa, where efforts to devolve power and resources to local governments frequently encounter resistance or reversal by central authorities. Research from Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania reveals the intricate nature of this dynamic. In Ghana, decentralisation has fostered greater citizen participation and enhanced accountability, yet the implementation of reforms struggles within a predominantly centralised political framework (Mohammed, 2016; Ayee, 2013). For example, Antwi-Boasiako (2010) demonstrated that decentralisation reforms increased public involvement and improved service delivery. However, the central government's tight control over financial resources and staffing significantly constrained local government autonomy. This tension highlights how decentralisation initiatives, though promising in theory, often encounter systemic obstacles that undermine their effectiveness. These country case studies illustrate the difficulties of balancing power between central and local authorities, revealing how entrenched centralised control can erode progress in local governance, hinder sustainable transformation, and challenge the practical application of decentralisation in the region.

In Kenya and Tanzania, decentralisation has enhanced service delivery, but also created tensions in the balance of power between central and local governments. In Kenya, reforms have notably improved healthcare and education access in rural communities (Barasa et al., 2017). Yet, the central government retains significant control over funding and policy decisions, which restricts the autonomy of local authorities (Kisumbe et al., 2024). Tanzania exhibits a similar dynamic where decentralisation coexists with strong central oversight. The central government's dominance over local government finances limits local officials' capacity to address community-specific needs effectively (Kessy & McCourt, 2010; Kessy, 2011). This tension reveals a complex decentralisation-recentralisation paradox, highlighting the challenges of empowering local governments while maintaining national coherence (Cheeseman et al., 2016; Pastory, 2014). Such findings suggest that while decentralisation can drive improvements in public services, its success depends heavily on the degree of fiscal and administrative autonomy granted to local entities, as excessive central control undermines local responsiveness and innovation.

In Uganda, the decentralisation-recentralisation paradox reflects a strategic effort by the central government to retain control over power and resources, thereby constraining the intended advantages of decentralisation (Lambright, 2014). This paradox reveals inherent tensions among the fundamental elements of decentralisation, such as participation, accountability, and efficiency (Green, 2008). Scholarly work highlights this issue as a complex, multifaceted phenomenon that requires more nuanced investigation (Green, 2010). Despite extensive scholarly discourse, substantial knowledge gaps persist. The effects of decentralisation and recentralisation on participation, accountability, and service delivery within Uganda's governance framework remain insufficiently understood (Tapscott, 2017). Notably, empirical studies addressing these impacts are sparse, creating a critical void in the literature (Green, 2013). Existing research tends to emphasise theoretical and conceptual perspectives, often relying heavily on quantitative methods that inadequately capture the intricate realities of decentralisation and recentralisation processes (Faguet, 2021). Such methodological limitations hinder a comprehensive understanding of the paradox and its practical implications for governance outcomes, underscoring the need for more diverse and context-sensitive research approaches.

Existing research pays limited attention to Uganda's historical and political context. This omission weakens understanding of how decentralisation and recentralisation evolve within the country's governance structures (Kiwanuka et al., 2022) Analyses often abstract complex realities into generalised frameworks that miss the nuanced influences shaping local governance. Empirical investigations into how decentralisation affects participation, accountability, and service delivery remain limited, leaving significant gaps in evidence (Curtale et al., 2016). Broader political and institutional factors, including power struggles, weak local institutions, and overlapping mandates, shape these processes yet receive little focused scrutiny.

Comparative insights across similar contexts could enhance understanding of these dynamics, although current studies rarely integrate such perspectives in depth. Dominant narratives often overlook how central and local actors contest authority, negotiate autonomy, and manage competing interests. Within Uganda, these tensions have produced a fluid and unstable balance between centralised control and localised governance. The decentralisation-recentralisation dynamic reflects not only administrative adjustments, but also broader political agendas and institutional pressures, which continue to shape governance outcomes in practice (Kiwanuka et al., 2022; Curtale et al., 2016).

Despite extensive literature on decentralisation and recentralisation in Africa, major gaps persist in understanding their deeper dynamics (Logan, 2011; D'Arcy & Cornell, 2016). Cases from Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania show both the promise and the shortcomings of decentralisation reforms, yet cross-country comparative analysis remains limited. This restricts broader insights into shared obstacles and structural patterns. Longitudinal studies are also scarce, weakening the evidence base on the sustainability and long-term consequences of decentralisation policies. Traditional authorities continue to shape governance in many African contexts, but their role in decentralisation processes is often underexplored (Logan, 2011). Similarly, the experiences of marginalised groups—particularly women, youth, and ethnic minorities—receive minimal attention despite their critical importance to inclusive governance (Rigon et al., 2020). These gaps reflect a broader tendency to focus on formal institutions while sidelining informal and social dimensions of governance. This study focuses on how Uganda explores the evolving relationship between decentralisation and recentralisation. Using qualitative analysis of existing data, it investigates how competing agendas, power dynamics, and institutional arrangements shape the outcomes of these reforms.

## 3.0 Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative approach to examine the decentralisation-recentralisation paradox in Uganda. The research focused on understanding the historical, political, and institutional dynamics shaping the interaction between decentralisation and recentralisation. A literature review methodology guided the process, drawing on peer-reviewed academic journals, policy documents, legal texts, and institutional reports published between 2010 and 2025 (Green, 2015; Tapscott, 2017). Secondary data analysis formed the basis of the research design, enabling a critical exploration of existing knowledge without direct fieldwork. This approach provided access to a wide range of sources, offering a comprehensive and contextualised understanding of Uganda's decentralisation experience. The researchers emphasise synthesising findings from multiple disciplines and perspectives to capture the multidimensional nature of governance reforms.

Data collection involved a systematic review of literature from sources such as Public Administration and Development, African Affairs, and the Journal of Eastern African Studies. Relevant legal frameworks, including the Uganda's Local Governments Act. The researcher analysed the Decentralisation Policy alongside reports from the World Bank, IMF, Uganda Bureau of Statistics, and Uganda's Ministry of Local Government. The researcher consulted databases including Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Scopus to locate relevant studies and grey literature (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2015) and employed documentary and content analysis methods to evaluate official policies, reform strategies, and governance outcomes (Bowen, 2009). This enabled the identification of key themes, recurring challenges, and institutional patterns within the decentralisation-recentralisation discourse.

Data analysis followed a thematic and content-based strategy, incorporating tools such as NVivo and Atlas.ti to facilitate coding and organisation of textual data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Thematic analysis helped uncover connections between decentralisation practices and broader political developments, while content analysis supported a structured examination of legal and policy texts (Krippendorff, 2018). A contextual framework allowed the research to situate governance reforms within Uganda's evolving political economy, while a comparative lens introduced insights from similar regional cases (Makara, 2018). The researcher analysed the functionality, capacity, and autonomy of local governments through institutional analysis, while evaluating power relations among the central government, local authorities, and citizens using a decentralisation–recentralisation framework (Tapscott, 2017).

Themes such as democratic participation, administrative efficiency, fiscal control, and local autonomy were central to the analysis. Coding of the data focused on identifying how policy intentions aligned—or diverged—from implementation realities. The role of informal power structures, political patronage, and elite interests emerged as recurrent themes across the literature. The content analysis of legal documents and academic studies revealed both structural enablers and constraints within Uganda's decentralisation model. Although the use of secondary data limited the ability to capture real-time developments or community-level perspectives, the study benefited from the breadth and depth of existing research. This methodological framework provided a robust foundation for analysing the evolving governance landscape in Uganda.

Ethical considerations guided every stage of the research process, despite the exclusive reliance on secondary data. The study upheld the principles of academic integrity, transparency, and accountability in the collection, interpretation, and citation of sources (Tracy, 2019). The researcher obtained all materials from publicly accessible and reputable sources, ensuring proper referencing to respect intellectual property rights. Findings were carefully and accurately represented to avoid misinterpretation or selective reporting.While human subjects were not directly involved, sensitivity to the political context of Uganda remained essential, especially in analysing documents related to government authority, local governance, and public accountability. The researcher consulted multiple sources to verify information, reduce bias, and present a balanced range of perspectives.

## 4.0 Findings

This study explored the decentralisation- recentralisation paradox in Uganda's governance system, examining the extent of decentralisation, factors driving recentralisation, and implications on governance and service delivery. A qualitative approach was employed, utilising secondary data collection and analysis methods, including document analysis, thematic analysis, and content analysis. The findings are organised into three thematic areas: historical context, driving forces of recentralisation, and the paradox's impact.

Decentralisation and recentralisation in Uganda reveal a deeply intertwined dynamic that shapes governance through persistent tensions between central authority and local autonomy. Though these processes are often framed as opposing, they coexist and interact, reflecting power negotiations within Uganda's postcolonial context (Bandyopadhyay & Green, 2016). The influence of colonial administrative structures remains visible, reinforcing centralised control while nominally promoting local participation. Despite policies aimed at devolving power, Uganda's central government maintains dominance through fiscal and administrative constraints, thereby weakening local governments and limiting their functional independence (Tapscott, 2017). Local authorities often lack adequate resources and decision-making power, reducing their capacity to meet community needs or pursue meaningful development strategies. This imbalance is further intensified by uneven economic investment, as underfunded infrastructure and service delivery obstruct local economic growth and reinforce dependency on central allocations (Lewis, 2018). These patterns demonstrate a governance system in which decentralisation functions more as a symbolic gesture than a substantive reform, reflecting a deliberate calibration of authority instead of an authentic redistribution of power. Such arrangements reflect broader struggles over legitimacy, control, and state-building in Uganda's contemporary political landscape.

Uganda's decentralisation policy sought to enhance participation, accountability, and service delivery by transferring authority and resources to local governments (Mulumba et al., 2021). Yet recent developments indicate a reversal, with the central government reclaiming influence over vital sectors such as health, education, and finance. Advocates for this shift argue that it improves coordination, ensures uniform standards, and strengthens oversight. Critics, however, contend that it erodes local autonomy and restricts citizens' engagement in governance, weakening democratic accountability (Ngabirano, 2020). This evolving interplay between decentralisation and recentralisation reveals a governance model shaped by shifting political incentives and institutional fragility. Power struggles between national and local actors reflect broader tensions over control and legitimacy, often driven by the central government's desire to manage political risk and maintain authority (Mulumba et al., 2021). While decentralisation was initially framed as a tool for grassroots empowerment, its implementation has faced constraints that limit its transformative potential. These include unclear mandates, resource gaps, and inconsistent policy enforcement. As a result, the state's attempt to balance local responsiveness with central oversight continues to shape Uganda's governance trajectory in complex and contested ways.

Uganda's decentralisation–recentralisation paradox reveals a complex and contested governance landscape shaped by many intersecting forces. At its core lie ongoing power struggles between national and local authorities, as both sides compete for control over resources and decision-making (Tapscott, 2017).Institutional weaknesses, such as limited technical capacity, poor coordination, and uneven resource distribution, have constrained the effectiveness of local governance and justified recentralisation (Titeca, 2018). National security concerns and political interests have further strengthened the central government's role, often at the expense of local autonomy. The reassertion of central authority is most evident in key sectors such as education, health, and finance. Here, strategic control is presented as essential for national coherence and stability. However, these shifts have weakened local governments' ability to plan, allocate, and manage resources in ways that reflect local priorities. The result is a governance system where decentralisation remains more rhetorical than functional, constrained by structural limitations and shaped by political calculations that prioritize control over empowerment.

Power dynamics between Uganda's central government and local authorities continue to shape the country's governance landscape, with recentralisation gaining momentum as a response to contested authority and administrative challenges. The central government's efforts to retain control over key decisions and resource allocation often manifest through direct intervention in local development initiatives, bypassing established local government structures and limiting their operational autonomy (Chigwata & Ziswa, 2018). This pattern reflects not only a political desire to consolidate influence but also a response to persistent institutional and capacity deficits at the local level. Many local governments struggle with inadequate technical expertise, weak financial management, and limited human resources, hindering their ability to effectively carry out decentralised responsibilities (Katusiimeh et al., 2024). These deficiencies reinforce dependency on the central government, creating a cycle where limited local capacity justifies further central intervention. As a result, the decentralisation agenda in Uganda has become constrained by a governance logic that favours central oversight over meaningful devolution, raising critical questions about the viability and intent of local empowerment within the current institutional framework.

National interests and security concerns play a critical role in driving recentralisation in Uganda. The central government prioritises national stability, tightening its grip on key sectors such as defence, internal security, and foreign affairs (Tapscott, 2017). Economic interests, patronage networks, and clientelism further reinforce this central control. International donor influence also shapes governance patterns, often reinforcing central government dominance rather than local empowerment. Rapid urbanisation and demographic shifts add complexity to governance, prompting the state to recentralise functions to manage emerging challenges effectively. Technological advancements influence power distribution by reshaping communication and surveillance capacities, often favouring centralised oversight.

