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Effect of Teaching Load on Quality Service Delivery in Private Chartered Universities in Kampala, Uganda

Gwokyalya Edith Baagala[1], Assoc. Prof. Sofia Sol Gaite[2], Dr. Tom M. Kabage[3], Assoc. Prof. Peter Betiang[4], Ssekyoga Lawrence[5]

[1,2,3,4,5]College of Education, Open and Distance Learning, Kampala International University, Uganda

Abstract

This study investigated the effect of teacher workload on service quality in private chartered schools in Kampala. The study is a component of a doctoral dissertation concerning academic burden and service quality at private chartered institutions. A mixed-methods cross-sectional research gathered questionnaire data from 301 academic staff and conducted qualitative interviews with Department Heads and Quality Assurance Officers. Academic staff delivered substantial instruction ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.67$) and offered moderate services ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.58$). The teaching load had a substantial negative connection with service quality ($r = -0.521$, $p < .001$). Regression analysis indicates that teaching load accounts for 27.1% of the variance in service quality ($R^2 = 0.271$), with a significant negative predictive effect ($B = -0.451$, $\beta = -0.521$, $p < .001$). A qualitative research revealed that a substantial teaching load constrained feedback, student consultations, class preparation, and the quality assurance of academic staff. The study advocates for particular frameworks addressing workload allocation, staff assistance, manageable class sizes, designated consultation periods, and quality assurance methods responsive to workload, since teaching load influences service quality.

Keywords: Teaching Load; Quality Service Delivery; Academic Staff Workload; Private Chartered Universities; Higher Education; Uganda

1.0 Introduction

Quality service delivery in higher education has moved from being a reputational aspiration to a managed institutional responsibility. Universities are now expected to demonstrate that teaching, assessment, feedback, student support, supervision, moderation, curriculum review, and academic administration are delivered reliably and responsively (Harvey, 2024; Martin, 2018; National Council for Higher Education [NCHE], 2024; UNESCO Office in Harare, 2025). This expectation is especially strong in private universities, where students and parents often evaluate institutional quality through service encounters such as lecturer availability, timeliness of feedback, consistency of procedures, and responsiveness to academic concerns (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Seitova et al., 2024; Stankovska et al., 2024).

Teaching load is therefore a central quality issue. It includes not only formal contact hours but also preparation, assessment design, marking, feedback, student consultation, management of large classes, and follow-up on academic concerns (Kenny & Fluck, 2023; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024; OECD,

2025). In many universities, however, workload allocation systems still treat teaching load narrowly, often counting courses or contact hours while underestimating the invisible labour of quality teaching, including feedback, moderation, digital communication, and student support (Harvey, 2024; Kenny & Fluck, 2023; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024).

In Uganda, the challenge is particularly important because the higher education sector has expanded under strong regulatory and competitive pressures. The National Council for Higher Education requires universities to maintain quality assurance systems, while students increasingly expect timely, reliable, and supportive academic services (NCHE, 2024). However, quality assurance systems depend heavily on academic staff time and commitment, meaning that excessive teaching load can weaken service reliability, delay feedback, reduce consultation, and limit participation in quality improvement processes (Harvey, 2024; Martin, 2018; Pham et al., 2022; UNESCO Office in Harare, 2025).

This article reports findings from the teaching-load component of a broader doctoral investigation of academic staff workload and quality service delivery in private chartered universities in Uganda. Its first objective specifically determined the effect of teaching load on quality service delivery in private chartered universities in Kampala, Uganda. The objective is important because the quality of academic services is experienced most immediately through daily teaching-related interactions: whether lectures are prepared, whether classes start and end as scheduled, whether students receive feedback in time, whether lecturers are available for consultation, and whether academic procedures are implemented consistently.

This article therefore narrows the broader doctoral investigation to the teaching-load dimension and presents it as an independent journal manuscript. It argues that teaching load is not merely an individual staff inconvenience but a structural determinant of institutional quality. When teaching load becomes excessive, quality service delivery is affected not because academic staff are unwilling to serve, but because the available academic time, energy, and attention become insufficient for the level of responsiveness, feedback, preparation, and quality assurance participation expected of them (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Cao et al., 2025; Demerouti et al., 2001; Yingying et al., 2025).

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Teaching Load in Higher Education

Teaching load refers to the volume and intensity of teaching-related responsibilities assigned to academic staff, including course preparation, lecture delivery, assessment design, marking, feedback, student consultation, and management of student learning processes (Kenny & Fluck, 2023; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024; OECD, 2025). It is a more complex construct than contact hours alone because effective teaching requires preparation before class, interaction during class, and follow-up after class. The quality of teaching service is therefore shaped not only by how much academics teach, but also by whether they have enough time to prepare, assess, respond, support, and improve (Harvey, 2024; Martin, 2018; Seitova et al., 2024).

