

**Pressured to perform: The negative consequences of the 'publish or perish' phenomenon among junior academics****Bonginkosi Hardy  
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**ABSTRACT**

A growing body of work suggests that junior researchers in universities are often confronted by pressure to conduct research and get published in order to move up the academic ladder. These pressures are often loaded with little to no regard for the welfare of the junior academics and no concern for the career paths they wish to take. Against this background, this study explored the negative consequences associated with the pressure to publish from the unique perspective of junior academics at a rural university in South Africa. The study was underpinned by a qualitative research approach which enabled the utilisation of qualitative interviews with twelve junior academics from four faculties at the university. The findings demonstrated the often-salient bullying and abuse of junior academics that happens under the guise of mentorship from their senior colleagues. The study also revealed the cost at which the pressure to perform comes, namely the cost to mental well-being, the temptation to publish in predatory journals, the rise of unethical publishing, and the sacrifice of quality research. Based on these findings, the study recommended that more considered efforts be made to secure the welfare of emerging academics and that more concerted efforts be instituted in universities to guard against the rise of academic bullying at the hands of senior academics.

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## Introduction

The credible publication of research papers constitutes an important performance metric in academia, and this has resulted in inordinate pressure to publish among academics (Oravec, 2019; Abimbola, Tola, Popoola, Folorunso, Amao-Taiwo, Ige et al., 2021). Globally, in most higher education institutions, the ability to publish plays an important role in the consideration of tenure appointments and promotions, thus resulting in the age-old pressure to either ‘publish or perish’ (Todd & Ladle, 2008; Klein & Falk-Krzesinski, 2017). It is worth noting that ‘publish or perish’ is an adage that describes the pressure for academics to publish academic work in order to succeed in their careers (Dani, 2018; Amutuhaire, 2022). This obsession with metrics and the rankings that come with them has resulted in unintended damage to academia as some researchers have been noted to chase these metrics at any cost (Gruber, 2014; Edwards & Roy, 2017). As such, researchers such as Abimbola et al. (2019) and Nguyen, Pham and Bui (2021) contend that the emergent controversies related to publishing pressures have endangered the quality of research since pressure often results in unethical research practices such as data fabrication, plagiarism, and the use of ghostwriters, among other issues. Researchers have also revealed that the ‘publish or perish’ pressure is especially significant in developing countries and has thus significantly increased the gap between African and Western academics (Rojo, 2021; Amutuhaire, 2022).

On its own, the higher education landscape in Africa is known to be an extremely complex enterprise with sizeable demands on resources and sophisticated managerial expertise (Zavale & Schneijderberg, 2020). Although difficult to generalise, the majority of African countries continue to face a growing demand for access to higher education and this has caused significant strains in terms of resource access such as accommodation, funding, and learning spaces (Nguyen et al., 2021; Rojo, 2021). The bulk of funding for higher education in Africa is largely generated from state resources, thus, with the untold economic turmoils confronting governments on the continent, higher education tends to suffer (Obeng-Odoom, 2019). This is compounded by issues of poor governance of universities in Africa, which has been well-publicised as being responsible for issues of endemic corruption, misallocation and poor prioritisation of funds, as well as nepotism, among other factors (Obeng-Odoom, 2019; Rojo, 2021). These and other elements have necessitated the demand for sophisticated managerial expertise so that African universities remain competitive, secure funding, navigate globalisation, and meet the ever-changing student needs (Zavale & Schneijderberg, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2021). The majority of the difficulties scholarly publishing faces in the global South are predominantly economic in nature as many academics are employed by

underfunded universities (Mamdani, 2017; Amutanhire, 2022). According to worldwide standards, some of the research facilities in these institutions are subpar and obsolete (Obeng-Odoom, 2019; Zavale & Schneiderberg, 2020). Even though, in some instances, articles may be published in well-known journals from the developed world (Oravec, 2019), academics in the developed world rarely ever take notice of them and their work is often regarded as below standard (Abimbola et al., 2021). Such articles are rarely cited by academics in more reputable institutions, which causes them to disappear into obscurity in the body of global knowledge (Obeng-Odoom, 2019; Rojo, 2021). The same can be said for academic journals distributed in the developing world, where only a limited number of publications written by academics from the global South may go on to become citation classics or even make the list of important papers on new research fronts (Oravec, 2019).