Moreover, limited civic engagement weakens local accountability and participation, indirectly supporting recentralisation (Lewis, 2014). These interconnected factors form a web of influences that together fuel the recentralisation trend in Uganda. The convergence of political, economic, social, and technological drivers creates a multifaceted governance environment, where recentralisation reflects a response to both perceived threats and practical governance challenges rather than a simple policy reversal. Recentralisation in Uganda profoundly affects the country's governance framework by undermining local government autonomy. It also curbs citizen participation and accountability, weakening the overall effectiveness of decentralisation (Katusiimeh et al., 2024). Economic interests strongly influence this trend, as the central government seeks to control lucrative sectors like oil, gas, mining, and forestry to maximise revenue and consolidate economic power (Makara, 2018). Patronage and clientelism further entrench recentralisation, with central politicians and bureaucrats using control to maintain networks by distributing jobs, contracts, and other benefits to loyal supporters (Kasozi, 2013).

Additionally, limited civic engagement diminishes public pressure for decentralisation, enabling the central government to reassert authority with little resistance (Kabwegyere, 2009). These factors create a complex and multifaceted environment where recentralisation reflects overlapping political, institutional, and economic dynamics. Power struggles, weak institutions, national priorities, and economic interests shape governance, limiting meaningful decentralisation and reinforcing central government dominance (Rugeiyamu & Msendo, 2025; Galukande-Kiganda et al., 2024; Michael et al., 2022; Tapscott, 2017). The decentralisation–recentralisation paradox in Uganda significantly affects local governance by shifting power and control back to the central government, thereby weakening local government autonomy. This shift limits local authorities' capacity to address community-specific needs and development priorities effectively (Atisa et al., 2021). As a result, service delivery suffers, and development outcomes remain poor. The erosion of local decision-making authority also undermines democratic governance, reducing citizen participation in decision-making and weakening accountability mechanisms (Yilmaz et al., 2010). This disconnect between citizens and local governance processes diminishes public ownership and engagement in development efforts.

Service delivery inefficiencies become more evident as local governments face significant challenges in managing key sectors such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure (Ricart-Huguet & Sellars, 2021). The recentralisation trend disrupts the intended benefits of decentralisation, creating a governance environment where local institutions are constrained, and public services fail to meet community demands. This dynamic underscores the difficulty of balancing central control with local empowerment in Uganda's governance system. The decentralisation-recentralisation paradox disrupts local governance in multiple critical ways. Citizens often disengage from public affairs, as they perceive limited influence over decision-making, reducing civic participation and weakening democratic processes (Mwesigwa et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2017). Disparities in resource allocation persist, as certain local governments secure more support than others, deepening structural inequalities (Michael et al., 2022; Tapscott, 2017). This uneven distribution contributes to inefficient resource use and hinders equitable service delivery. Accountability mechanisms also erode, with transparency faltering under blurred lines of authority between central and local administrations (Anayochukwu et al., 2022; Kimengsi & Akhere, 2017).

In addition, the paradox impairs local economic development, as centralised control limits the responsiveness and agility of local institutions (Tangri & Mwenda, 2019). Capacity building stagnates, reinforcing a cycle of dependency on central authorities, which in turn weakens institutional resilience and trust at the community level (Dickovick & Wunsch, 2014). The constrained policy space further restricts the autonomy of local governments, reducing their flexibility to tailor solutions to specific local contexts (Smoke, 2015; Michael et al., 2022).

## 5.0 Discussion

The decentralisation-recentralisation paradox in Uganda continues to provoke active discourse among scholars and policymakers, reflecting divergent views on governance, efficiency, and accountability. Supporters of recentralisation maintain that stronger central oversight is essential to address persistent inefficiencies in local service delivery and to enhance the effective use of public resources (Tapscott, 2017; Mwesigwa et al., 2022). They argue that the central government must protect national priorities and promote a fairer distribution of resources. This is especially important in regions with weak administrative capacity (Anayochukwu et al., 2022). However, critics warn that recentralisation reduces local government autonomy and undermines the progress made under earlier decentralisation reforms. These reforms had strengthened participatory governance and improved responsiveness to community needs (Green, 2015; Dickovick & Wunsch, 2014). They emphasise that central dominance may lead to bureaucratic inefficiencies and reduce space for innovation at the local level (Smoke, 2015). This ongoing tension reflects broader concerns about balancing state control with local empowerment, especially in contexts where political and fiscal decentralisation remain uneven and contested (Michael et al., 2022; Tapley et al., 2022).

Classical decentralisation theory argues that devolving power enhances participatory governance, improves service delivery, and promotes efficient resource use (Smoke, 2015). Yet, Uganda's recentralisation trend raises questions about the practical application of these ideals. The central government has increasingly reclaimed authority in areas once delegated to local governments, particularly in sectors such as education, health, and finance (Tapscott, 2017; Michael et al., 2022). This reassertion often comes through tighter control over fiscal transfers, administrative oversight, and policy direction, leaving local governments with limited decision-making power (Mwesigwa et al., 2022). While proponents may view this shift as a response to inefficiencies or weak local capacity, critics see it as a systematic erosion of decentralisation's foundational goals (Anayochukwu et al., 2022). Research indicates that this pattern has reduced local governments to administrative units rather than autonomous entities capable of planning and implementing context-specific development (Green, 2015). As recentralisation advances, it increasingly undermines the core principles of classical decentralisation theory, particularly in fragile governance contexts where political and fiscal asymmetries shape central–local relations (Tapley et al., 2022; Dickovick & Wunsch, 2018).

Recentralisation has emerged as a strategic move by central governments seeking to reassert authority over critical sectors while addressing what are perceived as persistent inefficiencies in local service delivery (Tapscott, 2017). This shift, while framed as a corrective mechanism, has raised substantial concerns regarding its broader implications for democratic governance. Scholars contend that these centralising tendencies threaten to undermine the core objectives of decentralisation, especially its commitment to participatory governance and the delivery of locally responsive public services (Chen et al., 2021; Derow, 2021). The retraction of power from local authorities not only narrows opportunities for civic engagement, but also tends to centralise decision-making in ways that obscure accountability structures and deepen regional inequalities (Tapscott, 2017; Chen et al., 2021). Moreover, critics contend that recentralisation often unfolds under the guise of efficiency, yet lacks sufficient empirical support demonstrating clear gains in service outcomes (Tsofa et al., 2017). As a result, the ongoing tension between central oversight and local autonomy continues to provoke critical debate within governance scholarship, particularly concerning its long-term impact on democratic practices and equitable development (Chen et al., 2021; Faguet, 2014).

The decentralisation-recentralisation paradox in Uganda has significantly strained the quality and responsiveness of public service delivery, exposing tensions between central authority and local autonomy. As local governments lose discretion over resources and decision-making, the ability to tailor services to community-specific needs diminishes, fostering inefficiencies and citizen dissatisfaction (Efriandi et al., 2019; Golooba-Mutebi & Hickey, 2016). This dynamic not only weakens democratic accountability, but also disrupts the intended participatory framework that underpinned initial decentralisation reforms (Ibrahim, 2024). While recentralisation may be justified by concerns over corruption or capacity at local levels, its unchecked expansion has constrained meaningful local engagement and skewed developmental priorities away from grassroots realities (Obonyo & Muhumuza, 2023; Green, 2015). The governance system faces growing challenges as the erosion of local authority undermines trust in institutions and destabilises the delicate balance needed for effective policy implementation and political legitimacy (Ojok & Kiwanuka-Tondo, 2024; Tapscott, 2017). The long-term effects of these shifts suggest an ongoing struggle between central control and democratic localism. This leads to implications that ripple through public administration, state–citizen relations, and national development planning.

The recent trend of renewed centralisation in Uganda demonstrates the central government's deliberate effort to reassert authority over key sectors. This is driven by concerns about perceived inefficiencies and performance gaps in local service delivery systems (Tapscott, 2017; Biryomumeisho et al., 2024). Although presented as a response to mismanagement, this shift has substantially eroded the foundational principles of decentralisation. It limits local governments' decision-making authority and reduces opportunities for meaningful citizen participation (Mulumba et al., 2021; Bataringaya & Mbabazi, 2019). The reassertion of central government fiscal and administrative control has disrupted the delivery of essential services at the local level. This is particularly evident in sectors such as health, education, and infrastructure, where responsiveness to local needs remains crucial (Biryomumeisho et al., 2024).

Increased central oversight has constrained the ability of local councils to innovate, allocate resources strategically, and maintain meaningful engagement with their constituencies (Ojok & Kiwanuka-Tondo, 2024; Golooba-Mutebi & Hickey, 2016). This centralising trend raises critical concerns about the long-term viability of participatory governance and the degree to which recentralisation reflects a pursuit of political dominance rather than administrative efficiency (Green, 2015). The shifting distribution of power signals a deeper contestation over institutional authority, public accountability, and the legitimacy of governance structures within Uganda’s evolving political and administrative framework.

The decentralisation-recentralisation paradox in Uganda has constrained citizen participation and weakened accountability within the governance system. This concentration of control by the central government fosters dependency among local communities, diminishing their autonomy and capacity to act independently (Beeri, 2023; Kiwanuka et al., 2022). As a result, local governments face significant obstacles in driving economic development, creating employment, and alleviating poverty, since their diminished autonomy limits responsive and context-specific initiatives (Madinah et al., 2015; Katusiimeh et al., 2022). The dynamic tension between decentralisation's promise of empowerment and recentralisation's practical constraints challenges the effectiveness of governance reforms in Uganda. It further reveals complex structural and political factors that inhibit the realisation of local development goals (Green, 2013). This paradox requires a nuanced understanding to grasp how centralised fiscal and administrative control shapes local governance outcomes in the country.

Research indicates that decentralisation has enhanced service delivery in Uganda, especially in healthcare and education sectors, by allowing local governments to address specific community needs more effectively (Makara, 2012; Kasozi, 2018). This localised approach has improved both efficiency and responsiveness in public service provision (Johnson, 2023; Kakumba, 2010). However, recentralisation has undermined these gains by shifting control and resources back to the central government, which has disrupted service continuity and reduced the quality of public services in critical areas like health and education (Ssonko, 2013; Lwanga, 2016). The tension between decentralisation and recentralisation creates a paradox that weakens service delivery, restricts citizen engagement and accountability, and impedes efforts toward economic growth and poverty alleviation (Omweri, 2014). This ongoing challenge shows how fluctuating governance structures influence the effectiveness of local administrations and their ability to meet public needs in Uganda.

Furthermore, some argue that recentralisation represents the central government's strategic effort to consolidate control over resources and key sectors like healthcare and education. This restricts local government autonomy (Mwesigwa et al., 2022; Tapscott, 2017; Green, 2013). This perspective shows how such control undermines decentralisation's intended benefits, including enhanced citizen participation and improved governance outcomes (Makara, 2012). Conversely, others contend that recentralisation addresses inefficiencies and inconsistencies in local service delivery. This aligns local actions with national priorities and improves service quality (Kasozi, 2019; Tapscott, 2017). These scholars emphasise the pragmatic need for central oversight to ensure coherent development strategies across regions (Awortwi, 2011). This ongoing dialogue underscores the complexity of balancing power between central and local governments. It exposes the tensions and trade-offs inherent in Uganda's governance structure and its implications for sustainable development.

Research from various African countries sheds light on the decentralisation-recentralisation paradox beyond Uganda's borders. In Ghana, decentralisation has improved citizen participation and service delivery, but recentralisation trends have appeared as the central government reclaims control over vital sectors (Arkorful et al., 2021; Ayee, 2015). South Africa presents a similar pattern, where decentralisation initially strengthened democratic governance and local service provision. However, recentralisation efforts have diminished local governments' autonomy and effectiveness (Muzekenyi et al., 2022; Enaifoghe & Cotties, 2019). Meanwhile, studies in Kenya and Tanzania reveal that recentralisation has often compromised decentralisation's benefits, leading to inefficiencies and weakened service delivery (Kiambati, 2020; Tsofa et al., 2017). These cross-country experiences indicate that the paradox is widespread in the African context. It reflects the common governance challenges tied to power dynamics between central and local authorities. Understanding these patterns is key to recognising how decentralisation and recentralisation influence governance and service outcomes across the region.

The study's findings, particularly as presented in Factors Influencing Recentralisation of Local Government Functions in Uganda, demonstrate that since approximately 2003, the central government has actively undermined decentralisation by reclaiming key administrative and fiscal powers. It has centralised the appointment of critical officials—such as Chief Administrative Officers and Town Clerks—previously under the mandate of district and local commissions. Additionally, it has recentralised control over payroll systems, local revenue collection, and drug procurement, transferring responsibilities from district-level institutions to national bodies like the National Medical Stores. The governance of Kampala has similarly shifted, with administrative authority consolidated under a centrally appointed Executive Director.

These reversals undermine institutional autonomy, local responsiveness, and financial agency that are central to Uganda Vision 2040's strategic pillars, particularly "Governance" and "Strengthening Fundamentals for Harnessing Opportunities" such as human resource development and decentralised service delivery. Vision 2040 envisions an upper-middle-income, modern, and prosperous society founded on strong institutions, democracy, and the rule of law. Local government development plans are coordinated under the NPA and implemented with participatory input from local governments (National Planning Authority, 2007; New Vision, 2025). When local governments are deprived of power to manage technical staffing or local revenues, the capacity to deliver on flagship projects (like regional cities, infrastructure, and referral hospitals) is weakened. The practice of recentralisation thus creates a mismatch between Vision 2040's targets (e.g. improved local service delivery, equitable development, skilled human resources, infrastructure across regions) and the practical constraints local governments face due to curtailed authority (Biryomumeisho et al., 2024; New Vision, 2025).

