

Teaching What You Research: A Phased Model for Reconciling Resource Allocation with the Tripartite Mandate of Ugandan Universities

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ABSTRACT: Background: Ugandan universities operate under a tripartite mandate of teaching, research, and community service, yet the structural conditions for reconciling these functions under constrained resource environments remain poorly understood. This study examined the extent to which faculty research activities were integrated into teaching, how resource allocation patterns influenced mandate fulfilment, and what factors facilitated or hindered research-informed teaching across five Ugandan universities. **Methods:** A concurrent mixed-methods design was employed. A structured questionnaire was administered to 320 stratified randomly sampled academic staff across Makerere University, Kyambogo University, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Uganda Christian University, and Gulu University. Quantitative data were analysed at univariate (frequencies, means, standard deviations), bivariate (chi-square, Spearman's rank correlation), and multivariate (binary logistic regression) levels. Qualitative data from in-depth interviews were analysed thematically and triangulated with quantitative findings. **Results:** Only 43.1% of faculty reported integrating research into teaching. Bivariate analyses confirmed significant associations between research-informed teaching and academic rank ($\rho = +0.61$), departmental research culture ($\rho = +0.58$), research funding access ($\rho = +0.54$), and teaching load ($\rho = -0.47$). Logistic regression (Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.54$; classification accuracy = 76.6%) identified academic rank (OR = 3.13), departmental research culture (OR = 2.64), research funding (OR = 2.44), and teaching load (OR = 0.46) as the strongest independent predictors. Institution-level resource allocation scores were universally below the Likert scale midpoint, with time for research ($M = 2.35$) and teaching load adequacy ($M = 2.42$) recording the lowest means. **Conclusion:** Research-teaching integration in Ugandan universities was systematically constrained by structural resource allocation failures, particularly excessive teaching loads and inadequate research funding. A phased reconciliation model -- prioritising workload rationalisation, departmental culture transformation, and targeted research infrastructure investment -- is recommended as the evidence-based pathway for genuine operationalisation of the tripartite mandate.

Keywords: research-informed teaching, tripartite mandate, resource allocation, Ugandan universities, higher education, logistic regression, academic workload

Introduction

Universities in Uganda, like their counterparts across Sub-Saharan Africa, operate under a tripartite mandate that obligates them to simultaneously pursue teaching, research, and community service. However, the practical operationalization of this mandate has remained deeply contested, particularly in the context of persistently constrained resource environments where institutional priorities often force a de facto hierarchy among these three functions (Julius & Geoffrey, 2025; Julius & Milly, 2025). The intersection of research activity and classroom instruction represents one of the most intellectually fertile yet practically underexplored terrains in Ugandan higher education. The concept of 'teaching what you research' -- that is, the deliberate integration of a faculty member's active research agenda into their pedagogical content and approach -- has gained traction in developed-country universities as a mechanism for enhancing instructional quality, student engagement, and knowledge currency (Acquaah et al., 2013; Darlington Balojja et al., 2024; Wilbrod Aviu, 2024). Yet in Uganda, where public universities such as Makerere, Kyambogo, and Mbarara University of Science and Technology grapple with heavy teaching loads, inadequate research funding, and competing administrative demands, the feasibility and institutionalisation of such integration remain empirically unclear (Kazaara & Nancy, 2025; Nancy & Audrey, 2025a). This study therefore proposes a phased model for reconciling resource allocation decisions with the tripartite mandate, examining how Ugandan universities can structurally and strategically align faculty research activity with teaching responsibilities without sacrificing either function.

Background of the Study

The Ugandan university system has undergone rapid expansion since the liberalisation of higher education in the 1990s, growing from a handful of public institutions to over 50 accredited universities by the mid-2020s. This expansion, while improving access, has been accompanied by a disproportionate growth in student enrolment relative to institutional capacity, faculty numbers, and research infrastructure (Ddungu & Edopu, 2017; Julius & Nancy, 2025). The Uganda National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) and the Ministry of Education and Sports have consistently emphasised the importance of research-led teaching as a quality assurance benchmark, yet structural incentive systems within universities tend to reward publications and grant acquisition in relative isolation from teaching performance evaluations. Globally, scholarship on the nexus between research and teaching -- from Boyer's 1990 model of scholarship to more recent work by (Baguma & Wolters, 2021; Hailu et al., 2023; Kizza et al., 2021) on research-teaching linkages -- has demonstrated that when faculty are supported to integrate their scholarly inquiry into course design and delivery,

students benefit from exposure to cutting-edge knowledge, methodological thinking, and professional academic culture. In Uganda specifically, studies by (Julius & Godfrey, 2025a; Kamanzi & Neema-Abooki, 2025; Komba Rwakijuma & Lunyolo, 2023) have documented the structural bifurcation between teaching and research functions, attributing it primarily to funding deficits, top-down administrative cultures, and a lack of institutional policies that formally recognise and reward research-informed teaching. Against this backdrop, the question of how universities can develop phased, evidence-based models to realign resource allocation -- including time, funding, infrastructure, and human capital -- with an integrated tripartite mandate remains both timely and urgent.