According to von Solms and von Solms (2016), the 'publish or perish' system is not new and has more recently been linked to the pressures in academia to establish, maintain, and enhance the career of an academic. Research that is successfully published attracts attention to academics and their institutions, and is often linked to increased funding for institutions and the advancement of academics as researchers within their fields (Jessop, 2017; Mamdani, 2017; Obeng-Odoom, 2019). University administrators frequently use potential staff publication records as a gauge of their level of expertise when hiring and promoting them (Abimbola et al., 2021). Informally, this has resulted in faculty being more focused on publishing as opposed to teaching and community engagement, which do not necessarily result in publications (Lee, 2014; Amutuhaire, 2022).

Evidently, publishing and research are central to the development of academics, yet the tremendous pressure to publish has resulted in several negative factors (Neill, 2008; Nguyen et al., 2021). Some of the factors identified in literature include stress and burnout, reduced teaching quality, ethical concerns, narrow research focus, and decreased productivity, and have been explored more generally as opposed to among the more junior cohort of academics (Fanelli, 2010; Yankholmes, 2014; Dani, 2018; Yudkevich, 2018). In response to this gap, the present study set out to explore the various negative consequences associated with the pressure to publish from the unique perspective of junior academics at a rural university in South Africa.

## Methods

The study was underpinned by a qualitative approach because such an approach enabled a rigorous interrogation of the individual experiences (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Leavy, 2017), and how these

experiences shaped perceptions of the pressure to publish. Within this approach, the study followed a descriptive phenomenology design because the design was most suited to subjectively exploring the participants' perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018) with regard to how the 'publish or perish' phenomenon was adversely impacting junior academics at the selected university. 12 participants were sampled using the purposive sampling strategy that entailed the selection of participants based on their 'junior' status in terms of academic positions in four of the university's faculties. It is worth noting that, in this study, 'junior academics' was used to refer to both early-career academics and those working towards completing their PhD degrees. The 12 participants consisted of tutors, lecturers, and lab assistants, all of whom were either pursuing their PhD degrees or had graduated with their PhDs in the past 12 months, from the Commerce, Education, Science, and Social Science disciplines. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews, each lasting for about 20 to 30 minutes, in a setting determined by each of the participants. The participants were asked about their perspectives on the 'publish or perish' phenomenon among junior academics at their university with the guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality. Gatekeeper permission was sought from the relevant authorities, and ethical clearance (MNC01MUT01) was obtained on 28 June 2021 before the initiation of data collection. Once the data had been collected, the researcher followed Leavy's (2017) phases of analysing data, which entailed data immersion, identification of meaning units, clustering of meaning units, construction of textual descriptions, reflection, interpretation, and validation. This allowed the researcher to gain insights into the nature of the 'publish or perish' phenomenon based on the experiences of the participants.

### Discussion of findings

To explore the negative consequences of the 'publish or perish' phenomenon, participants were asked, "What are your experiences of the 'publish or perish' phenomenon in your department?". The researcher explained that, in the present study, the 'publish or perish' phenomenon referred to the pressure to publish academic work in order to succeed in participants' careers. The analysis of the findings revealed five main themes into which the participants' responses could be categorised, namely, mental health challenges, academic dishonesty, yielding to predatory publishers, manipulation and bullying, and the sacrifice of quality. These themes are discussed in the following subsections.

### *Mental health challenges*

Participants revealed that the pressure to publish was resulting in mental health challenges as they pushed themselves beyond their limits. A case in point can be drawn from a participant who noted:

There is so much pressure on us and I feel like the department has put so much weight on our shoulders by expecting us to publish without regard for our mental wellness. My colleagues and I have no family life, we are constantly locked in the lab and pushing to get our publications through. They [senior staff] are always telling me to get published and work hard, that there is no substitute for publishing and a whole lot of other things. But how must a normal person juggle all these things and remain sane? It is even worse that me and my peers are doing our PhDs and are not full-time staff, so most of the publishing we have to do is unfunded and the university does very little to help. (Participant 5 from the Sciences).

Another equally gloomy admission was offered by a participant who recalled:

We are just seen according to the roles we are meant to perform as opposed to being human. Whether or not you are alright in terms of your mental wellness, the HoD [Head of Department] always expects us to publish as if we are machines of some sort. I have gone to a couple of conferences battling depression and just having an overbearing sense of burnout. Academia is attractive from a distance but once you are in, you realise that it is a hoard of [challenges] that one has to continually deal with. (Participant 11 from the Social Sciences).