The African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local Governance and Local Development provides legal and normative standards that bear strongly on the study's findings.

The Charter, which came into force in 2019, requires member states to adopt domestic laws recognising different levels of government with clearly defined competencies. It also mandates that local governments manage their finances and administration through democratically elected assemblies and mobilise resources for local development with transparency and accountability (AU, 2014/2019). The study's evidence that key decisionmaking powers have shifted back to central bodies—e.g. CAO appointment powers now handled by Public Service Commission rather than District Service Commissions, local revenue collection controlled centrally—contradicts those principles. Such recentralisation dilutes downward accountability, making local governments more answerable to central authorities than to citizens. It also undermines transparency, blurs public financial management lines, and may violate the Charter's expectation that central governments adopt measures to support local governments' resource mobilisation and autonomous administration (AU, 2014/2019; Biryomumeisho et al., 2024). Several examples illustrate how policymakers and practitioners can address this paradox and better align with Vision 2040 and the Charter. For example, allowing local governments to collect and manage their own revenues directly - rather than relying on centralised transfers - would enable them to plan, budget, and respond more effectively to local priorities.

Reinstating or sharing authority over the appointment of key technical officers- such as Chief Administrative Officers and Town or Municipal Clerks- would restore their capacity to recruit personnel aligned with local development needs. Ensuring financial transparency requires the provision of predictable, unconditional grants to reduce overreliance on conditional transfers that often limit flexibility.

Strengthening institutional capacity within local governments- particularly in areas such as financial management, procurement, planning, monitoring, and accountability - would enhance their operational efficiency. Establishing robust oversight and bottom-up accountability mechanisms, including regular reporting to local councils and the public, would improve transparency and trust. Furthermore, revisiting and amending existing legal and regulatory frameworks—such as the Local Government Act and Public Service Commission regulations—would help institutionalise the core principles of the African Charter, including clearly defined competencies, local autonomy, and fiscal decentralisation, while constraining the potential for unchecked recentralisation. Implementing pilots in selected districts to test restored decentralisation could help demonstrate benefits before scaling.

### 5.1 Conclusion

The decentralisation–recentralisation paradox in Uganda's governance system poses a complex challenge that deeply shapes the country's political and developmental path. Decentralisation reforms aim to enhance local autonomy and improve service delivery, but recentralisation trends have undermined these efforts, concentrating power and resources at the central government level.

This concentration restricts local governments' capacity to address community-specific needs and weakens the broader goals of decentralisation. Several factors drive this paradox, including political and economic interests that favour central control, institutional weaknesses that hinder effective decentralisation, and limited citizen participation that reduces accountability. The resulting tension between decentralisation and recentralisation disrupts local governance structures, weakens public oversight, and complicates efforts to deliver services and public goods. These disruptions generate inefficiencies and slow progress toward economic development and poverty reduction. Examining this paradox sheds light on the complex dynamics involved in balancing power within Uganda's governance framework, emphasising the critical importance of fostering governance systems that are responsive, accountable, and capable of supporting sustainable development goals throughout the country.

### *5.1.1 Contributions of the Study*

This study offers fresh perspectives on the intricate relationship between decentralisation and recentralisation within Uganda's governance system. It deepens understanding of how shifts in power between central and local governments influence governance quality and development outcomes. The findings highlight the critical role of decentralisation in promoting local autonomy and citizen participation, emphasising its potential to improve service delivery and accountability. By exploring these dynamics, the study adds valuable insights to existing scholarship, reinforcing the importance of participatory governance. It also provides a nuanced view of the challenges faced in balancing authority, which is essential for effective policy and practice formulation in Uganda.

The analysis reveals how recentralisation, through the concentration of power and resources at the central level, compromises the benefits that decentralisation aims to achieve. This recentralisation limits local governments' capacity to respond to community needs, diminishing service quality and citizen engagement. Such dynamics expose persistent tensions across governance levels, hindering progress toward inclusive development. Beyond academic contributions, the study offers a conceptual framework that aids policymakers and practitioners in understanding and navigating the decentralisation-recentralisation paradox. It underscores the complexities involved in achieving effective governance and sustainable development in Uganda.

### *5.1.2 Recommendations*

Based on the study's findings and analysis, the following recommendations and strategies aim to address the decentralisation–recentralisation paradox in Uganda:

#### *5.1.2.1 Practical Recommendations*

Strengthening local government institutions requires targeted efforts to develop the administrative and technical skills of local officials. Establishing a national training institute dedicated to local government capacity building can provide ongoing training programmes. These programmes would equip officials with the knowledge and skills needed to manage local affairs effectively and efficiently. Enhancing local government capacity creates a foundation for stronger governance, improved service delivery, and institutions that respond professionally and competently to community needs. Enhancing citizen participation and accountability calls for the development of structured participatory governance mechanisms. Introducing tools like citizen report cards and social audits encourages public involvement in evaluating local government performance. Establishing a national citizen participation framework can set clear guidelines and standards for meaningful citizen engagement. This framework supports transparency and responsiveness by ensuring citizens have platforms to voice concerns and hold local officials accountable, fostering a more inclusive governance environment that respects and incorporates public input.

Promoting transparency and accountability in governance involves creating robust mechanisms to monitor and report on government activities. Implementing open budgeting and procurement processes increases visibility in financial decisions, reducing opportunities for corruption. Coupling these practices with strong accountability measures, including empowered anti-corruption bodies, reinforces the integrity of public institutions. Establishing a national transparency and accountability framework can provide comprehensive guidelines that standardise these efforts across government levels, ensuring consistent application of transparency principles and strengthening trust between government and citizens.

#### *5.1.2.2 Policy Recommendations*

The government needs to review and revise the current decentralisation policy framework to address core issues driving the decentralisation-recentralisation paradox. A key problem lies in the unclear division of roles and responsibilities between central and local governments, which creates confusion and inefficiency. Establishing a national decentralisation policy review committee could provide a structured approach to reassessing and updating the policy framework. This committee would focus on clarifying governance roles and enhancing coordination, thereby strengthening the foundations for effective decentralisation and reducing the tensions that fuel recentralisation.

Building a decentralised governance system requires empowering local governments to make decisions and take responsibility for their communities. Establishing a national decentralised governance framework can guide this process by defining clear principles and practices for participatory governance and accountability. This framework would help promote transparency and responsiveness by giving local authorities the mandate and tools to engage citizens meaningfully. Empowered local governments could better reflect community needs and enhance democratic participation, fostering governance that is both inclusive and accountable.

Securing adequate resources and funding is essential for the successful implementation of decentralisation reforms and the strengthening of local government institutions. Creating a national decentralisation fund would provide a dedicated financial mechanism to support these efforts consistently. This fund could enable local governments to build capacity, deliver essential services, and sustain decentralisation initiatives. Ensuring reliable financial support would reinforce the structural changes needed to move decentralisation forward, enabling local governments to operate effectively and fulfil their roles in governance and development.

*5.1.2.3 Future Research Directions*

Future research must explore innovative ways to strengthen local governance, especially through ICT-based platforms that can enhance citizen participation and improve governance processes. Creating a national research institute focused on local governance would provide a dedicated space to investigate such innovative mechanisms. This institute could examine how technology facilitates engagement, transparency, and responsiveness in local government, offering new tools to bridge gaps between authorities and communities. By focusing on digital solutions, future studies can contribute to more dynamic and inclusive governance structures that adapt to changing societal needs.

Investigating the effects of fiscal decentralisation on local government performance also demands attention. Understanding how financial autonomy influences service delivery and accountability is critical for improving governance outcomes. Establishing a national research institute on fiscal decentralisation would enable targeted analysis of budgetary processes, funding allocation, and fiscal management at the local level. This research could reveal the strengths and weaknesses of current fiscal policies and identify ways to optimise resource distribution, ensuring local governments have the capacity and incentives to meet community needs effectively.

The role of civil society organisations in enhancing local governance deserves deeper examination as well. These organisations often serve as vital links between citizens and government, promoting participation and ensuring accountability. Setting up a national research institute dedicated to studying civil society's contributions could shed light on their impact and potential. Research can clarify the role of these organisations in supporting more democratic and responsive local governance by analysing how they mobilise citizens, advocate for transparency, and hold officials accountable.

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# Governance Of Oil and Gas in Uganda

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## Abstract

*Effective management of oil and gas resources is vital to boosting Uganda's economic development. The country has 1.38 billion barrels of recoverable oil reserves, significantly improving revenue, exports, and investment. Thus, the current study analysed the governance of oil and gas in Uganda by comparing value realisation, revenue management, enabling environment, and law and practice. The study explicitly compared Uganda's oil and gas sector scores from 2017 to 2021 across four key areas: oil and gas value, the enabling environment, revenue management, and laws and practices. The study employed a descriptive design, using solely quantitative methods to examine Uganda's governance of oil and gas. It relied on secondary data freely available on the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI) website. A two-sample t-test was conducted, and conclusions on the study hypotheses were drawn based on the resulting p-values. The findings emphasise the need to strengthen the enforcement of existing laws. Uganda must move beyond having well-crafted legislation on paper to ensuring its full implementation in practice. The government should uphold the rule of law in managing the oil and gas sector to guarantee that the current legal framework delivers tangible socio-economic benefits.*

***Keywords:*** *Oil and gas, environment, revenue, governance, Uganda*

## 1.0 Introduction

The discovery of commercially viable oil deposits in Uganda in 2006 marked a historic turning point in the country's development journey. With an estimated 6.5 billion barrels of oil discovered, of which 2.5 billion are recoverable, Uganda's petroleum resources present both an opportunity and a challenge (Veit, Excell, & Zomer, 2011). If managed effectively, this resource wealth can transform Uganda into a middle-income country by reducing poverty, encouraging socio-economic growth, and raising living standards. However, experiences from other resource-rich nations warn against the so-called "natural resource curse," where poor governance, rent-seeking behaviour, and weak institutions undermine the developmental potential of oil and mineral wealth (Agbaeze & Ukoha, 2018; Frankel, 2012). Avoiding this problem requires deliberate governance strategies that focus on transparency, accountability, and sustainable resource management.

Oil exploration in Uganda has a long history dating back to the colonial period, when oil seeps were first mapped and shallow wells drilled in places like Kibiro, Butiaba, and the Semliki valley. These early attempts stalled due to global events such as World War II, colonial economic policies favouring agriculture, and decades of political instability that deterred investment. It was not until 6 January 2006, with the discovery of the Mputa-1 well, that Uganda officially confirmed the presence of commercial oil (MEMD, 2017). This milestone prompted increased exploration activities, leading to multiple discoveries and growing international interest in Uganda's oil and gas sector (Agbaeze & Ukoha, 2018; Mbabazi & Muhangi, 2017).

Initially, Uganda lacked an adequate legal and institutional framework to regulate the petroleum industry. The Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act of 1985 and constitutional provisions offered limited guidance in a context where no large-scale commercial oil had yet been proven. Recognising the need for a comprehensive governance framework, the Government introduced key reforms between 2008 and 2015. These included the National Oil and Gas Policy (2008), the Oil and Gas Revenue Management Policy (2012), the Petroleum Acts of 2013, and the Public Finance Management Act (2015), which together sought to establish rules for exploration, production, revenue management, and transparency (GoU, 2013; Oloka-Onyango, 2020). The contemporary exploitation of petroleum wealth requires several considerations in the country's governance frameworks.

In this study, resource governance is understood as the set of "hard" rules, laws, regulations, monitoring, and enforcement mechanisms and "soft" rules norms, standards, and expectations that shape how hydrocarbons contribute to sustainable development. Effective governance requires not only strong legal frameworks, but also predictable institutional practices, equitable revenue sharing, and accountability by all stakeholders (ACODE, 2018; Phillips & Whiting, 2016). While Uganda has made progress in creating a governance architecture for the petroleum sector, recent assessments such as the (RGI, 2021) place the country in the "weak" performance band, citing gaps in revenue management, value realisation, and enabling environments (Frankel, 2012; Levy & Newell, 2005; Oloka-Onyango, 2020; Qureshi, 2008). Against this backdrop, the present paper critically examines Uganda's oil and gas governance framework over the past four years. It evaluates whether the policies and institutions established are sufficient to steer the country away from the pitfalls of the resource curse and toward inclusive, sustainable development.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

With substantial investments and revenues anticipated from Uganda's oil and gas sector as it enters the production phase, only prudent management of these resources can steer the country towards the much-anticipated middle-income status. However, despite early progress in establishing laws on exploration, production, licensing, and financial matters, the initial signs of effective governance in Uganda's oil and gas sector remain unpromising. The 2021 Resource Governance Index (RGI) report ranked Uganda's governance of the oil and gas sector within the weak performance band, after assessing value realisation, revenue management, the enabling environment, and the gap between law and practice. Furthermore, oil and gas licensing received a "failing" score, largely due to the absence of a cadastre, the lack of beneficial ownership disclosure rules, and the government's failure to publish contracts with oil and gas companies (Kjær, Therkildsen, Buur & Hansen, 2021; RGI, 2021).