Problem Statement

Despite the formal commitment of Ugandan universities to a tripartite mandate of teaching, research, and community engagement, the practical reconciliation of these functions remains structurally fragmented, particularly regarding how faculty research activity is translated into teaching content and classroom practice (Julius & Godfrey, 2025b; Obuku et al., 2021). Resource allocation frameworks in most Ugandan universities remain siloed, with research budgets, teaching loads, and community service obligations managed as largely independent administrative units. This fragmentation creates conditions under which faculty either neglect research in favour of heavy teaching duties or pursue research agendas disconnected from their instructional responsibilities, thereby undermining both the quality of student learning and the societal relevance of institutional knowledge production (Eton & Chance, 2022; JAPHETH et al., 2023; Nancy & Audrey, 2025b). There is currently no evidence-based phased model tailored to the Ugandan higher education context that guides universities in systematically integrating research into teaching while rationalising resource allocation across all three mandate dimensions. This study addresses that gap.

Objectives of the Study

Main Objective

To develop and validate a phased model for reconciling resource allocation with the tripartite mandate of Ugandan universities, with particular focus on the integration of faculty research activity into teaching practice.

Specific Objectives

1. To assess the extent to which faculty research activities are integrated into teaching content and delivery in selected Ugandan universities.
2. To examine the resource allocation patterns (financial, temporal, and infrastructural) and their influence on the fulfilment of the tripartite mandate in Ugandan universities.
3. To identify the institutional, structural, and individual-level factors that facilitate or hinder the adoption of a research-informed teaching model in Ugandan universities.

Research Questions

4. To what extent do faculty members in Ugandan universities integrate their research activities into their teaching content and pedagogical approaches?
5. How do existing resource allocation patterns within Ugandan universities influence the simultaneous fulfilment of the teaching, research, and community service mandate?
6. What institutional, structural, and individual-level factors facilitate or hinder the integration of research into teaching in Ugandan universities?

Methodology

This study adopted a concurrent mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative survey methods with qualitative approaches to generate a comprehensive understanding of the research-teaching nexus and resource allocation dynamics across selected Ugandan universities. The target population comprised academic staff, heads of department, and senior university administrators drawn from five purposively selected universities -- Makerere University, Kyambogo University, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Uganda Christian University, and Gulu University -- selected on the basis of institutional diversity, geographical spread, and research active status. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select 320 academic staff respondents across faculties and colleges, ensuring proportional representation by gender, academic rank, discipline cluster (sciences, social sciences, and humanities), and institution type (public versus private). Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire for quantitative strands and in-depth interview guides for qualitative strands, with the questionnaire pre-tested on 30 respondents outside the main sample to establish reliability (Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.70) and validity. Quantitative data were entered and cleaned in SPSS version 26 and analysed at three statistical levels: at the univariate level, frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations were computed to describe the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and the general patterns of research-teaching integration and resource allocation, providing a baseline descriptive profile of the study population; at the bivariate level, Pearson's chi-square tests and Spearman's rank-order correlation analyses were conducted to examine the nature, direction, and statistical significance of associations between resource allocation variables (research funding levels, teaching load hours, access to research infrastructure) and indicators of research-informed teaching (course content currency, use of self-generated research data in lectures, student exposure to ongoing research projects), with significance set at $p < 0.05$; and at the multivariate level, binary logistic regression models were fitted to identify the independent predictors of research-informed teaching practice, with the outcome variable coded as 1 (faculty member integrates research into teaching) or 0 (faculty member does not integrate research into teaching), and predictor variables including institutional type, academic rank, years of experience, research funding access, weekly teaching load, departmental research culture, and availability of research mentorship -- model fit was assessed using the Hosmer-

Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test, and results were reported as odds ratios (OR) with 95% confidence intervals (Nelson et al., 2022, 2023). Qualitative data from interviews were transcribed verbatim, coded using NVivo 14, and analysed thematically to contextualise and explain the patterns and associations identified in the quantitative strand, with findings triangulated across both data sources to enhance the credibility and transferability of conclusions. Ethical approval was obtained from the Makerere University School of Graduate Studies Institutional Review Board, and informed consent was secured from all participants prior to data collection.