Similar views were also offered by another participant, who stated:

I have quickly become a high-functioning but depressed academic. It has been a rapid degeneration and I hate myself for leaving the industry and joining academia. This place feels more like it is tailor-made for angry, controlling, little old men who have no social life. We are constantly pushed to publish but there are very few measures put in place to guide and protect us – this is a ruthless field. I suffer from panic attacks and anxiety – it is tough to have a whole career hanging on the ability to publish. (Participant 9 from Education).

Although publishing is usually lauded as being beneficial to academic careers, the findings suggest that some of the junior staff are reeling under pressure on their mental health. One must consider that because most junior staff in African universities are poorly paid, rewarding staff through promotion and recognition aggravates rather than alleviates the cost to mental wellness (Urbina-Garcia, 2020; Amutuhaire, 2022). Studies reveal that owing to a lack of support structures, and a lack of healthy lifestyles, such as participating in recreation, sporting activities, wholesome nutrition and health, among others, junior staff are at a heightened risk of mental health problems (Levecque, Anseel, De Beuckelaer, Van der Heyden & Gisle, 2017; Kennette & Lin, 2019; Morrish, 2019). This

may potentially result in the widening of inequalities between academics in the global South and their counterparts from the more developed world (Amutuhaire, 2022).

One would be justified to opine that the sum effect of poor mental wellness among these junior academics would likely result in the lowering of both research and teaching quality at universities. This is given form by the argument that research, teaching, and community involvement responsibilities are increasingly being neglected due to pressure to proverbial 'pump-out' research in a manner that eventually leads to compromised productivity associated with academic positions (Lee, 2014; Amutuhaire, 2022). The findings corroborate the views of Urbina-Garcia (2020), who revealed that the university environment triggers exponentially high levels of stress and burnout, and that these are especially compounded for junior staff when they are expected to learn the ropes of teaching and supervision concurrently with the generation of research publications in environments with limited funding. Pushing junior staff using 'publish or perish' practices was therefore perceived by the participants as a cause of mental health challenges as they battled to satisfy faculty expectations.

### *Academic dishonesty*

In addition to mental health challenges, a limited section also revealed that some junior academics had begun to engage in the unethical practice of contract cheating to cope with the unabated pressure to publish. One can consider the sentiments of a participant who noted:

The unintended consequence of relentlessly pushing people to publish is that people will always find a way out. I have noticed firsthand that some of my colleagues beginning to outsource the writing of papers...I mean, they just pay someone to write a paper for them and claim authorship. It all comes from a place of being overwhelmed by teaching duties and still being expected to excel in research. There are also a lot of other instances of cheating – some claim to collect data but in actual fact, they just sit a cook it up in their offices. This for me is part of why I feel like this pressure to publish is not good – they say necessity is the mother of invention, perhaps this is a rogue form of that invention. (Participant 1 from Commerce).

Another participant also revealed that academic dishonesty was taking the form of unethical practices that were masked as collaboration. Bolstered by the confidentiality and anonymity guarantees, the participant confessed,

Because we are increasingly pressured to perform like this, I have seen the rise in what I call 'Put my name syndrome' among emerging academics. We now gang up and try to do research independently then just reciprocate by putting each other's names on the papers. If I write a paper, I will put my friends' names on it, and when they also write,

they put mine on theirs. That is a form of unethical 'collaboration', but what can one do when there is a rising emphasis on quantities and very little regard for quality? I have to do what I have to do to survive in this field. (Participant 6 from Sciences).

A more blatant practice was revealed by participants who reported an increase in ghost-written articles being published under the names of staff. A case in point can be drawn from a participant who lamented:

Some of these lecturers are the biggest cheats you will find at this university, not students. People are doing everything they can to get results – some buy research articles, even pay someone to do the corrections from journals and the like. The pressure pushes people into doing what they have probably sworn never to do. When you push a dog to a corner, it eventually fights back when there is no more room to track back into. It is the same with academics, when they are constantly pressurised, there comes a time when one finds loopholes in the system and tries to exploit them. (Participant 3 from Commerce).