According to Niringiyimana (2021), despite some improvements, governance in Uganda's emerging oil and gas sector - as well as in the wider mining sector - remains weak, with widening gaps between law and practice. This weakness could undermine the country's commitment to transparency and its aspirations for middle-income status (Niringiyimana, 2021; Oloka-Onyango, 2020). Moreover, although Uganda has established transparent policies and laws, parts of the contracting processes remain opaque and are not readily accessible to the public. As stipulated in the Access to Information Act (2005), information appeals are often time-consuming and do not always yield the desired outcomes. For instance, in Charles Mwanguhya Mpagi and Izama Angelo v. The Attorney General (2010), the Chief Magistrate's Court of Nakawa ruled that the applicants had not proved beyond reasonable doubt that the public benefit of disclosure outweighed the potential harm to third parties (Bagabo, Mugyenyi, Magara & Twebaze, 2019; Oloka-Onyango, 2020).

### 1.2 General Objective of the Study

Undoubtedly, Uganda has made efforts to establish an institutional and legal framework to guide its nascent oil and gas sector. However, procedures, policies, and laws hold little value unless they are effectively implemented and enforced, supported by administrative efficiency, adherence to the rule of law, public trust in government, and a sound regulatory framework. The primary objective of this study is to assess whether the implementation of Uganda's current oil and gas governance framework is helping the country avoid falling into the "oil curse" syndrome, with particular emphasis on comparing Uganda's oil and gas value scores between 2017 and 2021.

### 1.3 Hypotheses

The objectives of the study were evaluated using the hypotheses below:

**Ha$_1$:** There was a significant difference in the scores of the value of oil and gas between 2017 and 2021 in Uganda

**Ha$_2$:** There was a significant difference in the scores of the enabling oil and gas environment between 2017 and 2021 in Uganda

**Ha$_3$:** There was a significant difference in the scores of the oil and gas revenue management between 2017 and 2021 in Uganda

**Ha$_4$:** There was a substantial difference between the scores of the oil and gas Laws and practices in Uganda

## 2.0 Literature Review

A substantial body of scholarship has examined the "oil curse," a range of political and economic challenges that affect nearly all oil-producing nations to varying degrees (Peck & Chayes, 2015). While oil and mineral resources can generate considerable benefits, irresponsible governance often distorts economies, encourages corruption, and provokes conflict. Evidence indicates that countries rich in oil and mineral resources are more susceptible to civil unrest than those without (El-Gamal & Jaffe, 2009; Peck & Chayes, 2015). For Uganda, the extent to which oil and mineral wealth will provide sustainable benefits depends largely on transparency, particularly in how the government handles oil and mining contracts with companies.

One major challenge associated with resource wealth is the "Dutch disease," first observed in the Netherlands in the late 1950s when gas exports strengthened the Dutch guilder. This shift made the manufacturing and service sectors less competitive and left the economy vulnerable when gas prices later declined (Agbaeze & Ukoha, 2018; Ross, 1999). Similar patterns have occurred in African countries such as Nigeria and Chad, where resources and labour moved from non-booming sectors to the oil sector, weakening overall economic stability (Agbaeze & Ukoha, 2018; Robinson, Torvik, & Verdier, 2006).

Oil-producing states also face persistent gaps in information, monitoring, and public participation (Karl, 2007; Morrison, 2012; Ross, 2012). These gaps exist at both local and national levels, where power is concentrated in the executive, fiscal accountability is weak, and rent-seeking practices prevail. In such contexts, civil society groups and advocacy organisations often lack the capacity to hold governments and oil companies accountable. To mitigate these risks, international donors, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), think tanks, and industry associations have promoted governance reforms and accountability initiatives (Bagabo et al., 2019; Van Alstine, Manyindo, Smith, Dixon, & AmanigaRuhanga, 2014).

Resource governance encompasses both hard rules, such as laws, policies, and regulations, and soft rules, including norms, standards, and social expectations, which determine how hydrocarbons contribute to development and poverty reduction (Van Alstine et al., 2014). Much of the oil curse literature emphasises the importance of robust management frameworks that shield governance from the adverse effects of resource revenues. Mechanisms like sovereign wealth funds, binding savings rules, and careful expenditure controls are recommended to stabilise economies and ensure long-term benefits. These insights are particularly relevant for Uganda, which faces both opportunities and risks in managing newly-discovered reserves.

Globally, governance norms have evolved to counter the negative economic, social, and environmental impacts of extractive industries. Advocates of good governance argue that transparency across the extractive value chain is essential for ensuring that oil wealth benefits the population. In Uganda, this involves enacting policies and laws that regulate exploration and production, define license obligations, establish financial rules, and ensure disclosure and accountability ACODE (2018). Governments are expected to regulate resource extraction, collect revenue, and use it to deliver services equitably by promoting transparency, accountability, and participation. The parties involved, such as the government and companies, must comply with these policies, laws, regulations, and best practices, as illustrated in Figure 1.


*Figure 1: Uganda Oil and Gas Sector Governance Framework*

*Source: ACODE (2018)*

One key governance issue is ownership. Article 244 of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda states that all minerals and petroleum resources belong to the government, acting on behalf of the people (Oloka-Onyango, 2020). This reflects the public trust doctrine, which obliges government to manage resources transparently and accountably. Another critical issue is contract transparency. According to best international practices, open contracting and disclosure of agreements are essential for civic trust and competition. However, Uganda's oil contracts have often been opaque, with limited public access, despite constitutional requirements and the Access to Information Act (Oloka-Onyango, 2020). Secrecy around contracts has been linked to corruption, environmental harm, conflict, and mismanagement. Countries such as Nigeria, Angola, and Venezuela illustrate the dangers of secrecy, while Norway provides a contrasting model where openness has fostered development (GoU, 2018).

Uganda has also struggled with local content provisions. Many oil contracts lack specific quotas or timelines for employing Ugandans, merely stating that expatriates will gradually be replaced. The National Local Content Act (2019) was introduced to address these weaknesses and strengthen local participation in oil projects Oloka-Onyango (2020) Without effective local content rules, resource wealth can fail to benefit the broader population (Oloka-Onyango, 2020). The literature consistently warns that without openness and accountability, oil revenues tend to worsen corruption, deepen inequalities, and undermine environmental sustainability law? and Minio-Paluello (2010) note that Uganda's licensing processes still suffer from weaknesses that need reform if the country is to achieve international best practices. Lessons from Ecuador demonstrate that institutional reforms and strong governance can transform oil wealth into broader development benefits, including economic diversification and investment in infrastructure (Al-Badri; Lay & Minio-Paluello, 2010).

Internationally, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is the leading global standard for resource governance. It requires disclosing revenues, payments, and contracts to promote accountability. Uganda joined EITI in 2020, pledging to adhere to its 12 principles.

However, contract disclosure remains limited, with agreements often treated as state secrets. Even legal requests for access to contracts such as the case of Charles Mwanguhya Mpagi and Izama Angelo v. Attorney General (2010) have been unsuccessful. Uganda's National Oil and Gas Policy recognises that the sector can generate both opportunities and risks. If poorly managed, it can lead to economic stagnation, environmental damage, and increased poverty. To mitigate these risks, Uganda has developed a legal, regulatory, and institutional framework. Capacity-building initiatives have been introduced to enhance monitoring and accountability, but practical implementation depends on the active involvement of all stakeholders, government, companies, and civil society alike.

## 3.0 Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design (Hammond & Gast, 2010) with a quantitative approach to investigate Uganda's oil and gas governance. This design was chosen because it allows for the systematic description, analysis, and interpretation of existing governance data without manipulating variables. The descriptive design was appropriate since the study aimed to analyse governance indicators rather than establish causal relationships. The population of the study comprised governance indicators in the oil and gas sector of Uganda, as published by the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI) through the Resource Governance Index (RGI). The scope was limited to the most recent available data on Uganda's oil and gas sector governance, focusing on value realisation, revenue management, and enabling environment (Johnston, 2014).

Given the reliance on secondary data, the study employed purposive sampling. Data from the RGI on Uganda was selected because it is globally recognised, regularly updated, and based on internationally standardized governance frameworks. Other potential sources were excluded to maintain consistency and comparability of indicators. Secondary data were collected from the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI) website. Specifically, datasets and reports for Uganda's oil and gas sector under the Resource Governance Index were downloaded and extracted. The study focused on variables measuring governance performance, such as legal framework, transparency, accountability, value realisation, and revenue management (GoU, 2018).

The data were analyed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, variance, and frequency distributions) to provide summaries of the governance indicators. A two-sample t-test (Chakraborty, Firestone, & Bellows, 2013) was conducted to compare governance performance across different categories of indicators, particularly between value realisation, revenue management, and enabling environment. The analysis was performed using SPSS version 14 (Bryman & Cramer, 2009). Hypotheses were tested at a 95% confidence level, with conclusions drawn based on the significance values (p-values). The study relied on secondary data from the NRGI, which is a globally recognised institution specialising in extractive sector governance. The data's credibility is assured by NRGI's rigorous methodology, peer-review processes, and the use of internationally accepted governance benchmarks. Using one standardised data source ensured reliability and comparability across governance indicators.

The methodology had limitations. First, the reliance on secondary data restricted the researcher's ability to verify or update information. Second, the study did not collect primary data from stakeholders in Uganda's oil sector, which could have provided richer contextual insights. Third, the use of descriptive and t-test analysis restricted the depth of causal inference. These limitations are acknowledged, but the use of RGI data still provides valid insights into governance performance in Uganda. Although the study relied on secondary data, ethical standards were observed. Data was accessed from publicly available sources, with due acknowledgment of NRGI as the primary publisher. Proper citation and referencing were applied in line with academic conventions. No human subjects were involved; hence issues of consent or confidentiality did not arise.

## 4.0 Results

This chapter presents the descriptive statistics and findings on the study objectives.

### 4.1 Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics of the study variables are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the variables**

| Variables | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Dev |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Oil and gas value realisation score in 2017 | 4 | 13 | 72 | 42.50 | 24.853 |
| Oil and gas value realisation score in 2021 | 4 | 27 | 78 | 49.00 | 22.076 |
| Oil and gas enabling environment score in 2017 | 7 | 23 | 68 | 46.71 | 18.062 |
| Oil and gas enabling environment score in 2021 | 7 | 20 | 70 | 49.71 | 15.892 |
| Oil and gas revenue management score in 2017 | 2 | 36 | 48 | 42.00 | 8.485 |
| Oil and gas revenue management score in 2021 | 3 | 43 | 52 | 48.67 | 4.933 |
| Oil and gas law score from 2017 to 2021 | 2 | 49 | 57 | 53.00 | 5.657 |
| Oil and gas law practice (enforcement) score from 2017 to 2021 | 2 | 38 | 39 | 38.50 | .707 |

*Source: Author's computations based on NRGI, 2021*

Table 1 shows that oil and gas value realisation scored an average of 42.5 points in 2017, below the average score of 49 points in 2021. The enabling environment of oil and gas scored an average of 46.7 points in 2017, slightly below the 49.7 average score points in 2021. The sector's revenue management scored an average of 48.7 points in 2021, above the 42-point average in 2017. Regarding oil and gas laws and enforcement, the sector scored an average of 38.5 points in law enforcement, below the 53-point average for Uganda's oil and gas laws.

#### *4.1.1 Comparing the scores of the value of oil and gas between 2017 and 2021 in Uganda*

The study sought to find out whether there was a significant difference in the average score on the value of the oil and gas sector between 2017 and 2021 in Uganda. The oil and gas sector value was measured regarding licensing, taxation, local impact, and state-owned enterprises. The findings are presented using a two-sample t-test in Table 2.

**Table 2: Two-sample t-test comparing the scores of the value of oil and gas between 2017 and 2021 in Uganda**

Two-sample t test with equal variances

| Variable | Obs | Mean | Std. Err. | Std. Dev. | [95% Conf. | Interval] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| VR_201~e | 4 | 42.5 | 12.42645 | 24.8529 | 2.953489 | 82.04651 |
| VR_202~e | 4 | 49 | 11.03781 | 22.07563 | 13.87275 | 84.12725 |
| combined | 8 | 45.75 | 7.791364 | 22.03731 | 27.32635 | 64.17365 |
| diff | | -6.5 | 16.62077 | | -47.16956 | 34.16956 |

diff = mean(VR_2017_score) - mean(VR_2021_score)    t = -0.3911
Ho: diff = 0    degrees of freedom = 6

Ha: diff < 0    Ha: diff != 0    Ha: diff > 0
Pr(T < t) = 0.3546    Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.7093    Pr(T > t) = 0.6454

*Source: Author's computations based on NRGI, 2021*

The findings from Table 2 reveal that there was no significant difference in the average score of the value of oil and gas between 2017 and 2021 in Uganda (Mean difference=6.5 score points, P-value (0.7093)>0.05). The findings may imply that the value of oil and gas sector scored almost the same points in 2017 and 2021 because of the reduction in licensing and local impact.

