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Relationship between workload and learners' academic performances of Ntungamo district public secondary schools in Uganda

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Abstract
This study looked into how students' academic success in public secondary schools related to their workload. The study aimed to better understand how teachers' workload can affect learners' academic performance. The target population was 7588, including 7182 learners, 396 teachers, and 10 Head Teachers. A cross-sectional research design was used for the study. The study employed mixed mixed-methods approach and a cross-sectional research design. Using purposive sampling, 10 schools and 10 head teachers were chosen from among them. Simple random sampling was used to obtain 350 learners, and 20 teachers. Questionnaires were the tools used to gather data for the study. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the study instruments for quantitative data. In order to identify significant predictors of academic accomplishment, the analysis employed regression and correlation approaches to assess the degree of correlation between student performance and instructors' working conditions. The findings revealed strong positive correlations between workload and learners' academic performance. the workload is the most influential predictor. When considering standardized coefficients, workload management plays a critical role in shaping students' academic performance. Improving these factors can lead to better teaching effectiveness and enhanced student learning. The findings recommended that educational policymakers should focus on optimizing teachers' workload to improve both teacher well-being and student success.
Keywords: Work Load and Learner's Academic Performances, Uganda

Introduction
One important element that improves school effectiveness is the performance of the teachers. Crucially, it is a prerequisite for the efficacy of schools and the success of educational reforms since teachers' dedication leads to greater work to fulfil the mission and objectives of the school. According to Muhammad and Hussain (2020), one of the best strategies to increase teachers' dedication is to empower them.

The number of researchers in Uganda continues to raise concerns about working conditions, and even teachers frequently fight about their excessive workloads. Despite the government's efforts to improve their lot, teachers feel that their standards are not being met.

The most significant genuine element that is said to contribute to the growing number of teachers quitting the teaching profession is their discontent, which suggests that the working circumstances are unfair. According to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998), teacher discontent is a global phenomenon, resulting from both low academic production and a growing proportion of instructors quitting their jobs. Concerning this, poor work conditions bring about an increase in teachers' turnover, create psychological trauma and absenteeism (Troman & Woods, 2000).

According to Fisher et al. (1993), performance is the outcome and work behavior attained to finish the assigned tasks and responsibilities within a specific time frame. According to Sinha (2001), teachers' performance is based on their own openness and willingness to do their duties. He added that having professors who are willing and transparent in their work could boost employee productivity, which in turn affects performance. Therefore, Sinambela (2012) defines teacher performance as his capacity to carry out particular tasks.

Teachers' success is the culmination of their collective talents, efforts, and abilities, which have helped the institution achieve its goal of increased productivity. Although it takes more work to get better performance, improved school performance shows that attempts are being made to reach goals (Ellinger et al., 2003). One of the key elements that greatly influences a school's success is teacher performance. These schools have led to poor teacher attendance rates, tardy reporting, and a high percentage of instructors who fail to carry out all of their professional responsibilities, and in the end, fail to accomplish their responsibilities as necessary.

In Ntungamo District, the teaching learning environment is not conducive due to heavy workloads imposed upon the teachers affects their capacity to deliver the expected outcome. This trend affects the performance of the students negatively. In support of this perspective, Leblebici (2012) asserts that the workplace conditions determine a level of teachers' motivation, subsequent performance, productivity, and creativity. Academic success is influenced

by a variety of circumstances, but it is crucial to comprehend the elements that go into creating high-quality education. Teachers who work in a tough atmosphere and are unhappy with their jobs will not be dedicated or productive (Roberto et al., 2019). Teachers' perseverance in the teaching and learning process is depressing given the difficulties that plague their working conditions at Ntungamo District's secondary schools. Thus, this study looked at how workload and students' academic performance relate to one another in Ntungamo District public secondary schools.

Literature Review

The Relationship Between Workload and Learners' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools

The functions and responsibilities given to teachers make up their workload (Farrant, 2015). Teaching burden, according to Rahman and Avan (2016), is the amount of time spent on various teaching and research assignments, organizing extracurricular activities, and participating in meetings, among other things. As a result, teachers' workload has an impact on how effective they are in the classroom, and their ability to enhance the teaching and learning process is what ultimately determines how effective they are (Zaidan & Juariyah, 2020). Workload lists the various tasks that academic staff members perform and allots a predetermined amount of time (or "budget") to each task. This makes it possible for academics, their departments, and their institutions to create a clear and thorough picture of who is doing what and how much time they are spending on it.