Recent workload scholarship demonstrates that academic labour is often underestimated because many institutional workload models do not fully capture service, assessment, student support, curriculum work, and quality assurance responsibilities (Kenny & Fluck, 2023; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024). Nnadozie and Chinomona (2024) particularly argue that growth in student enrolment without proportional growth in academic staffing and resources increases teaching-load pressure and threatens teaching effectiveness. This is consistent with OECD (2025), which treats student-academic staff ratios as an important indicator of institutional capacity and learning support in tertiary education.

Within the Job Demands-Resources theory, teaching load operates as a job demand. Job demands are aspects of work that require sustained physical, cognitive, and emotional effort and may lead to strain when not balanced with adequate resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Demerouti et al., 2001). When academic staff face high teaching demands without sufficient time, support, staffing, technology, or faculty development, the likely consequences include fatigue, reduced responsiveness, weaker preparation, delayed feedback, and diminished service quality (Cadena-Povea et al., 2025; Cao et al., 2025; Yingying et al., 2025).

2.2 Quality Service Delivery in Universities

Quality service delivery in higher education refers to the extent to which academic and support services are delivered in a manner that meets stakeholder expectations and institutional standards. In the SERVQUAL tradition, quality is commonly understood through reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Parasuraman et al., 1988). In universities, these dimensions are reflected in timely feedback, dependable teaching schedules, effective supervision, accessible consultation, credible assessment procedures, and continuous improvement of academic processes (Martin, 2018; Pham et al., 2022; Seitova et al., 2024; Stankovska et al., 2024).

Higher education quality assurance has expanded substantially in recent decades, with universities required to demonstrate evidence of planning, monitoring, review, assessment, stakeholder feedback, and continuous improvement (Harvey, 2024; Martin, 2018; NCHE, 2024; UNESCO Office in Harare, 2025). However, quality assurance can become performative if it produces documentation without addressing the workload conditions under which teaching, feedback, supervision, and quality routines are actually performed (Harvey, 2024; Pham et al., 2022; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024).

Service quality in higher education is also strongly linked to student satisfaction and institutional reputation. Seitova et al. (2024), using SERVQUAL in a higher education context, confirmed that perceived service quality significantly affects student satisfaction. Stankovska et al. (2024) similarly emphasise that higher education service quality is central to competitiveness, retention, and improvement because students evaluate institutions through concrete service experiences. These studies support the view that quality service delivery depends on both institutional systems and the daily academic work through which students experience those systems (Harvey, 2024; Martin, 2018).

2.3 Teaching Load and Quality Service Delivery

The relationship between teaching load and quality service delivery is theoretically and practically strong. Under the Job Demands-Resources theory, excessive teaching load may impair service quality by exhausting the time and energy required for reliable and responsive service delivery (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Demerouti et al., 2001; Yingying et al., 2025). Under SERVQUAL, the same overload can widen service gaps by weakening responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and empathy in academic service encounters (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Seitova et al., 2024; Stankovska et al., 2024).

Empirical evidence supports this logic. Workload studies show that when teaching, marking, consultation, and quality documentation increase without proportional institutional support, academic staff may prioritise urgent tasks while reducing time for reflective preparation, student feedback, mentorship, and quality improvement (Kenny & Fluck, 2023; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024; Pham et al., 2022). Recent evidence on lecturer stress and burnout also confirms that university lecturers face distinctive work stressors arising from teaching, research, administration, student support, and institutional demands (Cadena-Povea et al., 2025; Cao et al., 2025; Yingying et al., 2025).

In Uganda's private chartered universities, the relationship may be intensified by staffing constraints, competitive enrolment pressures, quality assurance requirements, and reliance on academic staff to deliver multiple services simultaneously. The NCHE quality assurance framework places responsibility on institutions to ensure quality, but institutions can only fulfil this responsibility sustainably where workload allocation, staffing, and service expectations are realistic (NCHE, 2024; Pham et al., 2022; UNESCO Office in Harare, 2025). Thus, teaching load is both a human resource issue and a quality assurance issue (Harvey, 2024; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024).