Results

TABLE 1: Socio-demographic and Institutional Characteristics of Respondents (n = 320)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	198	61.9
	Female	122	38.1
Academic rank	Tutorial/Graduate Assistant	54	16.9
	Lecturer	112	35.0
	Senior Lecturer	89	27.8
	Associate/Full Professor	65	20.3
Discipline cluster	Sciences & Technology	118	36.9
	Social Sciences	107	33.4
	Humanities & Arts	95	29.7
Institution type	Public university	204	63.8
	Private university	116	36.2
Years of experience	1-5 years	88	27.5
	6-15 years	143	44.7
	16+ years	89	27.8
Research-informed teaching	Yes (integrates research into teaching)	138	43.1
	No (does not integrate)	182	56.9

Note: Frequencies and percentages reflect the full analytic sample.

Interpretation

The univariate analysis of socio-demographic characteristics revealed that the sample was predominantly male (61.9%), with females constituting 38.1% of respondents -- a distribution consistent with documented gender imbalances in Ugandan academic staffing as reported by the Uganda National Council for Higher Education. The majority of respondents held the rank of Lecturer (35.0%), followed by Senior Lecturer (27.8%), while Associate and Full Professors constituted only 20.3% of the sample, suggesting that the study captured a cross-sectional spread of career stages rather than over-representing senior faculty. Public university staff comprised 63.8% of respondents, roughly mirroring the proportion of public to private university enrolments in Uganda's higher education landscape. Experience was moderately distributed, with the modal category being 6-15 years of service (44.7%), indicating a workforce neither predominantly junior nor at the end of career trajectories. These descriptive patterns were critical for contextualising subsequent inferential analyses, as they signalled the potential moderating influence of rank, institutional type, and experience on research-teaching integration.

Most consequentially, the univariate output revealed that only 43.1% of faculty reported integrating their research into their teaching -- a figure that was strikingly low given the formal tripartite mandate embedded in Ugandan university charters and the National Development Plan III's emphasis on research-driven education. This finding mirrored patterns documented in other low- and middle-income country higher education systems, where structural resource constraints and heavy contact teaching hours systematically undermine the conditions necessary for research-informed pedagogy. The implication of this baseline statistic was that the majority of Ugandan university faculty were effectively operating in a teaching-only mode, disconnected from active scholarly inquiry in their classroom delivery -- a structural failure with direct consequences for graduate quality, institutional rankings, and the national knowledge economy. These proportions established the dependent variable distribution against which subsequent bivariate and logistic regression analyses were anchored.

TABLE 2: Bivariate Analysis: Association between Resource Allocation Variables and Research-Informed Teaching

Variable	Chi-square	df	p-value	Spearman's rho	Direction
Research funding access	48.71	3	<0.001	+0.54	Positive
Weekly teaching load (hours)	39.22	3	<0.001	-0.47	Negative
Access to research infrastructure	33.86	2	<0.001	+0.49	Positive
Departmental research culture	41.05	3	<0.001	+0.58	Positive
Research mentorship availability	28.34	2	<0.001	+0.43	Positive
Academic rank	55.18	3	<0.001	+0.61	Positive

Institution type (public vs private)	6.84	1	0.009	+0.15	Positive
Years of experience	18.93	2	<0.001	+0.33	Positive

Note: All chi-square tests were two-tailed. Significance threshold $p < 0.05$.

The bivariate analysis yielded statistically significant associations between all examined predictor variables and the outcome of research-informed teaching ($p < 0.05$ for all), confirming that the identified factors were individually relevant rather than spuriously correlated. Academic rank returned the largest chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 55.18$, $df = 3$, $p < 0.001$) and the strongest Spearman correlation ($\rho = +0.61$), indicating a robust positive monotonic relationship wherein higher academic rank was consistently associated with a greater likelihood of integrating research into teaching -- a finding aligned with the assumption that senior faculty possess both the research productivity and pedagogical autonomy to draw on their own scholarly work in instructional design. Departmental research culture was second in correlation strength ($\rho = +0.58$, $\chi^2 = 41.05$, $p < 0.001$), underscoring that individual faculty behaviour was not occurring in a vacuum but was substantively shaped by the normative and structural environment of their immediate academic unit. Research funding access also returned a strong positive association ($\rho = +0.54$, $p < 0.001$), consistent with theoretical frameworks positing that resource availability is a necessary, though not sufficient, precondition for sustained research activity that can feed into teaching.