The number of classes taught, the number of students in each class, and the length of time spent working are some of the factors that affect teaching burden. A teacher's work hours are somewhat self-determined and reflect their efficiency, enthusiasm, and devotion in addition to the requirements of the school. A teacher with a modest workload is more creative, imaginative, and productive than one who is overburdened and stressed out, according to Gwambombo (2013).

The number of classes each teacher teaches, the number of teacher contact hours in a week, or the size of the class are common ways to gauge teachers' workloads, and public secondary school instructors typically have heavier workloads, according to Siniscalo (2018). The reduced workload runs counter to the teacher shortage that certain schools are facing as a result of a structural mismatch between the supply and demand for educators. According to the World Bank, distributing instructors among schools and having them teach several courses will make better use of the current workforce.

According to the Ministry of Education, there should be 28 hours of average teacher-student contact each week, divided into 48 40-minute periods (Abagi, 2017). Teaching a class of more than 70 students presents difficulties for the instructor in terms of maintaining classroom discipline and grading and assessing the students. This problem occurs because a teacher's capacity to watch each student and determine their areas of strength and weakness is diminished when there are too many students in the same class. The subject teacher becomes demotivated as a result, which impacts the pupils' performance.

Global Workload for secondary school is 1200 minutes per week (Mta-aeem, 2020). This translates to 20 hours per week or 4 hours per day. Teaching time, supervision, remediation, and homeroom are the four components that make up the global workload, according to Mta-aeem. 1025 minutes a week, 205 minutes a day, or three to four hours a day, is the average amount of time spent teaching. Homeroom contributes to the weekly workload minutes required of secondary teachers. At the High School, homeroom typically lasts ten minutes.

Since there is no set amount of time that can be spent supervising students, this can differ from school to school, while keeping in mind that the total workload cannot be exceeded. The overall workload is subtracted from the sum of the teaching, supervision, and homeroom time to calculate the remedial time.

In the USA, according to McLoughlin (2023), teachers dedicate about 998 hours per year to classroom teaching. Mcloughlin posits that this time excludes planning time and time spent on students' mental health, or else, if these times are factored in, a teacher works for about 1600 hours per 200-day academic year. The actual teaching per day translates to 5 hours per day or 25 hours per week. However, this workload varies from State to State, because education in the USA is devolved and each state runs its education programs, including teacher recruitment and management.

In the UK, teachers continue to put in more hours and work harder than those in any other profession. Teachers are required to work a minimum of 1265 hours annually. Teachers are also required to put in a fair amount of extra time in order to fulfil their professional obligations. When all teaching components are aggregated, the average teaching time per week comes to around 49 hours or 9.8 hours per day (Walker, Worth, & Brande, 2019).

In order to cover the overburdened curriculum of 20 subjects by the end of a term, teachers must put in at least nine hours a day, which is equivalent to 45 hours a week or 2700 minutes per week, while the average Nigerian student spends at least eight hours a day in school (Adesulu, 2017).

On the other hand, in Kenya, Secondary school teachers are required to teach a minimum of 27 lessons of 40 minutes each per week, or 1080 minutes a week. In terms of hours per week, 1080 translates to 18 hours a week. However, there is a proposal by the Teachers Service Commission of Kenya to raise the minimum teacher's workload to 32 lessons of 40 minutes each per week.

The issue of workload has a significant impact on instructional effectiveness and efficiency. In order for instructors to have time to prepare for effective teaching, they should be assigned to teach subjects that are as closely related to their area of expertise as feasible while maintaining a modest teaching load (Mehrad, 2020). In Uganda, secondary schools have grown quickly, but there aren't enough systems in place to guarantee that teachers have a manageable workload (Nuwaha, Atukunda, &

Kyayemagye, 2023). Since 2004, the Ministry of Education and Sports has trained a large number of teachers in an attempt to increase secondary education (MoES, 2015).

It has been discovered that the excessive workloads of teachers are causing a national outcry. In their assessment of working conditions, Han et al. (2020) clarified the relationship between workload and academic performance by stating that teachers who have moderately assigned tasks tend to be more productive, while those who are overburdened with work become unsuccessful in teaching and learning activities (Han et al., 2020 & Mehrad, 2020).