#### *4.1.2 Comparing the scores of the enabling oil and gas environment between 2017 and 2021 in Uganda*

The study's second objective was to investigate whether there was a significant difference in the scores for the enabling environment of oil and gas in Uganda between 2017 and 2021. In terms of the enabling environment, the study examined voice and accountability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, the rule of law, control of corruption, political stability and absence of violence, and data openness. The findings of the study are presented in Table 3.

***Table 3: Two-sample t-test results comparing the scores of the enabling environment of oil and gas between 2017 and 2021 in Uganda***

Two-sample t test with equal variances

| Variable | Obs | Mean | Std. Err. | Std. Dev. | [95% Conf. | Interval] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EE_201~e | 7 | 46.71429 | 6.826818 | 18.06206 | 30.00966 | 63.41891 |
| EE_202~e | 7 | 49.71429 | 6.006799 | 15.8925 | 35.01618 | 64.41239 |
| combined | 14 | 48.21429 | 4.388019 | 16.41846 | 38.73455 | 57.69402 |
| diff | | -3 | 9.093243 | | -22.81248 | 16.81248 |

diff = mean(EE_2017_score) - mean(EE_2021_score)    t = -0.3299
Ho: diff = 0    degrees of freedom = 12

Ha: diff < 0    Ha: diff != 0    Ha: diff > 0
Pr(T < t) = 0.3736    Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.7472    Pr(T > t) = 0.6264

*Source: Author's computations based on NRGI, 2021*

The study outcomes in Table 3 revealed at a 5% level that there was no significant difference in the scores of the enabling environment of oil and gas between 2017 and 2021 in Uganda (mean difference = =3 score points, P-value (0.7472)>0.05). The findings may imply that the enabling environment of oil and gas remained almost the same score points in both 2017 and 2021. No change in the score points was attributed to increased corruption tendencies, government ineffectiveness, and reduced quality in the oil and gas regulatory system.

### 4.1.3 Comparing the scores of the oil and gas revenue management between 2017 and 2021 in Uganda

The study investigated whether there was a significant difference in Uganda's oil and gas revenue management scores between 2017 and 2021. Revenue management of the oil and gas sector was examined in national budgeting, subnational resource revenue sharing, and sovereign wealth funds. The findings are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Two-sample t-test results comparing the scores of the oil and gas revenue management between 2017 and 2021 in Uganda**

Two-sample t test with equal variances

| Variable | Obs | Mean | Std. Err. | Std. Dev. | [95% Conf. | Interval] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| RM_201~e | 2 | 42 | 6 | 8.485281 | -34.23723 | 118.2372 |
| RM_202~e | 3 | 48.66667 | 2.848001 | 4.932883 | 36.41271 | 60.92063 |
| combined | 5 | 46 | 2.949576 | 6.595453 | 37.81066 | 54.18934 |
| diff | | -6.666667 | 5.789518 | | -25.0915 | 11.75816 |

```
    diff = mean(RM_2017_score) - mean(RM_2021_score)              t =  -1.1515
Ho: diff = 0                                       degrees of freedom =        3

    Ha: diff < 0                  Ha: diff != 0                  Ha: diff > 0
 Pr(T < t) = 0.1665         Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.3330          Pr(T > t) = 0.8335
```

*Source: Author's computations based on NRGI, 2021*

The study found that the average scores of oil and gas revenue management between 2017 and 2021 in Uganda were not significantly different at the 5% level (mean difference=6.7 points, p-value (0.3330)>0.05). The results may imply that the oil and gas sector revenue management scores remained almost the same in 2017 and 2021 in Uganda due to the ineffectiveness of the national budgeting process.

### *4.1.5 Comparing the scores of the oil and gas laws and practices in Uganda*

The last objective of the study was to investigate whether there was a significant difference between the scores of oil and gas sector laws and practices in Uganda from 2017 to 2021. The findings are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Two-sample t-test results comparing the scores of the oil and gas laws and practices in Uganda**

Two-sample t test with equal variances

| Variable | Obs | Mean | Std. Err. | Std. Dev. | [95% Conf. | Interval] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Law | 2 | 53 | 4 | 5.656854 | 2.175181 | 103.8248 |
| Practice | 2 | 38.5 | .5 | .7071068 | 32.1469 | 44.8531 |
| combined | 4 | 45.75 | 4.497685 | 8.995369 | 31.43636 | 60.06364 |
| diff | | 14.5 | 4.031129 | | -2.844548 | 31.84455 |

diff = mean(Law) - mean(Practice)    t = 3.5970
Ho: diff = 0    degrees of freedom = 2

Ha: diff < 0    Ha: diff != 0    Ha: diff > 0
Pr(T < t) = 0.9653    Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0693    Pr(T > t) = 0.0347

*Source: Author's computations based on NRGI, 2021*

The results in Table 5 show that there was no significant difference in the average scores of the oil and gas laws and practice in Uganda from 2017 to 2021 at a 5% level (mean difference=14.5 scores, P-value (0.0692)>0.05). The findings may imply that the Government does not fully enforce the laws governing the oil and gas sector, as stated in the Constitution of Uganda.

## 5.0 Conclusions

The study concludes that oil and gas governance in Uganda was poor between 2017 and 2021. For instance, the study observed no significant improvement in oil and gas value, environmental conditions, revenue management, or law enforcement between 2017 and 2021. The poor performance of the sector could primarily be attributed to the Government of Uganda's noncompliance with oil and gas laws and industry best practices. It hardly adheres to the rules and upholds the rule of law principles despite having a robust oil and gas legal regime. This is likely to create an opportunity to abuse and misuse oil funds and eventually end the oil curse syndrome. Therefore, adherence to the rule of law, openness, and full access to information will allow all stakeholders to participate in the oil and gas sector. Several improvements are necessary to address the following bottlenecks: poor licensing, increased corruption, government ineffectiveness, reduced quality in the oil and gas regulatory system, and an ineffective national budget.

### 5.1 Recommendations

Strengthen enforcement of existing laws. Uganda must move beyond having good laws on paper to fully enforcing them in practice. The Government should uphold the rule of law in the management of the oil and gas sector to ensure that the current legal regime delivers real socio-economic benefits.

Restrict ministerial discretion in licensing. Although the Petroleum (Exploration, Development, and Production) Act, 2013 requires a transparent and competitive licensing process, it grants the Minister of Energy broad powers to bypass this process. These discretionary powers should be limited through legal amendments to prevent misuse and ensure fairness.

Domesticate the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) principles. Uganda's membership in the is a positive step, but without a domestic law to enforce its principles, progress remains limited. The Government should enact legislation to embed EITI standards into national law, making transparency and accountability legally binding.

Ensure contract transparency. The Government should publish all oil and gas contracts, including Production Sharing Agreements (PSAs), in full and without withholding details. This will allow citizens, Parliament, and civil society to assess whether Uganda is securing fair benefits from its natural resources.

Improve public access to information. Key government ministries and agencies should make vital documents such as contracts, licenses, revenue reports, and environmental assessments readily accessible online. Reporting should meet EITI standards in both scope and depth.

Protect human rights and the environment. Current oil contracts do not include enforceable standards on environmental protection or human rights. New laws or amendments should introduce specific and binding obligations on oil companies to safeguard communities, protect the environment, and ensure sustainable operations.

Prevent oil-backed debt risks. Uganda must avoid the mistakes of countries like Angola, where oil-backed loans have created unsustainable debt. While the Public Finance Management Act (2015) provides a framework, Uganda should adopt best practices from Norway by saving all oil revenues in a sovereign wealth fund and using only the interest for expenditure. This will protect the economy and future generations.

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# Technostress and ICT Adoption among Senior Managers in Ugandan Public Universities

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## Abstract

*The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in higher education has streamlined administration and teaching. However, it also creates unique stressors or technostress that can either facilitate or hinder adoption. In this study, we examined the relationship between technostress and ICT adoption among senior managers in Ugandan public universities. An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used to collect survey and interview data from eighty-eight (88) senior managers across seven universities. Exploratory factor analysis revealed the multidimensionality of both technostress (complexity, overload, invasion, uncertainty, and insecurity) and ICT adoption (ease of use, acceptance, and usefulness). Regression analysis showed that technostress was a predictor of ICT adoption. Specifically, techno-complexity had a negative impact, while techno-overload and techno-invasion had positive impacts. Techno-insecurity and techno-uncertainty did not have a significant impact on ICT adoption. Qualitative data confirmed the quantitative findings, indicating that stressors like workload and constant connectivity promote adoption, while complexity acts as a barrier. The results contribute to theory by showing that stressors have varying effects on adoption, with some discouraging and others encouraging it. In practice, the findings highlight the need to address complexity through training and user-friendly ICT design, along with balanced policies to prevent overload and invasion of privacy.*

**Keywords:** *ICT adoption, technostress, higher education, senior managers, Uganda, mixed methods*

## 1.0 Background of the Study

The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is becoming an essential and all-encompassing way to improve efficiency, governance, and decision-making processes (UNESCO, 2023). The ICT concept includes a wide range of computer hardware and software systems, e-learning platforms, video conferencing, and online collaborative services, which are vital to learning and management functions in institutions. The speed of digitalisation in universities has increased rapidly, as the need for remote and hybrid work during the COVID-19 pandemic changed many teaching practices and operations (Dey, Al-Karaghouli, & Muhammad, 2020; Vaziri, Casper, Wayne, & Matthews, 2020). At the same time, in Uganda, local policies shape these global ICT trends by emphasising the role of ICT in advancing the government's broader social and economic development goals. For example, the National ICT Policy (2014) and the Third National Development Plan (2020/21–2024/25) framework see ICT as a powerful force for change, a catalyst for, and a critical part of, public sector reform and improved efficiency (Ministry of ICT & National Guidance, 2014; National Planning Authority, 2020). Consequently, public universities now depend on ICT for many aspects of university governance, performance monitoring, and service delivery.

The increased adoption of ICT in university work has also been accompanied by rising psychosocial pressure on users. In higher education, researchers have extensively studied and validated this phenomenon across various institutional contexts. Their findings reveal several significant negative relationships between technostress and key attitudes and behaviours, such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and staff performance (Jena & Mahanti, 2014; Govender & Mpungose, 2022). A recent study involving staff and faculty at Indian universities by Mahapatro et al. (2023) also found that a notable portion of participants, about one-third, experienced relatively high levels of technostress. The study further provided clear evidence of technostress's impact on individual outcomes, including reduced ICT adoption and lower job performance among staff.

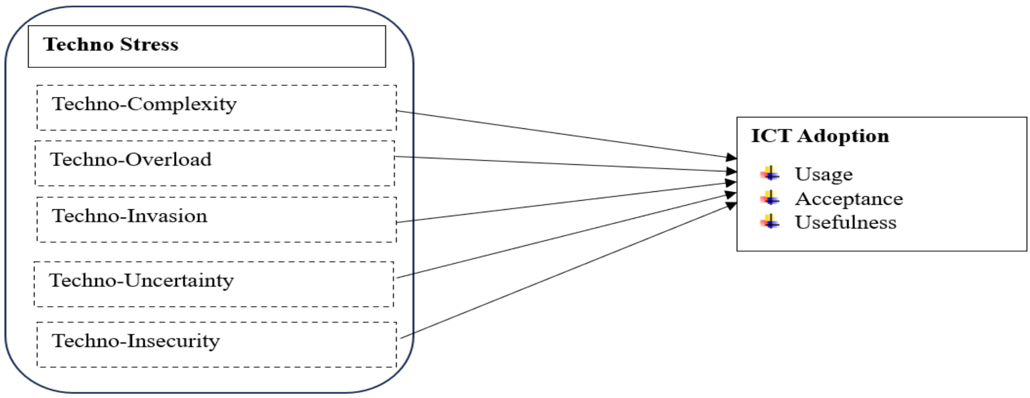
In Uganda's public universities, ICTs have been generally welcomed. Studies indicate that despite widespread use of computers and the internet for teaching and administration, various individual and structural barriers often slow or even reverse the adoption process. These barriers include inadequate and overloaded ICT infrastructure, insufficient staff training and development opportunities, weak leadership and support for technology adoption, and a lack of technical expertise. The National Planning Authority (2020) highlights that underdeveloped ICT infrastructure, low investment in research and innovation, and unmet conditions for policy implementation and adoption largely cause these issues. There is a growing view that university staff, particularly senior managers, are increasingly experiencing forms of technostress during their work. Symptoms of technostress reported in Ugandan universities include constant work overload, intrusion of work into personal time, anxiety about continuous ICT system updates and learning, and fear of being replaced by younger digital generations (Muhenda, 2020). Although many studies on ICT adoption in Ugandan universities and technostress have focused on students and lecturers, little research has examined the experiences of senior managers in public universities, who play a central role in driving ICT strategy, budgeting, implementation, and leadership support. The research gap is both conceptual and practical. Theoretically, the need to integrate the technostress phenomenon with established ICT adoption models, such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), has not yet been well-developed in public higher education institutions in Africa. This includes distinguishing between the hindrance nature of most technostress creators (complexity, uncertainty) and some potential challenge stressors (e.g., overload) in resource-limited public universities. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of technostress on ICT adoption among senior managers in Ugandan public universities.