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The article is based on objective-one data extracted from a broader mixed-methods study on academic staff workload and quality service delivery in private chartered universities in Uganda. The broader study adopted a pragmatic mixed-methods approach and a cross-sectional correlational design. This design was appropriate because it enabled the collection of quantitative and qualitative data at a single point in time to examine the relationship between teaching load and quality service delivery while also obtaining institutional explanations from key informants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The quantitative strand generated measurable evidence on teaching load and quality service delivery, while the qualitative strand provided explanatory insights from institutional actors directly involved in workload allocation and quality assurance. This design strengthened interpretation through triangulation, allowing statistical findings to be interpreted alongside lived institutional experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

3.2 Study Population and Sampling

The study population comprised 1,807 academic staff from five purposively selected private chartered universities in the Kampala Metropolitan Area. To ensure confidentiality and institutional privacy, the participating universities were not identified by name in this article; they were coded as University A, University B, University C, University D, and University E. The population included academic staff involved in teaching, assessment, consultation, supervision, and other academic service responsibilities. The decision to anonymise institutions was consistent with the study's ethical commitment to confidentiality and with accepted reporting practices for studies involving identifiable organisations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

For the quantitative strand, Yamane's (1967) formula was used to determine a sample size of 328 academic staff from the population of 1,807. Questionnaires were distributed proportionately across the five institutions, and 301 valid responses were returned, giving a response rate of 91.8%. For the qualitative strand, ten key informants were targeted, comprising five Heads of Department and five Quality Assurance Officers. Eight key informants participated, representing an 80.0% qualitative response rate. Heads of Department were selected because of their role in workload allocation and staff supervision, while Quality Assurance Officers were selected because of their role in monitoring quality service delivery.

Table 1: Quantitative Sample Distribution of Academic Staff

University Code	Study Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
A	731	133	Simple random sampling
B	329	60	Simple random sampling

C	308	56	Simple random sampling
D	235	43	Simple random sampling
E	204	36	Simple random sampling
Total	1,807	328	

Source: *Field data (2025).*

Table 2: Response Rate

Study Component	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Questionnaire	Questionnaires administered	328	100.0
Questionnaire	Questionnaires returned	301	91.8
Questionnaire	Questionnaires not returned	27	8.2
Interview	Key informants targeted	10	100.0
Interview	Key informants interviewed	8	80.0
Interview	Key informants not interviewed	2	20.0

Source: *Field data (2025).*

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire. For this article, attention was restricted to the teaching-load section and the quality service delivery section. Teaching load was measured using ten Likert-scale items addressing course units, contact hours, class size, number of classes, preparation, marking, feedback, consultation, lesson effectiveness, and manageability within official working time. Quality service delivery was measured using ten items addressing timeliness, feedback, scheduling, supervision, monitoring, leadership support, staff commitment, continuous improvement, consistency of procedures, and academic effectiveness. These indicators align with workload and service-quality literature emphasising responsiveness, reliability, assessment feedback, and support as core service-quality concerns in higher education (Kenny & Fluck, 2023; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Seitova et al., 2024; Stankovska et al., 2024).

Qualitative data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide administered to Heads of Department and Quality Assurance Officers. The interview questions explored how teaching load affected feedback, consultation, lesson preparation, student support, participation in quality assurance processes, and institutional coping mechanisms.

3.4 Quality Control

The research instruments were reviewed by experts to establish content validity. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The main data reliability coefficients were strong, with academic staff workload producing alpha = 0.880, faculty development programmes alpha = 0.889, and quality service delivery alpha = 0.879. These values exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, supporting internal consistency of the instruments (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Pallant, 2020).

3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's product moment correlation, and simple linear regression. Means and standard deviations were used to describe teaching load and quality service delivery. Pearson correlation tested the direction and strength of the relationship between teaching load and quality service delivery, while regression analysis determined whether teaching load significantly predicted quality service delivery. Qualitative data were analysed thematically following the logic of

coding, theme development, review, definition, and interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The final interpretation integrated quantitative and qualitative evidence to generate a balanced explanation of the findings.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and secure handling of research data. Universities and respondents were coded to protect institutional and personal identity, and no participating university is named in this article. Participation was voluntary, and data were reported in aggregate form to avoid exposing individual staff members, departments, or institutions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

4.0 Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics for Teaching Load

Teaching load was examined using ten items. The findings showed that academic staff generally experienced high teaching load in private chartered universities in Kampala, Uganda.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Teaching Load