Methodology

Research Design

Research design, according to Sileyew (2019), entails gathering data from a sample of respondents who share comparable features about the same variables. In The study employed a cross-sectional research approach, which gathers data at a single point in time, to obtain a succinct picture of a particular occurrence in a particular population (Culliford & Bradbury, 2020). In order to identify a population of interest at a particular moment in time—also known as a snapshot of the population under study—a cross-sectional design gathers data. The researcher used a cross-sectional design to collect data from a large number of respondents at a particular time. According to Bryman (2016), the design often allows researchers to compare many groups at the same time, such as age groups, ethnic groups, or any other categories within a population.

Cross-sectional studies can find links or associations between variables without having participants to commit to multiple sessions or lengthy periods of data collecting because data is collected at a single point in time. They cannot, however, prove causation (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019). Using the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, and J from the alphabet, the population consisted of ten head teachers, 396 teachers, and 7182 students from ten public secondary schools in Ntungamo District.

The sample size for this study was determined using the formula published by Solvens (1960). This allowed the researcher to sample the population with the right amount of accuracy. 7588 people in the target demographic will make up the sample.

Table 1. Sample Size

School	Head Teachers Population	Sample	Teachers Population	Sample	students Population	Sample	**Total Sample**
A	1	1	36	2	680	33	**36**
B	1	1	29	2	400	20	**23**
C	1	1	65	3	1420	69	**73**
D	1	1	34	2	564	28	**31**
E	1	1	23	1	520	25	**27**
F	1	1	34	2	650	32	**35**
G	1	1	49	2	920	45	**48**
H	1	1	22	1	460	22	**24**
I	1	1	55	3	738	36	**40**
J	1	1	49	2	830	40	**43**
Total	10	10	396	20	7182	350	**380**

Source: Primary Data (Researcher, 2024)

Instruments for Data Collection

Data collection is the methodical, exacting process of obtaining and analyzing relevant variable data to answer specific research questions, test hypotheses, and assess findings (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). The main techniques for gathering data, according to Mazhar, Anjum, Anwar, and Khan (2021), were questionnaires, interviews, observation, and surveys. Observations, surveys, questionnaires, checklists, and interviews are a few of the tools used in data collection (Young et al., 2018). Data for this study was gathered using the questionnaire.

The Questionnaire

Quantitative data was gathered via the questionnaire. Mazhar and associates (2021) define a questionnaire as a prepared list of questions given to several responders. Open-ended and closed-ended questions are the two main categories (Cheung, 2021). To collect the data, the questionnaires are utilized for the quantitative research, respectively (Ahmad et al., 2019). However, some researchers also quantify the responses while the data is being analyzed (Kyngäs, 2021). The self-administered questionnaire (SAQ), which has appropriate alternatives for each component, will be used and is based on a 4-point Likert scale. It used questions with closed-ended answers. The researcher was able to cover the respondents swiftly and affordably if they used closed-ended questions (Krosnick, 2018).

Results of the study

Descriptive statistics on Work Load and Learner's Academic Performance.

This section presents items on workload and learners' Academic Performance. Using a scale with 1 denoting strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 agree, and 4 strongly agree, respondents were asked to rate how much they display the feelings listed below. Table 2 below presents the findings.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics on Work Load and Learner's Academic Performance

Statement	Mean	SD
Teachers are competent in the subjects they are teaching	**3.12**	**0.87**
I participate in extracurricular activities	**3.17**	**0.77**
I am overwhelmed by the amount of schoolwork I have	**3.28**	**0.76**
I prioritize my tasks when faced with multiple assignments	**3.46**	**0.85**
I have noticed changes in my grades when my workload increases	**3.60**	**0.84**
Reducing teachers' workload to 10 lessons per week leads to better academic performance among the students	**3.77**	**0.87**
High workloads of more than 30 lessons per week for teachers negatively affect students' academic performance	**3.10**	**0.89**
The number of assignments and timely marking affect students' academic achievement	**3.37**	**0.87**

Primary data 2025

The data provides insights into various factors affecting academic performance and workload management for both students and teachers. Teachers' competence in their subjects is rated moderately high, with a mean of 3.12 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.87, indicating confidence in their subject knowledge. Students' participation in extracurricular activities is similarly rated, with a mean of 3.17 (SD = 0.77), suggesting a moderate level of engagement outside of academics. However, the pressure of schoolwork is evident, with a mean of 3.28 (SD = 0.76), reflecting that many students feel overwhelmed by their academic responsibilities.