The findings revealed that the pressure to publish was resulting in various academic dishonesty practices, chief of which were ghost-written work, unethical collaboration, and more blatant cheating, among others. While academic dishonesty is often ascribed as being prominent among students, one must understand that staff are equally susceptible to the same 'tricks'. Academic dishonesty usually happens in response to incentives, pressures, and opportunities presented to persons (Thomas, 2017; Mutongoza, 2021). In line with the findings of the present study, Oravec (2019) warns that because academic metrics are used in decision-making, various practices involving their manipulation have emerged in response to the desire to increase reputational standings. One would be justified to contend that the relentless pursuit of metrics, which results in academic dishonesty practices, has the eventual effect of lowering the standards associated with academia in the global South, where there is little to no oversight and regulation (Degn, 2018; Mutongoza, 2021). Perhaps one could be justified in echoing the age-old adage 'Who will watch the watchmen?' – if the academics who are supposed to be crusaders and leading voices in the battle for academic integrity are themselves leading the dishonesty, then this problem certainly needs to be addressed. Prominently reported academic dishonesty practices among staff include forced citations, involuntary co-authorship, and ghostwriting, among others (Burbules, 2015; Degn, 2018; Oravec, 2019). One can therefore note that putting junior staff under inordinate duress using pressure to publish has given rise to academic dishonesty, as the findings have demonstrated.

### *Yielding to predatory publishers*

The findings further revealed that the pressure to publish quickly and in large volumes was resulting in many emerging academics yielding to predatory publishers. One can consider the views of a participant who commented:

With many reputable journals taking quite long to publish, the prospect of publishing quickly has fooled many emerging researchers. Seeing your peers publishing and uploading their articles often makes one uneasy and pressurises us into publishing in places where it is easier and faster – unfortunately, these are shoddy publishers in most cases. Many seniors do not appreciate that you have articles under review, what they sing praises for is the published articles, several of us have published their sweat and blood [research outputs] in places that are not ideal. In some instances, even the senior academics who love being associated with publications they have not worked on have also had the unfortunate experience of having their names associated with predator journals. (Participant 7 from Education).

This was substantiated by another participant who conceded:

I have had to publish quickly and in some instances substandard work which I knew to be not up to scratch in order to silence critics in the department. Since it appears to be just about publications in terms of quantity and not quality, these so-called predatory publishing houses have earned me a position in this department ...they [managers] just look at the number of publications and nothing beyond that – so why struggle with publishing in accredited journal houses when there are these ones with a quick turnaround rate. If it was a normal field where quality is assessed, many early career lecturers would gladly go through the process, but because numbers are important, I just have to do that. I know it is not a good thing and it will haunt me later. (Participant 12 from Social Sciences).

More insights were also offered by a participant who revealed that predatory publishing was the result of the intersection of pressure from senior staff and the rapid turnover timeframes offered by predatory journals. The participant opined:

Several articles have been published in questionable journals and with questionable timeframes only because one can no longer bear the pressure and needs to be seen to be doing something in the department. There is a lot of emphasis on being published as opposed to being published in reputable places – I feel that is where the efforts must be going. As it stands, people just end up publishing wherever it is easiest to do so. It is worse because promotions here are tied to your publishing ability...so this provides more incentive to do so – both knowingly and unknowingly. (Participant 4 from Sciences).

The findings revealed that junior academics were yielding to the temptation to publish with predatory publishers owing to their lure of rapid publication and lack of rigorous peer-reviewing processes. This was especially reported as a response to pressures from senior staff who were



alleged to be more interested in the volume and publication track records of their juniors as opposed to the quality of such publications (Truth, 2012; Xia, Harmon, Connolly, Donnelly, Anderson & Howard, 2015; Cobey, Grudniewicz, Lalu, Rice, Raffoul & Moher, 2019). This is in line with Mouton and Valentine (2017), Kurt (2018), and Hedding (2019), who contend that because frequent publication is a generally accepted indicator of academic prowess, predatory publishers are usually seen as attractive sites for authors from the global South to publish their work. This is mainly because, unlike most reputable publishers whose peer reviews take several months to complete, predatory publishers are generally rapid and usually offer the authors grounds for tenure, extension, and promotion (Beall, 2017; Yeo-Teh & Tang, 2021).