## 2.0 Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Brod (1982, 1984) defined technostress as the pressure that occurs when individuals fail to successfully adapt to new technology. The technostress construct is described as the maladaptive or dysfunctional strain and pressure that individuals experience while trying to cope with new technologies (Brod, 1982, 1984). Several scholars (Brod, 1984; Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008; Tarafdar et al., 2019; Bondanini et al., 2020) identified five common technostressors, such as techno-overload, which relates to excessive work and time pressures caused by technology; techno-invasion, the blurred boundaries between work and personal life enabled by always-on and online technologies; techno-complexity, reflecting the need to acquire digital skills to manage new technologies; techno-insecurity, the feeling of job insecurity arising from fears of being replaced by colleagues who are more digitally skilled; and techno-uncertainty, the loss of confidence in technology caused by ongoing system changes and updates (Tarafdar, Cooper, & Stich, 2019; Bondanini et al., 2020). These technostressors have been tested and shown to influence ICT usage and acceptance in various academic and corporate settings (Bondanini et al., 2020). However, there is limited evidence on how they affect ICT adoption among a specific population in the Higher Education Institute (HE) context, such as senior managers in African public universities. Senior managers play a crucial role in implementing policy, allocating resources, and guiding organisational direction.

### 2.1 Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework is based on two digital technology adoption theories - the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh et al., 2003), as well as on emerging technostress literature (Tarafdar, Cooper, & Stich, 2019).




*Source: Adopted from Davis (1989); Venkatesh et al., (2003); Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008; Tarafdar et al., (2019); Bondanini et al., (2020) and modified by the Researchers*

***Figure 1:*** *Conceptual Framework*

Essentially, the two TAM/UTAUT models incorporate ICT adoption through rational perspectives such as perceived usefulness, ease of use, performance expectancy, and facilitating conditions. Meanwhile, technostress literature indicates that the "dark side" of digitalisation introduces stressors that can significantly influence user behaviour (Tarafdar et al., 2019). By combining these, the framework assumes that five hypothesised constructs of technostress (techno-overload, techno-invasion, techno-complexity, techno-insecurity, and techno-uncertainty) substantially impact the study's targeted ICT adoption outcomes (ICT use, acceptance, and perceived usefulness) among senior managers in Ugandan public universities. The TAM/UTAUT literature defines ICT adoption as both a behavioural and attitudinal outcome, specifically ICT usage, acceptance, and perceived usefulness.. Additionally, the framework aims to test the direct effects of the five TS constructs. Therefore, it provides a basis for testing hypotheses H1–H5 (Fig. 1).

## 2.2 Techno-Overload and ICT Adoption

The adoption of ICT is associated with pressures to manage large volumes of information and operate at high speed, a phenomenon known as overload. Shue, Tu, and Wang (2011) observed that ICT involvement in most work activities and daily life, combined with rapid technological change, leads employees to rely heavily on technologies and digital systems that dominate modern work processes. While ICT use can improve efficiency and effectiveness in decision-making and data processing (UNESCO, 2009; Berisha-Shaqiri, 2015), these benefits are often offset by the increased workload they create (Gunmala, 2005; Carlotto, Wendt, & Jones, 2017). Therefore, when senior managers in higher education adopt information and digital systems - such as enterprise resource planning and learning management systems their workload and responsibilities may increase. In many cases, these systems add new tasks instead of reducing them. The literature, however, suggests that overload can have either a negative or positive effect on ICT adoption.

On one hand, overload acts as a hindrance stressor that overwhelms a user's capacity to work (Hang, Chen, & Shah, 2022). On the other hand, when combined with performance expectations and organisational support, overload can serve as a challenge stressor that encourages adoption. As a concept within ICT adoption, overload warrants further research, especially in the context of public universities in Uganda. The first hypothesis is developed:

*H1: Techno-overload significantly affects ICT adoption among senior managers in public universities.*

### 2.3 Techno-Invasion and ICT Adoption

ICT-enabled connectivity also diminishes work–life balance as ICT blurs the lines between professional and personal life. This phenomenon is known as techno-invasion. Employees report feeling pressured to be available and connected beyond work hours, which threatens their work–life balance (Suhail & Sibichan, 2014). While mobile technologies, smartphones, and online collaboration platforms make work more flexible and responsive, they often lead to factors that can cause fatigue, burnout, and dissatisfaction. These issues can result in resistance to ICT adoption if not adequately managed (Mahboob & Khan, 2016). Senior managers in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) face a higher risk of invasion due to their decision-making roles and interactions with many stakeholder groups. However, little empirical research examines how invasion affects ICT adoption, particularly in terms of usage and acceptance among this group.

This gap is especially relevant in the Ugandan context, which this paper aims to address.

*H2: Techno-invasion has a significant effect on the adoption of ICT among senior managers in public universities.*

### 2.4 Techno-Complexity and ICT Adoption

Techno-complexity refers to the feeling of strain that occurs when ICT systems and technologies are too complex to learn and use. Sarabadani, Carter, and Compeau (2018) and Al-Maroof, Salloum, Hassanien, and Shaalan (2020) found that a lack of knowledge or expertise in using new ICT systems causes most employees to spend long hours learning and using these systems, which negatively impacts their perceptions of how easy they are to use. Tarafdar et al. (2011) discovered that frequent ICT system upgrades create a constant demand for reskilling, leading to stress and fatigue. Marchiori, Mainardes, and Rodrigues (2018) also found that complexity hampers the ICT adoption process, with older and more experienced staff experiencing more difficulty than younger and less experienced employees, likely because they have been exposed to more new technologies. Recent studies in Uganda have highlighted a lack of ICT training, insufficient technical support, and weak ICT leadership as major contributors to complexity-related technostress (Bbuye, 2017; Muhenda, 2020). For higher education institutions (HEIs), this issue can be particularly true for senior managers, who not only use these systems, but also need to monitor and enforce ICT use across their organisations. In this context, complexity is expected to hinder adoption by reducing perceived ease of use and usefulness.

*H3: Techno-complexity has a significant effect on ICT adoption among senior managers in public universities.*

### 2.5 Techno-Insecurity and ICT Adoption

Fear of losing one's job to younger or more technologically skilled colleagues is known as techno-insecurity. Sareen (2019) demonstrated that insecurity is most common when employees see themselves as less skilled and knowledgeable than their peers or supervisors. Previous research has linked insecurity to decreased productivity (Sarabadani, Carter, & Compeau, 2018) and lower job satisfaction (Tarafdar et al., 2011). Okolo, Kamarudin, and Ahmad (2018) also found that insecurity destabilises and demotivates staff, making them hesitant to use ICT. In higher education, insecurity may also happen when hiring young, ICT-savvy professionals who take on more responsibilities and authority than their older colleagues. In Uganda's public universities, where ICT adoption and use are key performance indicators for many senior managers, insecurity can undermine their motivation to promote ICT adoption.

*H4: Techno-insecurity has a significant effect on the adoption of ICT among senior managers in public universities.*

### 2.6 Techno-Uncertainty and ICT Adoption

Techno-uncertainty is a state where ICT users feel anxious and disoriented due to constant system upgrades, changes, and the regular introduction of new platforms. Bencsik and Csinger (2021) and Muhenda (2020) found that regularly upgrading ICT systems disrupts workflows and forces most employees to adapt to new systems and technologies constantly. Tarafdar et al. (2011) discovered that uncertainty reduces users' intention to adopt new technologies because of the strain it causes. For senior managers in HEIs, uncertainty can be especially destabilising due to limited resources, poor planning and implementation of ICT systems and platforms, and limited opportunities for training. This makes uncertainty a highly likely barrier to ICT adoption, as it undermines users' perceptions of both ease of use and usefulness.

*H5: Techno-uncertainty has a significant effect on ICT adoption among senior managers in public universities.*

## 3.0 Methodology

This study used a mixed-methods approach to examine the complex organisational phenomenon of technostress and ICT adoption. An explanatory sequential design was most suitable because it effectively captures both the relationship and context of this connection (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018). This method combines quantitative data with qualitative data collected at different stages of the research. The quantitative data are followed by qualitative data collection and analysis to provide a detailed explanation of the statistical results (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018). The statistical findings may involve testing a theory, exploring a phenomenon, or identifying a pattern (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018). Additionally, scholars have shown that explanatory sequential mixed methods are more effective at establishing validity, as this design leverages the strengths of both paradigms and reduces the limitations of using only one method (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2013).

### 3.1 Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all senior managers from nine (9) public universities accredited by the Uganda National Council for Higher Education (UNCHE). Seven (7) universities contributed to the main study sample, while two (2) universities piloted the instruments. The total study population was 118. These individuals were senior managers, including university officers, deans of faculties or schools, and heads of departments who typically use ICT tools such as laptops, PCs, iPads, and mobile phones for official work. The sample was selected using both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. The seven universities were purposefully chosen for the study because they provide top managers with ICT devices. From each of these institutions, sixty (60) senior managers were randomly selected to complete the structured questionnaire, and twenty-eight (28) were purposefully sampled for individual interviews (face-to-face or via Zoom). As a result, the total sample size consisted of eighty-eight (88) respondents, with an average response rate of approximately 70.4%, which was considered satisfactory.

### 3.2 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected in two main phases. In the first phase, quantitative data were gathered using a self-administered questionnaire distributed to study participants either by mail or through research assistants. The instruments included items adapted from validated scales of technostress (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008; Jena, 2015; Harahap & Effiyanti, 2016) and ICT adoption. The questionnaire was pilot-tested with forty (40) staff members from two universities. All items were evaluated for internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient, and only items with a reliability coefficient above 0.6 were included in the main survey. In the second stage, the qualitative data were collected from twenty-eight (28) senior managers using semi-structured interview guides. The interview schedules were designed to elicit participants' lived experiences of ICT adoption and issues of technostress. They also explored participants' perceptions of how these experiences relate to ICT use. More specifically, the topics raised included techno-overload, techno-invasion, techno-complexity, confidentiality concerns related to ICT use, internet disruptions, poor data packages, and perceptions of insecurity in the workplace. The qualitative data were used to supplement and help interpret the quantitative data.

### 3.3 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

The instrument's validity was confirmed through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). In the technostress scale, 28 items were loaded and analysed, resulting in five (5) factors or dimensions of technostress with eigenvalues above 1 (4.03, 2.78, 1.77, 1.38, and 1.27). Thirteen (13) items with weak or cross-loadings were removed, while fifteen (15) items with factor loadings between 0.573 and 0.931 were retained. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) was .593. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (BTOS) was significant at $p < .001$, indicating that the data are suitable for factor analysis. The ICT adoption scale also had its items loaded and analysed, resulting in three (3) dimensions with eigenvalues of 5.178, 1.99, and 1.475. Two (2) weak items were removed, leaving 13 items with loadings from 0.666 to 0.858. The KMO statistic was .765, and Bartlett's Test was significant at $p < .001$. These results confirm that the construct is valid. Regarding reliability, the findings show that the constructs have Cronbach's alpha coefficients above 0.6, which is considered acceptable. It is noteworthy that a cutoff point of 0.6 was used, as the study was exploratory in nature.

**Table 1: Reliability Test Results**

| Technostress | Items | Cronbach alpha(α) |
|---|---|---|
| Complexity | 7 | .640 |
| Overload | 5 | .846 |
| Invasion | 6 | .618 |
| Uncertainty | 5 | .632 |
| Insecurity | 5 | .624 |
| ICT adoption | 15 | .801 |

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS. The means and standard deviations were used to assess the level of technostress and the degree of ICT adoption.

Correlation analysis was used to assess the strength and direction of relationships between the variables. The study employed the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r). It used multiple regression analysis to test the five hypotheses and explore the relationships between the creators of technostress and ICT adoption (ICT use, ICT acceptance, and ICT usefulness). The qualitative data collected from the interviews were transcribed, coded, and analysed thematically. Common themes that emerged from the data included confidentiality risks, internet disruptions, and poor data packages as likely explanations of why some creators of technostress had a significant influence on ICT adoption, while others did not. The study received approval from the relevant university authorities to be carried out at the designated institutions, and the participants signed informed consent forms before taking part. Respondents were assured of their confidentiality and anonymity, which was very important to them given the nature of their work, including critical managerial decision-making and governance of ICT use in the universities.

## 4.0 Results

### 4.1 Respondent Bio-Data

A total of 88 respondents were considered for the study. Out of these, 60 (68.2%) responded to structured questionnaires, while 28 (31.8%) participated in in-depth interviews. The respondents include university officers, deans of faculties or schools, and department heads in seven public universities.