Effective task management emerges as a critical skill for students. The mean score of 3.46 (SD = 0.85) indicates that many students prioritize tasks when faced with multiple assignments. Changes in academic performance due to increased workload are noticeable, as reflected by a mean of 3.60 (SD = 0.84). This suggests a clear link between workload and academic outcomes, emphasizing the need for balanced workloads to maintain or improve grades. Moreover, the impact of assignments and timely grading on student achievement is evident, with a mean of 3.37 (SD = 0.87), highlighting the importance of teachers' responsiveness in managing academic outcomes.

Teachers' workloads significantly affect students' academic performance. The data shows a high agreement (mean = 3.77, SD = 0.87) that reducing teachers' workloads to 10 lessons per week leads to better student outcomes. Conversely, a heavy workload of more than 30 lessons per week is perceived to negatively affect performance, with a 3.10 on average (SD = 0.89). These results highlight the necessity of teachers having balanced workloads so they can give students the time and attention they need and create a more encouraging and productive learning environment.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix of Teachers' Workload and Learners' Academic Performance

	Learner's academic Performance	Work load
Learner's academic Performance	1	0.47** 0.000

** Level of Significance 0.05

The relationship According to Table 3 above, workload and students' academic achievement have a somewhat favorable link (r=0.47, p=0.000r = 0.47, p = 0.000r=0.47, p=0.000). This suggests that a higher workload may be linked to better academic results, though the relationship is less pronounced than for the other variables. One possible explanation is that teachers with heavier workloads may spend more time and effort on instruction, which could positively impact student achievement. However, it is crucial to consider the potential risks of burnout and diminished teaching quality if workloads become excessive. Balancing workload to ensure teachers remain effective and motivated is key to sustaining positive academic outcomes for students.

Correlation Analysis Results

The correlation analysis showed that workload was related to learners' academic performance in government-aided secondary schools. An examination of correlation was conducted by the researcher. The findings are shown in Table 3 below.

Regression Model for Workload and Learners' Academic Performance

At the confirmatory level, to establish whether workload was related to learners' academic Performance in government-aided secondary schools, a regression analysis was carried out. Table 4 below shows the results.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.861[a]	.741	.604	.396

Source: Primary data 2025

The independent and dependent variables have a strong association, according to the model summary. A high positive association is indicated by the correlation coefficient (R = 0.861), which points to a trustworthy linear relationship. A decent fit is demonstrated by the R Square value of 0.741, which shows that the predictors in the model account for 74.1% of the variation in the dependent variable. A more accurate indicator of the model's explanatory ability, the adjusted R Square is marginally lower at 0.604 and takes

into consideration the number of predictors. Even with this adjustment, over 60% of the variation is still explained, reinforcing the model's strength. The model's predictions are fairly accurate, as evidenced by the standard error of the estimate (0.396), which is the average difference between the observed data points and the anticipated values. Overall, these results suggest a well-fitted model that provides meaningful insights into the relationship between the variables.

ANOVA[a]

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	39.731	3	7.604	177.145	.000[b]
Residual	14.425	197	.065		
Total	54.156	200			

Table 5: Model Fit

ANOVA Table 5 sheds light on the regression model's overall significance. The p-value (Sig. = 0.000) and the F-statistic (177.145) show that the model is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that a considerable amount of the variance in the dependent variable may be explained by the independent factors taken together. Regression's sum of squares (39.731) indicates the variation that the model can explain, but residuals' sum of squares (14.425) indicates the variation that cannot be explained. The model accounts for a significant amount of the overall variation, with a total sum of squares of 54.156. Regression and residuals' degrees of freedom (df) offer more information about the sample size and model complexity, respectively.

Table 6: Coefficient Results

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	**Sig.**
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.916	.416		4.542	**.000**
WL	.447	.062	.176	4.174	**.000**

a. Dependent Variable: LAP

Source: Primary data 2025

Key: WL- Workload, LAP- Learners' Academic Performance

The coefficients in Table 6 provide insights into how workload influences learners' academic performance. The constant value (B = 0.916) suggests that when all other variables are held at zero, learners' academic performance starts at a baseline of 0.916. This serves as the foundation for understanding how the predictors add to academic outcomes. All of the model's variables have statistically significant p-values of less than 0.05, indicating that they all substantially contribute to the explanation of variations in academic performance.

Moreover, workload also positively affects academic performance, with coefficients of B = 0.236 and B = 0.447, respectively. Although the unstandardized coefficients are slightly contributions remain significant. Interestingly, the standardized coefficients (Beta) indicate that workload (Beta = 0.176). This highlights that smaller, well-managed workloads can enhance the learning environment, leading to better academic outcomes.