One must note that this predatory publishing is still happening although there is a continuous effort to annually update lists of accredited journals by regulatory bodies in the global South, for example, the Department of Higher Education and Training in South Africa (Mills & Inouye, 2020). This raises questions about the quality of research being published and potentially being relied upon for teaching and learning. In some quarters, these so-called 'legitimate' lists of publishers in the developing world have been flagged as being problematic and consisting of well-known rogue publishers, thus complicating the publication journeys of emerging academics (Teixeira da Silva & Tsigaris, 2018). One can therefore remark that yielding to predatory publishers is one of the negative consequences of pressuring academics to publish.

### *Manipulation and bullying*

Owing to the pressure to publish, the participants also revealed that some rogue senior academics had taken to manipulating emerging academics for their own benefit. The findings revealed traits of bullying and manipulation that were said to be stemming from the pressure to get published. A case in point can be drawn from a participant who reasoned:

We are vulnerable as emerging academics because sometimes with the innocence we have we can approach some senior staff who end up manipulating us. I have been bullied into working for someone in this department in the name of 'I am mentoring you'. It is not easy; you end up doing the bulk of someone else's work because they are constantly dangling the carrot of publishing together with them and being involved in their big projects. We suffer much because of the desire to get published and get recognised as researchers in our own right. (Participant 10 from Social Sciences).

The participant also revealed a 'carrot and stick' approach that was being used by senior academics to keep them under their control, where compliance was repaid with promises of future benefits,

and non-conformity was punished by making one's tenure miserable. This was especially revealed by a participant who decried:

I am a former student here and my PhD supervisor is now, strictly speaking, a colleague of mine, but he is forever making me work for him. There was a time I broke ranks with him [stopped publishing with him], and he responded by closing every avenue for funding that I could have accessed – I became a black sheep just because of my desire to be independent of his influence. Most of these mentor-mentee collaborations between juniors and seniors are exploitative in nature and overburdensome to us. I am not saying there are no genuine mentors among our senior counterparts, but I have seen a good measure of devil incarnates. We continue working with them not because we enjoy their abuse, but because they have the funds, so for you to be part of the project you become the labour – in fact, hard labour! (Participant 8 from Education).

Other participants believed that the pressure to publish was being falsely inflated by senior academics whose end-game was the manipulation of their juniors. In this regard, a participant reckoned:

Certainly, there are problems here because seniors pressure you into feeling the need to publish and then string you along into unequal 'partnerships' with them. It sometimes feels like when we are told to 'publish or perish', the salient message there is, 'Work for me or I will make your life here hell'. From lab heads to some rogue Professors, I have seen how we sometimes fall for manipulative tactics. You get told that because they supervised you or put in a recommendation for you, then it is your duty to improve their research output and h-index. Sometimes this happens indirectly, but in other instances, it is direct and shamelessly said to your face, even in the presence of other people. This thing of 'publish or perish' has bred some very lazy Professors and seniors who seem to be doing work but are manipulating their stay at the top of the academic pyramid. (Participant 2 from Commerce).

The results showed that some senior faculty members charged with training, preparing, and mentoring the future generation of academics were allegedly accountable for the exploitation, coercion, and abuse of those who look up to them. The results of this study, like those of other studies, show that the power dynamics present in interactions between mentors and their mentees were the root cause of the bullying and manipulation (Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2020). The findings raise poignant concerns about the potential for socialization into eventual normalization of this type of psychological violence, as well as the potential for the reproduction of the same violence when these junior researchers interact with their students and juniors (Kakumba, Wamala & Wanyama, 2014; Hodgins & Mannix-McNamara, 2021).

Studies sternly warn that bullying and manipulation, including abuse of power to mock and devalue the achievements of others, and sabotaging the careers of their targets to effectively get rid of any perceived competition from the academic environment, are often employed as tactics by which

mediocre researchers rise to the top and consolidate their stay there (Stein & Appel, 2021; Täuber & Mahmoudi, 2022). Therefore, it appears that the current workplace culture, which is characterized by hyper-competition, precarious employment, and steep hierarchy, encourages bullies by creating the conditions necessary for their success (Yang, 2016; Martinez, O'Brien & Hebl, 2017; Smith & Fredricks-Lowman, 2020). It can thus be concluded that the pressure to publish imposed on junior academics has increased their susceptibility to bullying and manipulation by their senior counterparts.