Of particular analytical interest was the strong negative correlation between weekly teaching load and research-informed teaching ($\rho = -0.47$, $\chi^2 = 39.22$, $p < 0.001$), which provided the most direct empirical evidence of the structural trade-off at the heart of the tripartite mandate's operationalisation in Uganda. This result statistically validated the qualitative testimonies frequently captured in grey literature about Ugandan academia -- that excessively high contact-hour obligations crowd out time for research activity, ultimately desiccating the pipeline through which faculty scholarly work might otherwise flow into course content. Institution type produced the weakest chi-square value and correlation ($\rho = +0.15$, $\chi^2 = 6.84$, $p = 0.009$), suggesting that while public university affiliation conferred a modest advantage in research-teaching integration, institutional type was not a dominant predictor on its own, and its effect was likely mediated by rank, experience, and departmental culture. These bivariate relationships set the stage for the multivariate modelling needed to disentangle the independent contributions of each predictor.

TABLE 3: Binary Logistic Regression: Predictors of Research-Informed Teaching Practice

Predictor variable	B	SE	Wald X2	p-value	OR	95% CI
Academic rank (ref: Tutorial Asst.)	1.14	0.23	24.6	<0.001	3.13	[2.00-4.90]
Departmental research culture	0.97	0.21	21.3	<0.001	2.64	[1.74-4.00]
Research funding access	0.89	0.22	16.4	<0.001	2.44	[1.58-3.76]
Weekly teaching load	-0.78	0.20	15.2	<0.001	0.46	[0.31-0.68]
Research infrastructure access	0.74	0.24	9.5	0.002	2.10	[1.31-3.35]
Years of experience	0.52	0.19	7.5	0.006	1.68	[1.16-2.44]
Research mentorship availability	0.61	0.22	7.7	0.005	1.84	[1.20-2.82]
Institution type (public = 1)	0.27	0.20	1.8	0.181	1.31	[0.88-1.95]
Constant	-3.42	0.54	40.1	<0.001	--	--

Note: Model fit: Hosmer-Lemeshow $\chi^2 = 7.34$, $df = 8$, $p = 0.502$ (good fit); Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.54$; Overall classification accuracy = 76.6%. OR = Odds Ratio; CI = Confidence Interval; B = regression coefficient; SE = standard error.

The binary logistic regression model demonstrated good overall fit, as confirmed by the Hosmer-Lemeshow test ($\chi^2 = 7.34$, $df = 8$, $p = 0.502$), which was non-significant as desired, and a Nagelkerke R^2 of 0.54 indicating that the model explained approximately 54% of the variance in research-informed teaching practice -- a strong explanatory capacity for a social science logistic model. Overall classification accuracy stood at 76.6%. After controlling for all other variables in the model, academic rank emerged as the strongest independent predictor (OR = 3.13, 95% CI: 2.00-4.90, $p < 0.001$), meaning that with each step up the academic hierarchy, faculty were over three times more likely to report integrating research into teaching than their tutorial-level counterparts. Departmental research culture retained substantial independent explanatory power (OR = 2.64, 95% CI: 1.74-4.00, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the normative environment of an academic department was a highly significant driver of individual faculty behaviour even when rank, funding, and experience were held constant -- a finding with critical policy implications for how universities frame research culture interventions.

The negative odds ratio for weekly teaching load (OR = 0.46, 95% CI: 0.31-0.68, $p < 0.001$) was among the most analytically decisive results: faculty with heavier teaching loads were 54% less likely to integrate research into their teaching, independently of all other covariates. This result provided statistically robust confirmation that teaching load is not merely a correlate but an independent suppressor of research-informed pedagogy -- a structural barrier that cannot be resolved through mentorship or cultural change alone without parallel relief of contact-hour obligations. Notably, institution type was the only variable that failed to reach statistical significance in the adjusted model (OR = 1.31, $p = 0.181$), suggesting that its apparent bivariate relationship with research-informed

teaching was substantially confounded by differences in academic rank distribution, funding access, and departmental culture between public and private universities. Research mentorship (OR = 1.84, $p = 0.005$) and infrastructure access (OR = 2.10, $p = 0.002$) remained significant independent predictors, highlighting the multi-dimensional nature of the enabling environment required for research-teaching integration in the Ugandan context.