Discussion of the Results

The first research hypothesis states that students' academic success in government-aided secondary schools is correlated with their workload.

The results showed that the alternative hypothesis, which states that when teachers are given a reasonable workload, is accepted and the first null hypothesis (H0), which states that there is no significant relationship between work load and students' academic performance in government-aided secondary schools, was rejected, they can pass the required knowledge to learners with improves their academic performance and the reverse is true. This was supported by one of the head teachers, who said that "*overloading teachers is not good because it affects their delivery and students' academic performance*". These findings were in agreement with Teaching burden, according to Rahman and Avan (2016), is the amount of time spent on various teaching and research assignments, organizing extracurricular activities, and participating in meetings, among other things. As a result, teachers' workload has an impact on how effective they are in the classroom, and their ability to enhance the teaching and learning process is what ultimately determines how effective they are (Zaidan & Juariyah, 2020).

Workload lists the various tasks that academic staff members perform and allots a predetermined amount of time (or "budget") to each task. This makes it possible for academics, their departments, and their institutions to create a clear and thorough picture of who is doing what and how much time they are spending on it. The results were in line with those of Gwambombo (2013), who found that teachers who are overburdened and under stress from a severe workload are less creative, inventive, and productive than those who have a moderate workload. Additionally, the results aligned with Siniscalo's (2018) findings.

The burden of teachers is frequently assessed by the number of classes each teacher teaches, the number of hours they spend in touch with students each week, or the size of the

class in relation to the suggested and actual workload. Teachers in public secondary schools are also expected to have higher workloads. The reduced workload runs counter to the teacher shortage that certain schools are facing as a result of a structural mismatch between the supply and demand for educators.

According to the World Bank, distributing instructors among schools and having them teach several courses will make better use of the current workforce. According to the Ministry of Education, there should be 28 hours of average teacher-student contact each week, divided into 48 40-minute periods (Abagi, 2017). Teaching a class of more than 70 students presents difficulties for the instructor in terms of maintaining classroom discipline and grading and assessing the students. This problem occurs because a teacher's capacity to watch each student and determine their areas of strength and weakness is diminished when there are too many students in the same class. The subject teacher becomes demotivated as a result, which impacts the pupils' performance.

Similarly, the findings were in agreement with McLoughlin (2023), who teachers dedicate about 998 hours per year to classroom teaching. Mcloughlin posits that this time excludes planning time and time spent on students' mental health, or else, if these times are factored in, a teacher works for about 1600 hours per 200-day academic year. The actual teaching per day translates to 5 hours per day or 25 hours per week. However, this workload varies from State to State, because education in the USA is devolved and each state runs its education programs, including teacher recruitment and management.

In the UK, teachers continue to put in more hours and work harder than those in any other profession. Teachers are required to work a minimum of 1265 hours annually. Teachers are also required to put in a fair amount of extra time in order to fulfil their professional obligations. The average weekly instruction time, when all teaching components are combined, is around 49 hours, or 9.8 hours per day (Walker, Worth, & Brande, 2019).

Ultimately, the results supported Adesulu's (2017) assertion that the average Nigerian student attends school for at least eight hours every day, while teachers put in at least nine hours to make sure students finish the demanding curriculum of twenty topics by the conclusion of a term. 45 hours a week, or 2700 minutes, is equivalent to nine hours a day. In contrast, secondary school teachers in Kenya are expected to teach a minimum of 27 40-minute courses every week, or 1080 minutes total.

Conclusion

The study underlined the importance of managing teachers' workloads. Overburdened teachers often struggle to maintain the quality of their teaching, which negatively impacts students' learning experiences. In contrast, a balanced workload enables teachers to plan effectively, focus on their teaching, and provide the attention each student needs. It also helps prevent burnout and ensures that teachers remain motivated and creative in their work. By addressing issues like class size, job security, and workload, instruction In every school, stakeholders may increase academic achievement by enhancing the environment for both instructors and students.

Recommendation

Managing teachers' workloads is critical to improving both teacher well-being and student outcomes. Overloading teachers not only leads to burnout but also reduces the quality of instruction. To address this, school administrators should distribute teaching responsibilities more evenly and ensure workloads are manageable. Providing teachers with sufficient time for lesson planning, grading, and professional development will enhance their effectiveness and creativity. By ensuring that teachers are not overwhelmed, schools can create a more sustainable system where educators are better equipped to accommodate their students' various demands.

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