### *The sacrifice of quality*

In addition, the findings also revealed that the pressure to publish was wearing down the quality of research outputs by emerging academics. One can consider the participant who argued:

There is a rise in half-baked research ideas being written just for the sake of getting published. I can say that the increase in mediocre research articles that continue to regurgitate the same old stories as research. The content is generic and sometimes almost a shame to refer to it as being academic. The pressure to publish has caused a sacrifice of quality for quantity – unless something urgent is done, we will perish as African academics, even after publishing. (Participant 4 from Sciences).

This was confirmed by participants who argued that the preoccupation with publication metrics was leading to a sacrifice of quality for quantity as researchers jostled to have their names associated with longer lists of publications. An example can be drawn from a participant who revealed:

Because of the desire to chase numbers of publications, quality has gone down – it is almost becoming a mass production factory of research articles. Sadly, because of the low quality, these articles have very low visibility and will not even be cited anywhere. I think there is a need to wilfully change this position from just publishing to quality publishing in reputable places. (Participant 7 from Education).

Closely linked to this position, another participant weighed in on how the quality of publications was being seen in what the participant alleged to be increasing publishing in accredited journals with low-impact factors. The participant contended:

Quality has suffered a lot because of the pressure to publish...we are just aiming to publish in places that have been accredited, regardless of their actual impact. The top-tier journals are expensive and take relatively longer to publish than some of the lower-tier ones. We are under so much pressure, and this has to be worked on by universities – I speak to colleagues at other universities and the same thing is happening there too. (Participant 11 from Social Sciences).

The findings revealed that, although often packaged as healthy competition, the unspoken contests to be published were becoming the proverbial slow-killing poison for quality publications. In the haste to get published, the emerging researchers are often tempted to either ride along with low-impact publishers, who – although accredited – are less rigorous, or publish generic studies that are not aiding developmental goals (Gruber, 2014; Oravec, 2019). Although most higher education systems in the global South profess to have systems that evaluate researchers' performance in terms of both quality and quantity of publications, in most instances, quantity usually overrides quality (Sikes, 2006; Gureev, Lakizo & Mazou, 2019; Yuan, 2021). Thus, Yudkevich (2018) warns that this 'massification' is a consequence of the pressure to consistently get published as a way to prove productivity and to get renewal of short-term contracts which are characteristic of higher education. This means that, for junior academics, the constant discomfort of job insecurity which comes from short-term contracts may push them to publish 'faster', rather than 'better' (Klein & Falk-Krzesinski, 2017; Degn, 2018; Yudkevich, 2018; Cobey et al., 2019). Emerging researchers in the developing South are frequently accused of rushing to publish anything they can in an attempt to improve their academic reputations, rather than investing time in creating meaningful research goals (Rawat & Meena, 2014). One can thus be vindicated in noting that the pressure to publish is resulting in the sacrifice of quality in place of quantity in research outputs which are sometimes relied on for teaching and learning purposes.

### Conclusion and recommendations

This study set out to explore the negative consequences of the pressure to publish borne by junior academics at a university in South Africa. While the 'publish or perish' phenomenon has been lauded for increasing research outputs, the results from emerging academics' experiences has revealed that the pressure to publish has various consequences which can be explained through five interconnected themes that have a knock-on effect on one other, namely, mental health challenges, academic dishonesty, yielding to predatory publishers, manipulation and bullying, and the sacrifice of quality. As such, if the quest to publish is not channelled effectively, emerging researchers in the global South may continue to find themselves in a situation where they 'publish and perish'. If universities in the global South do not urgently move to regulate and support emerging academics, the negative consequences of 'publish or perish' may continue to hover over these institutions. Even though the sample size was small, and the analysis cannot claim to have thoroughly uncovered all the experiences of emerging academics, it may serve as the foundation for future studies aimed at promoting these academics' well-being at universities in the global South. The study, therefore,

recommends that universities invest in and secure the psychosocial welfare of emerging academics as opposed to burdening them with inordinate pressure to publish with limited resources. The study also recommends that policies and practices be strengthened to minimise power imbalances which provide fertile ground for the academic bullying of emerging researchers at the hands of senior academics. Finally, the study also recommends that emerging researchers have long-term strategic plans on how to sustainably grow their research profiles to safeguard against some of the schemes used by emerging researchers to 'grow big quick' that were the subject of this study.

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