TABLE 4: Resource Allocation Patterns across Institutions: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations (5-point Likert Scale)

Resource allocation dimension	Makerere	Kyambogo	MUST	UCU	Gulu	Overall M (SD)
Adequacy of research funding	3.12	2.31	2.78	2.54	2.09	2.57 (0.82)
Reasonable teaching load	2.68	2.12	2.45	2.87	1.98	2.42 (0.75)
Access to research infrastructure	3.45	2.44	3.21	2.76	1.87	2.75 (0.94)
Time allocated for research	2.89	2.07	2.61	2.43	1.74	2.35 (0.78)
Community service support	2.74	2.22	2.55	2.61	2.03	2.43 (0.71)
Mentorship & professional development	3.08	2.38	2.91	2.82	2.17	2.67 (0.79)
Composite tripartite mandate support	2.99	2.26	2.75	2.67	1.98	2.53 (0.76)

Note: Scale anchors -- 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree. MUST = Mbarara University of Science and Technology; UCU = Uganda Christian University. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

The institution-level resource allocation profiles presented in Table 4 revealed uniformly low mean scores across all six dimensions and all five universities, with no institution achieving a composite tripartite mandate support score above 3.00 out of 5 -- a finding of considerable concern given that a score of 3.00 represents only the neutral midpoint of the Likert scale. Makerere University returned the highest composite score (M = 2.99, approaching neutral), followed by Mbarara University of Science and Technology (M = 2.75), Uganda Christian University (M = 2.67), Kyambogo University (M = 2.26), and Gulu University at the lowest (M = 1.98), reflecting the known resource gradient between Uganda's flagship research-intensive institution and regional or newer public universities. The dimension with the lowest overall mean was time allocated for research (M = 2.35, SD = 0.78), which, combined with the teaching load adequacy score (M = 2.42, SD = 0.75), pointed to a pervasive condition in which the temporal architecture of faculty work was fundamentally misaligned with the demands of the tripartite mandate -- confirming the structural chokepoint identified in the logistic regression.

The standard deviations across all dimensions (ranging from 0.71 to 0.94) indicated moderate but not extreme within-group variation, suggesting that the resource inadequacy experienced by faculty was not an isolated perception held by a small minority but was a broadly shared condition across institutional contexts. Access to research infrastructure showed the highest standard deviation (0.94), reflecting the wide inter-institutional gap between Makerere -- which benefits from donor-funded laboratory and library infrastructure -- and Gulu University, which returned a critically low mean of 1.87 on this dimension. The community service support dimension, despite being a formal component of the tripartite mandate, scored poorly across all institutions (overall M = 2.43, SD = 0.71), indicating that community engagement activities were neither resourced nor incentivised sufficiently to be perceived as institutionally supported by faculty. Taken together, these data provided an evidence base for the argument that Ugandan universities were structurally incapable of honouring the tripartite mandate in its full form under current resource allocation regimes, and that a phased, prioritised reallocation model -- sequenced to first reduce teaching loads and establish research time policies -- was a necessary institutional reform pathway.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated that the tripartite mandate of Ugandan universities -- encompassing teaching, research, and community service -- remained structurally under-resourced and functionally fragmented, with only 43.1% of faculty reporting meaningful integration of research into their teaching practice. Logistic regression modelling confirmed that academic rank, departmental research culture, research funding access, and infrastructure availability were significant independent enablers of research-informed teaching, while high teaching loads constituted its most powerful independent suppressor. Institution-level resource allocation profiles were uniformly below the neutral midpoint across all five sampled universities, with Gulu University recording critical deficits in infrastructure and time for research. The study concluded that a phased reconciliation model -- beginning with workload rationalization, progressing to departmental culture transformation and funding diversification, and culminating in institutionalized research-teaching integration policies -- offered the most pragmatic and evidence-based pathway for Ugandan universities to genuinely honor their tripartite mandate, enhance graduate quality, and position themselves as credible contributors to Uganda's knowledge-driven development agenda.

Recommendations

University management and the Uganda National Council for Higher Education should adopt and enforce a maximum teaching contact-hour policy -- not exceeding 12 hours per week for research-active faculty -- accompanied by a formal protected research time allocation of at least 30% of contractual working time, operationalised through structured workload management frameworks embedded in institutional human resource policies.

Departments should institutionalize research culture through structured mechanisms including departmental research seminars where faculty present ongoing work to students, formative peer review of research-informed syllabi, and revised academic promotion criteria that explicitly reward demonstrable linkages between a faculty member's research outputs and their course content and student supervision activities.

The Government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education and Sports, should substantially increase the national higher education research budget and establish a dedicated competitive grant fund for research-teaching integration projects, with special allocation windows for regional and newer public universities such as Gulu, whose critical infrastructure deficits place them at a structural disadvantage in fulfilling the tripartite mandate.

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