### 4.2 Factor Analysis Results

#### *4.2.1. Techno-Stress Scale*

The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of the 28 items that make up the technostress measure developed initially for this study showed that only 15 items loaded satisfactorily on five dimensions with Eigenvalues greater than 1 (4.03, 2.781, 1.769, 1.378, and 1.267). These five factors explained approximately 70.2% of the variance. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.593, which is above the Kaiser (1974) recommended lower limit of 0.50 and the more commonly used acceptable lower limit of 0.60–0.70. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p < .001$), indicating that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix and was suitable for factor analysis.

The rotated factor loadings identified five dimensions of Technostress. The first dimension, complexity (Factor 1), was reflected by items such as; "new developments in technology are a burden" (.931), "technology is too complex to understand" (.868), "take a long time to get used to new technologies" (.786), and "learning new software" (.774). Users generally experience cognitive overload when they have to learn and understand ICT artifacts to apply them in their work. The second dimension, Factor 2 (Overload), includes items such as "forced to do more work than I usually handle" (.903), "makes me work harder" (.885), "makes me work faster" (.781), and "perform tasks faster" (.769). These items relate to the user's perception that the ICT compels the manager to work harder and faster. On the other hand, the third dimension, Factor 3 (Invasion), includes items such as "had to be available online most times" (.808), "internet disruptions" (.781), "often compelled me to do more work to meet deadlines" (.760), and "felt like taking work home with me" (.667). All these items relate to the general blurring of boundaries and the intrusion of ICT into the manager's personal time.

While Factor 4 (Uncertainty), which is the fourth dimension, includes items such as "internet disruptions" (.856), "power disruptions affecting connectivity" (.804), "failure to use technology to communicate" (.782), and "power outages" (.714), these reflect the instability in the ICT environment that causes unpredictability. Finally, the fifth dimension, Insecurity (Factor 5), includes items like "forced by technology to work with very tight schedules" (.750), "internet disruptions" (.712), "failure to use technology to communicate" (.707), and "reluctance to share knowledge with other colleagues" (.690). These items highlight feelings of job insecurity and resistance to change. The factor analysis thus supported the idea that the construct of technostress is multidimensional. Reliability estimates produced Cronbach alpha values above the 0.50 threshold for each factor (ranging from .524 to .846), indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency for an exploratory study. However, further refinement of the measurement model could enhance these reliability estimates.

**Table 2: Technostress Factor Loading**

| Items | Dimension | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| New developments in technology are a burden | .931 | | | | |
| The use of technology too complex to understand | .868 | | | | |
| Regular technology upgrades were complicated | .865 | | | | |
| The use of technology created more problems than normally experienced | .652 | | | | |
| Do not know enough about ICT application utilisation | .642 | | | | |
| Forced to do more work than I usually handle | | .903 | | | |
| Forced by technology to work much harder | | .889 | | | |
| Had to be available online to do work most times | | | .808 | | |
| Able to regularly upgrade my technical skills | | | .758 | | |
| Had to sacrifice time for technology updates | | | .587 | | |
| Sometimes internet connectivity disruptions | | | | .856 | |
| Power disruptions that affected connectivity | | | | .804 | |
| Frequent upgrades in computer software | | | | .573 | |
| Forced by technology to work with very tight time schedules | | | | | .750 |
| Reluctance to share knowledge among coworkers | | | | | .690 |
| Eigen values | 4.03 | 2.781 | 1.769 | 1.378 | 1.267 |

% of variance explained 25.2% 17.4% 11.1% 8.6% 7.9%, KMO .593. Sig. 000

### *4.2.2 ICT Adoption*

The factor analysis of the 15 items that make up the ICT adoption (usage, acceptance, and perceived usefulness) measure developed initially for this study showed that only the 13-item ICT adoption scale produced a three-factor solution with Eigenvalues above 1 (5.178, 1.990, and 1.475), explaining a total of 56.6% of the variance. The KMO value was 0.765, which is within the acceptable range, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p < .001$), indicating appropriateness.

**Table 2: ICT Adoption Factor Loading**

| Items | Variable | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Easy to perform office assignments using ICT<br>Comfortable conducting business transactions online | .848<br>.780 | | |
| Navigating ICT assisted me complete office tasks | .770 | | |
| More control over my office tasks | .713 | | |
| Less time to do my assignments | .670 | | |
| ICT very easy to use | .666 | | |
| Easy collaboration with staff | | .839 | |
| Faster accomplishment of assignments | | .811 | |
| Completing tasks at one's own pace | | .786 | |
| Overall performance improvement | | .767 | |
| ICT useful in conducting business in a virtual environment | | | .858 |
| An enabler of business continuity | | | .829 |
| A new form of conducting business | | | .720 |

Eigenvalues 5.178 1.99 1.475

% of variance explained 39.827 15.308 1.475; KMO .765; Sig. .000

The loadings showed the following dimensions:

The ICT adoption had three dimensions: ICT ease of use, perceived usage, and usefulness. The first dimension, ICT ease of use (Factor 1), included items such as "easy to perform office assignments using ICT" (.848), "easy to complete tasks using ICT" (.844), "tasks completed quickly when using ICT" (.792), "accessing ICT was quick and easy" (.780), and "navigating ICT helped me complete tasks" (.770), reflecting respondents' experience of efficiency and ease of use. The second dimension, Factor 2 (Acceptance), included items like "easy collaboration with staff" (.839), "overall performance improvement" (.767), and "collaboration improvement was very high" (.758), which focus on improving teamwork and productivity. The third dimension, Usefulness (Factor 3), contained items such as "ICT useful in conducting business in a virtual environment" (.858), "ICT as an enabler of business continuity" (.829), and "enjoyed working from home as a result of ICT" (.810), highlighting the strategic importance of ICT in ensuring operational continuity. The internal consistency reliabilities of these three adoption dimensions range from 0.727 to 0.761, indicating adequate to good consistency.

The results of the factor analyses support the multidimensionality of both the technostress and ICT adoption constructs, suggesting that they cannot be validly and reliably measured as uniform or one-dimensional phenomena. Similarly, ICT adoption is multidimensional, requiring both operational and strategic considerations in the higher education context. In light of these validated structures, regression analysis will be used to test the hypothesised relationships.

## 4.3 Hypothesis Testing: Effect of Technostress on ICT Adoption

Table 3 shows the model's fit for the entire sample. The $R^2$ and adjusted $R^2$ values indicate the percentage of variance in ICT adoption explained by the five technostress predictors (complexity, overload, invasion, uncertainty, and insecurity).

**Table 3: Model Summary**

**Model Summary[b]**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | | Durbin-Watson |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change | |
| 1 | .524[a] | .275 | .203 | .50329 | .275 | 3.859 | 5 | 51 | .005 | 1.694 |

*a. Predictors: (Constant), Insecurity, Overload, Invasion, Uncertainty, Complexity*

The five-predictor model, which includes all dimensions of technostress as predictors (complexity, overload, invasion, uncertainty, and insecurity), explains 27.5% of the significant variance in the ICT adoption scores of senior managers in public universities ($R^2$ = .275; Adjusted $R^2$ = .203). The F-test also shows that the overall model fit is statistically significant ($F(5,51) = 3.859$, $p = .005$), indicating that the combination of technostress dimensions in the regression can meaningfully predict ICT adoption. The Durbin-Watson statistic is 1.694, suggesting no concern of autocorrelation in the residuals. Although the R-squared value indicates the model explains a small portion of the variance, the results remain statistically significant. The significance of individual predictors provides valuable insights into specific factors affecting ICT adoption.

## 4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Table 4 presents the regression coefficients for different technostress dimensions. Both the unstandardised (B) and standardised (Beta) coefficients are listed, along with their standard errors, t-values, and significance levels.

**Table 4: Regression Analysis (Coefficients[a])**

| Model | | Unstandardised Coefficients | | Standardised Coefficients | t | Sig. | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | | Std. Error | Beta | | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 3.279 | .449 | | 7.304 | .000 | |
| | Complexity | -.287 | .100 | -.365 | -2.863 | .006 | Supported |
| | Overload | .120 | .052 | .288 | 2.332 | .024 | Supported |
| | Invasion | .169 | .083 | .250 | 2.034 | .047 | Supported |
| | Uncertainty | .059 | .089 | .084 | .662 | .511 | Not Supported |
| | Insecurity | .073 | .071 | .133 | 1.028 | .309 | Not Supported |

Dependent Variable: ICT Adoption

### *4.4.1 Techno-overload and ICT adoption*

The techno-overload has a positive and statistically significant impact on ICT adoption ($\beta = 0.288$, t = 2.332, $p = .024$), indicating that techno-overload, as a facet of technostress, notably influences ICT adoption. In simpler terms, the more senior managers are required to use ICT to handle increased workloads, work faster, or feel overwhelmed by the number of ICT tools available, the more likely they are to adopt ICT. The results support the idea that overload can serve as a challenge stressor, motivating senior managers to use ICT to address efficiency stressors, such as speeding up work through technology. Therefore, H1 is supported.

### *4.4.2 Techno-invasion and ICT adoption*

The results indicate that the relationship between techno-invasion and ICT adoption is positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.250$, t = 2.034, $p = .047$), demonstrating that techno-invasion, as a dimension of technostress, has a meaningful impact on ICT adoption. In other words, the more senior managers in public universities are contacted through technological means during their personal time or frequently travel for work using ICT tools (e.g., emailing during trips), the more likely they are to adopt ICT at work. Therefore, H2 is supported.

### *4.4.3 Techno-complexity and ICT adoption*

The results show that techno-complexity has a negative and statistically significant impact on ICT adoption ($\beta = –0.365$, t = –2.863, $p = .006$), indicating that techno-complexity as a dimension of technostress significantly influences ICT adoption. In simpler terms, the more senior managers in public universities view ICT tools as too complex, difficult to learn, or requiring extra effort to update, the less likely they are to adopt ICT meaningfully. This finding aligns with expectations and previous research, which indicates that complexity acts as a barrier to ease of use and perceived usefulness key factors in most ICT adoption models (e.g., TAM, UTAUT). Therefore, H3 is supported.

### *4.4.4 Techno-insecurity and ICT adoption*

The results show that techno-insecurity does not have a statistically significant effect on ICT adoption ($\beta = 0.133$, t = 1.028, $p = .309$), indicating that techno-insecurity, as part of technostress, does not significantly influence ICT adoption. In other words, even if some senior managers feel insecure about being replaced by younger colleagues or those with more ICT skills, this perception does not appear to lead to notably lower ICT adoption in this context. Holding managerial roles in public universities might actually shield senior managers from stress caused by insecurity, thanks to their authority and job security. Thus, H4 is not supported.

### *4.4.5 Techno-uncertainty and ICT adoption*

Techno-uncertainty, defined as stress caused by frequent system upgrades and constant changes in ICT tools, is not a significant predictor of ICT adoption ($\beta = 0.084$, t = 0.662, $p = .511$). This shows that techno-uncertainty, as a part of technostress, does not strongly influence ICT adoption. In other words, although uncertainty emerged as one of the main challenges reported qualitatively by managers, it was not a statistically significant predictor of ICT adoption in this study. This may be because managers have become accustomed to frequent system upgrades and changes, or because the technology support systems within universities help mitigate the impact of this technostress dimension on ICT adoption. Therefore, H5 is not supported.

It is important to note that three out of the five dimensions of technostress significantly affect ICT adoption: overload, invasion, and complexity. Importantly, both overload and invasion are positive predictors, meaning these stressors serve as motivators rather than barriers. In contrast, insecurity and uncertainty, two other dimensions that can reasonably be considered harmful stressors, are not statistically significant. This indicates that both technostress creators and inhibitors exist among the individual dimensions of the construct, with the creators explaining greater variance in ICT adoption.

## 5.0 Discussion

This study's results show that the dimensions of technostress have unequal and opposing impacts on ICT adoption, confirming both challenge and hindrance pathways. The statistically significant negative beta value for techno-complexity indicates that its stressor is a barrier, negatively affecting ICT adoption. This confirms previous findings from Tarafdar et al. (2011) and Sareen (2019), who report that a high perception of complexity, such as learning difficulties and system changes in ICT use, undermines employees' confidence in using these systems. Similarly, Muhenda's (2020) study in Uganda demonstrated that frequent system upgrades combined with a lack of training on new platforms caused academic staff to resist their use. This, in turn, reaffirms the logic of the TAM model (Davis, 1989), which states that perceived ease of use is a key factor. It suggests that when ICT platforms become too challenging to operate, they begin to hinder adoption even among the most senior managers at the university.

In cases of techno-overload, the beta coefficient of statistical significance ($P<0.05$) shows a positive impact on ICT adoption. This aligns with findings from Jena and Mahanti (2014), who reported that although this dimension may initially be perceived as stressful, it fosters a positive attitude toward increased ICT use as a necessary adaptation for efficiency. In the Ugandan higher education system, where senior managers often handle large volumes of administrative and academic tasks (RUFORUM, 2017), the use of ICT becomes an attractive coping mechanism to manage growing workloads. This finding is consistent with the challenge–hindrance framework (Cavanaugh et al., 2000), which views overload as a challenge stressor that prompts more effort and resource investment to achieve desired goals rather than avoiding them.