Item	Teaching Load Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
TL1	I teach many course units in a semester.	3.88	1.02	High
TL2	My weekly teaching contact hours are heavy.	3.94	0.98	High
TL3	The number of students I teach is too large for effective instruction.	3.62	1.09	High
TL4	I handle many classes in a typical semester.	3.79	1.01	High
TL5	Preparing for lectures takes a large portion of my working time.	4.01	0.93	High
TL6	Marking students' coursework and examinations creates a heavy workload for me.	4.08	0.89	High
TL7	I find it difficult to provide timely feedback to students because of my teaching load.	3.68	1.05	High
TL8	My teaching schedule leaves me with little time for consultation with students.	3.57	1.08	High
TL9	The teaching load assigned to me affects my ability to deliver lessons effectively.	3.44	1.11	High
TL10*	My teaching load is manageable within the official working time.	2.41	1.14	Low
	Aggregate Mean	**3.76**	**0.67**	**High**

Source: *Field data (2025).*

The aggregate mean for teaching load was 3.76 (SD = 0.67), interpreted as high. This means that respondents generally agreed that their teaching responsibilities were demanding and consumed a substantial portion of their working time. The most demanding indicators were marking coursework and examinations (M = 4.08, SD = 0.89), preparing for lectures (M = 4.01, SD = 0.93), and heavy weekly contact hours (M = 3.94, SD = 0.98). These findings are consistent with workload literature showing that assessment, preparation, contact hours, and student support are among the most time-consuming but often

undercounted aspects of academic labour (Kenny & Fluck, 2023; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024; OECD, 2025).

These results show that teaching load extended beyond classroom delivery into assessment, preparation, feedback, and consultation. The finding that teaching load was not manageable within official working time (M = 2.41, SD = 1.14) is particularly important because it suggests that academic staff were likely carrying teaching-related responsibilities beyond formal workload expectations. This is consistent with evidence that academic workload is often broader and more demanding than workload allocation models indicate, especially when assessment, student communication, administration, and quality assurance duties are included (Harvey, 2024; Kenny & Fluck, 2023; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024).

4.2 Descriptive Statistics for Quality Service Delivery

Quality service delivery was also measured using ten items. The results show that quality service delivery was generally moderate, although some indicators were rated high.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Quality Service Delivery

Item	Quality Service Delivery Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
QSM1	Academic services in this university are delivered in a timely manner.	3.18	0.96	Moderate
QSM2	Students receive feedback on academic work within an acceptable time.	3.02	1.01	Moderate
QSM3	Teaching and learning activities are conducted according to the university schedule.	3.44	0.89	High
QSM4	Student supervision services are provided effectively in this university.	3.21	0.94	Moderate
QSM5	The university monitors the quality of academic services regularly.	3.36	0.88	Moderate
QSM6	There is clear leadership support for quality service delivery in this university.	3.47	0.86	High
QSM7	Academic staff are committed to meeting students' academic needs.	3.69	0.81	High
QSM8	The university continuously improves its academic service processes.	3.24	0.91	Moderate
QSM9	Academic procedures are implemented consistently across departments.	3.11	0.93	Moderate
QSM10	Generally, quality service delivery in this university is effective.	3.33	0.90	Moderate
	Aggregate Mean	3.31	0.58	Moderate

Source: *Field data (2025).*

The aggregate mean for quality service delivery was 3.31 (SD = 0.58), interpreted as moderate. This means that quality service delivery existed but was not uniformly strong across the sampled universities. The highest-rated indicator was academic staff commitment to meeting students' academic needs (M = 3.69, SD = 0.81), followed by leadership support for quality service delivery (M = 3.47, SD = 0.86) and teaching and learning activities being conducted according to schedule (M = 3.44, SD = 0.89). These strengths

suggest that staff commitment and leadership direction were present, but not sufficient by themselves to guarantee consistently high service quality (Harvey, 2024; Martin, 2018; NCHE, 2024).

The lowest-rated quality indicator was timely feedback on academic work (M = 3.02, SD = 1.01), followed by consistent implementation of academic procedures across departments (M = 3.11, SD = 0.93). These lower means are important because timeliness and consistency are central SERVQUAL indicators of responsiveness and reliability (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Seitova et al., 2024; Stankovska et al., 2024). The findings suggest that although institutional quality systems were present, service-delivery outcomes remained vulnerable in areas requiring sustained academic time, coordination, and follow-up (Harvey, 2024; Pham et al., 2022).