Techno-invasion was also found to have a statistically significant positive effect on ICT adoption. Prior research has shown that permanent connection and accessibility (Shue, Tu & Wang, 2011; Berisha-Shaqiri, 2015) contribute to both stress and normalisation of ICT use, as it makes ICT an integral part of private and work life. The current study's results may be explained by the fact that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when working from home became the new normal (Vaziri et al., 2020), managers had to adapt to remote work, which required a permanent connection in most places, including Uganda. Consequently, invasion, which negatively impacts work–life balance, also begins to facilitate habitual ICT use among them.

In cases of techno-insecurity and techno-uncertainty, the results did not show a statistically significant link between these stressors and ICT adoption. This contrasts with existing studies that have found both factors to negatively affect individuals' attitudes and behaviour toward ICT. For example, Okolo, Kamarudin, and Ahmad (2018) argued that when people see their jobs as insecure due to technological changes, they find it hard to adapt. In Uganda, Muhenda (2020) found that frequent system updates made staff feel insecure about using those systems. It seems that in public universities, the job security of the managers and their coping mechanisms for network and power outages help buffer the impact of these stressors. This finding is consistent with Ergado's (2019) research in Ethiopian higher education, which showed that organisational factors and management support within the institution influence individual adoption intentions. This may explain why, when other stressors are considered, insecurity and uncertainty no longer have a significant predictive effect.

The results reveal significant contradictions with previous literature. While some studies have treated all dimensions of technostress equally (Tarafdar et al., 2019) as potentially damaging for ICT adoption, this research indicates that some dimensions negatively influence managers' attitudes and behaviors, while others have positive effects. In this context, overload and invasion, often viewed as negative, are instead sources of extra work and positive pressure here, with complexity remaining the main barrier. This aligns with Marchiori, Mainardes, and Rodrigues

(2018), who found that perceptions of technostress, whether negative or positive, vary among different employee groups based on their work experience and are not uniformly negative. How different stressors are interpreted as challenges or hindrances determines their effects. Regarding insecurity and uncertainty, their inconsistency with qualitative studies like Muhenda (2020) suggests that single-dimensional descriptions of challenges may overstate their influence as predictors of behavior if not considered alongside other factors.

## 5.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the effect of the five technostress dimensions on ICT adoption among senior managers in public universities in Uganda. The analysis incorporated validated factor structures of technostress and ICT adoption to ensure reliability and validity. The results support the multidimensional nature of technostress, with five distinct dimensions (complexity, overload, invasion, uncertainty, and insecurity), and the three-dimensional structure of ICT adoption (perceived ease of use, collaboration, and continuity). Regression analysis revealed that three technostress dimensions (complexity, overload, and invasion) significantly predicted ICT adoption, whereas two other dimensions (insecurity and uncertainty) were not significant predictors.

The study findings have several implications. First, complexity emerged as a major barrier to ICT adoption. This underscores the importance of providing ongoing training and ensuring user-friendly ICT systems to improve perceived ease of use. Second, overload and invasion, contrary to expectations, also positively predicted ICT adoption, as managers use ICT tools to handle increased workloads and the normalization of constant connectivity. This indicates the asymmetric nature of technostress, where some stressors hinder ICT adoption, while others actually promote it. Lastly, the non-significant impact of insecurity and uncertainty may be due to the unique context of public universities in Uganda, where job security is guaranteed by structure, and the institutions are relatively resilient to infrastructural instability.

## 5.2 Recommendations and Future Research Areas

### *5.2.1 For University Management*

Institutions should regularly improve the ability of university leaders and staff to handle techno-complexity. Training, peer-learning workshops, and on-demand ICT support services can make systems and processes easier to use, encouraging greater adoption. Institutions should also invest in more user-friendly systems and interfaces that are simpler to navigate. Similarly, universities need to pay more attention to managing techno-overload and techno-invasion. While these stressors can have positive effects, allowing ICT demands to grow unchecked could lead to negative long-term consequences. This might result in burnout and should be prevented. Clear communication and policies about after-hours communication and manageable ICT workloads would help institutions manage adaptive stress without harming their well-being.

ICT adoption strategies should also focus on long-term sustainability. Besides encouraging immediate use, strategies need to support the continuous institutionalisation of ICT adoption. This includes aligning ICT policy guidelines with the institution's strategic plan. It also involves securing ongoing funding for ICT strategic priorities and integrating ICT adoption into performance management systems for university leadership. Incorporating ICT into governance and management frameworks and recognising adaptive behaviour will help embed usage and adaptive practices into the organisational culture.

### *5.2.2 For Policymakers and Regulators*

The national education authorities and the National Council for Higher Education should develop ICT adoption guidelines that address technostress. Policy documents should emphasise not only infrastructure investment, but also stress reduction strategies. This could involve allocating funds and strategic resources for digital literacy training and psychosocial counseling. Data infrastructure and internet reliability should also be prioritised. Although techno-uncertainty was found to be non-significant in the model, this should not lessen the importance of maintaining stable digital environments and infrastructure, which remain ongoing qualitative concerns.

### *5.2.3 For Researchers*

This study shows that technostress should be viewed as a multidimensional construct with varying effects. Future research should explore existing concepts, such as overload and invasion, to determine whether they better represent situations where technostress acts as a 'challenge' or 'hindrance' stressor. Additionally, research in different settings, such as private universities, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), or various regions, is necessary to validate the broader applicability of these relationships further. Longitudinal studies would also help identify possible shifts in stressor effects as ICT systems develop and people become more accustomed to them. The analysis of other potential moderating or mediating variables, such as personal traits like innovativeness and openness to change, should also be considered.

The study emphasises the importance of using a mixed methods approach to capture both the quantitative relationships between technostress and ICT adoption and the qualitative perceptions of managers regarding these stressors in real-world settings. The modest KMO value for the technostress scale (0.593) also suggests the need to improve measurement tools within African higher education contexts. Future research should employ Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to validate constructs and explore causal relationships. Longitudinal studies would be beneficial to understand how the impact of stressors evolves as ICT systems and organisational practices develop.

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# APPENDIX

## Author Guidelines for the Ugandan Journal of Management and Public Policy Studies (UJMPPS)

Author guidelines are valuable for researchers seeking to publish their work in the Ugandan Journal of Management and Public Policy Studies (UJMPPS). The guidelines offer detailed instructions and specifications on various aspects of manuscript preparation, including formatting, citation styles, manuscript structure, and ethical considerations. They provide authors with a clear roadmap to follow, ensuring that their work meets the UJMPPS requirements and aligns with the standards of scholarly publishing. The primary purpose of author guidelines is to enhance the quality and consistency of published research. Therefore, this enables efficient manuscript handling by journal editors and reviewers, contributing to a smoother and more timely review process. Below is a precise presentation of the manuscript structure:

### 1.0 Introduction

The introduction must contain your argument for the social and scientific value of the study, and should:

- Clearly state the research problem, its significance, and the objectives of the study.
- Provide a concise review of the relevant literature, highlighting the existing knowledge gaps and the need for the current study.
- Clearly state the research questions or hypotheses that the study aims to address.

### 2.0 Literature Review /Theoretical Framework

The discussion section should address the following three elements:

- Present the literature/ theoretical framework or conceptual model that underpins the study.
- Discuss the key theories, concepts, or frameworks that inform the research and justify their relevance to the research problem.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the existing literature/ theoretical foundations and their implications for the research.

### 3.0 Methodology

This section should:

- Describe the research design, including the approach (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods), data collection methods, and data analysis procedures.

- Provide details about the study participants or sample, including relevant demographic information.
- Explain the instruments or measures used for data collection and their validity and reliability.
- Discuss any ethical considerations and steps taken to ensure participant confidentiality and informed consent.

## 4.0 Results

The author(s) should:

- Present the findings of the study in a clear and logical sequence that addresses the aim and objectives of your study.
- Use tables, figures, or charts as appropriate to enhance the presentation and understanding of the results.

Provide detailed descriptions of the statistical analyses performed, including any statistical tests or software used.

- Support the findings with relevant statistical data or qualitative evidence.

## 5.0 Discussion

This must focus on the following:

- Interpret the findings in light of the research questions or hypotheses and the existing literature.
- Discuss the implications of the findings for theory, practice, and policy in the field of public administration, business, management, leadership and public policy.
- Analyze any unexpected or contradictory results and propose possible explanations.
- Identify the limitations of the study and suggest avenues for future research.

## 6.0 Policy Implications/Recommendations

In this section, the author(s) should:

- Discuss the potential implications of your research findings for public policies, practices, or decisionmaking.
- Consider how your research can inform or guide policymakers or practitioners in improving public administration, business, management, leadership and public policy.
- Offer specific recommendations based on your findings, emphasizing actionable steps or

strategies that can be implemented in real-world settings.

- Highlight the potential benefits and impacts of implementing these recommendations.

## 7.0 Conclusion

Under this subsection, author(s) should:

- Summarize the main findings of the study.
- Highlight the contributions of the research to the field of public administration, business, management, leadership and public policy.
- Provide a concise conclusion that addresses the research objectives and research questions or hypotheses.

## 8.0 Limitations and Areas for Future Study

In this section, author(s) should:

Identify and discuss the limitations of your study.

Reflect on any constraints, shortcomings, or potential sources of bias or error that may have influenced your findings or conclusions.

Be transparent about any limitations in your methodology, data collection, or sample size.

Discuss how these limitations may have affected the generalizability or validity of your findings.

Furthermore, propose areas for future research that can build upon or address the limitations of your study.

## 9.0 References

Under this section, author(s) should:

Provide direct references to original research sources whenever possible. All citations must be well referenced using APA 7th edition format. Please consult the document for a guide.

Cite all sources accurately and consistently throughout the manuscript.

Include only the references cited in the text and self-citations should not exceed 7.5% of total references.

***Note:*** *References should not be used by authors, editors, or peer reviewers to promote self-interests.*

## 10. Manuscript Formatting

Prepare the manuscript in Microsoft Word or a compatible format.

Use a double line spacing throughout the manuscript and should not be more than 20 pages typed in Times New Roman.

Use 1-inch margins and double-spacing throughout the manuscript.

Start a new paragraph by indenting it from the left margin, not by leaving a line blank, except after a (sub-) heading.

Keep all text aligned justified, and only center the manuscript title, author's name and affiliation, and captions and legends of illustrations.

All illustrations, figures, and tables must be placed within the text at the appropriate points, rather than at the end of the manuscript. Ensure to cite sources if you are not the originator and reference carefully.

Manuscript should be between 4,000-8,000 words, and word count should not compromise the article's quality; hence if your paper is slightly shorter or longer, it will be considered.

Number all pages consecutively.

***Note:*** *The Manuscript must be original. All manuscripts will be checked for plagiarism using Turnitin Similarity Check by Crossref and those with more than 15% similarity index will be sent back to author(s) for redress.*

## 11. Abstract

This should:

Include an abstract of no longer than 250 words and must be written in the past tense that provides aconcise summary of the research.

Clearly state the research problem/ purpose, methods used, key findings, implications and limitations.

## 12. Title and Keywords

Choose a clear and concise title that accurately reflects the content of the study.

Provide 3-5 keywords that represent the main concepts and topics of the research.

### 13. Author Information

Include the names, affiliations, and email addresses of all authors.

Specify the corresponding author and provide their contact information.

### 14. Funding Acknowledgment

Author(s) should acknowledge any sources of funding or grants that supported the research

### 15. Ethical Considerations

Author(s) must adhere to the highest standards of research ethics when conducting their studies and preparing their manuscripts. This includes obtaining proper informed consent from human subjects, ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of participants, and appropriately disclosing any potential conflicts of interest. Author(s) should also accurately attribute the work of others and avoid plagiarism or any form of scientific misconduct. The journal reserves the right to reject manuscripts that do not meet ethical standards or violate research integrity principles.

### 16. Submission Procedure

Author(s) should submit their manuscripts electronically through any of the two UJMPPS online submission system and/ email: umijournal@gmail.com / journal@umi.ac.ug. The online submission system allows for easy manuscript tracking throughout the review process and ensures efficient handling by the editorial team. The author(s) should follow the instructions provided on the journal's website regarding the submission process, including any specific requirements for file formats.

NB. UJMPPS offers researchers a valuable platform to showcase their work and publish issues biannually (in June and December) each year. With our year-round open call for papers, authors are encouraged to seize the opportunity and submit their high-quality research contributions to shape and advance the field of education leadership and management.

Finally, it's important to note that these guidelines are designed to ensure clarity, consistency, and adherence to scholarly standards. Authors are encouraged to carefully review and follow these guidelines when preparing their manuscripts for submission to the UJMPPS. For any further inquiries or assistance, authors are encouraged to refer to the UJMPPS website or contact the Journal's Editorial Office at journalumi@gmail.com / journal@umi.ac.ug or Chief Editor, Assoc. Prof. Lazarus Nabaho at lnabaho@umi.ac.ug / lazarusnabaho@gmail.com and / Managing Editor, Robert Agwot Komakech at rakomakech@umi.ac.ug/ kagwot@gmail.com

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