4.3 Correlation between Teaching Load and Quality Service Delivery

Table 5: Pearson Correlation between Teaching Load and Quality Service Delivery

Variable		Teaching Load	Quality Service Delivery
Teaching Load	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.521**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	301	301
Quality Service Delivery	Pearson Correlation	-0.521**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	301	301

Source: *Field data (2025).*

*****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).***

The Pearson correlation results show a statistically significant moderate negative relationship between teaching load and quality service delivery ($r = -0.521$, $p < .001$). This means that heavier teaching load was associated with lower quality service delivery. The direction of the relationship is theoretically expected: as staff carry more course units, contact hours, classes, marking, preparation, and student consultation pressure, their capacity to provide timely and consistent academic services is likely to decline (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Demerouti et al., 2001; Kenny & Fluck, 2023).

The relationship was not trivial. A coefficient of -0.521 indicates a meaningful association in social science research, particularly in a university service context where service quality is shaped by many institutional, human, technological, regulatory, and student-related factors (Field, 2018; Harvey, 2024; Martin, 2018). In practical terms, the finding suggests that teaching load should be treated as a core quality assurance concern rather than a narrow departmental scheduling matter (NCHE, 2024; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024).

4.4 Regression Analysis for the Effect of Teaching Load on Quality Service Delivery

Table 6: Model Summary for Teaching Load Predicting Quality Service Delivery

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.521	0.271	0.269	0.497

Source: *Field data (2025).*

Table 7: ANOVA for Teaching Load Predicting Quality Service Delivery

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	27.40	1	27.40	111.15	0.000
Residual	73.69	299	0.246		
Total	101.09	300			

Source: *Field data (2025).*

Table 8: Regression Coefficients for Teaching Load Predicting Quality Service Delivery

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	5.006	0.161		31.09	0.000
Teaching Load	-0.451	0.043	-0.521	-10.54	0.000

Source: *Field data (2025).*

The model summary shows that teaching load explained 27.1% of the variance in quality service delivery ($R^2 = 0.271$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.269$). This is a meaningful proportion because service delivery in universities is influenced by many factors, including leadership, staffing, infrastructure, student numbers, technology, policies, and quality assurance culture (Harvey, 2024; Martin, 2018; OECD, 2025; UNESCO Office in Harare, 2025). The result therefore confirms that teaching load was not a minor factor but a substantial predictor of perceived quality service delivery.

The ANOVA results show that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 299) = 111.15$, $p < .001$. This indicates that teaching load significantly predicted quality service delivery in the sampled private chartered universities. The regression coefficient further showed that teaching load had a negative and statistically significant effect on quality service delivery ($B = -0.451$, $\beta = -0.521$, $t = -10.54$, $p < .001$), meaning that every one-unit increase in teaching load was associated with an estimated 0.451-unit decline in quality service delivery. This finding is consistent with workload and burnout evidence showing that persistent academic overload weakens professional capacity and service responsiveness (Cadena-Povea et al., 2025; Cao et al., 2025; Yingying et al., 2025).

Based on these results, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between teaching load and quality service delivery in private chartered universities in Kampala, Uganda, was rejected. The evidence supports the conclusion that teaching load has a significant negative effect on quality service delivery. This statistical conclusion strengthens the argument that quality improvement efforts should include workload governance as a measurable institutional quality indicator (Harvey, 2024; NCHE, 2024; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024).

4.5 Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings explained how heavy teaching load affected quality service delivery. Five related themes emerged from interviews with Heads of Department and Quality Assurance Officers.

First, excessive teaching reduced the time available for other academic services. Participant P1 stated:

> *"When teaching hours are excessive, lecturers are unable to dedicate sufficient time and energy to important aspects like curriculum development, student engagement, and administrative responsibilities."* **(Participant P1)**

Second, heavy workload limited participation in quality assurance. Participant P2 explained:

> *"Excessive working hours often prevent staff from participating actively in quality assurance processes or continuous improvement initiatives, which are critical for total quality management."* **(Participant P2)**

Third, excessive workload weakened teamwork and innovation. Participant P4 observed:

> *"Overburdened staff are less likely to collaborate or innovate."* **(Participant P4)**

Fourth, inadequate institutional support intensified teaching pressure. Participant P5 noted:

> *"Heavy teaching workloads are often compounded by insufficient tools, technology, and administrative assistance."* ***(Participant P5)***

Lastly, workload was perceived as unequally distributed across academic ranks. Participant P3 stated:

> *"Assistant lecturers and lecturers are assigned more responsibilities than others, leading to frustration and perceptions of unfairness."* **(Participant P3)**

Consequently, the findings showed that excessive and unequal teaching loads constrained academic service delivery, quality assurance participation, collaboration and innovation, particularly where institutional support was inadequate.

5.0 Discussion of the Findings, Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations

5.1 Discussion of the Findings

The findings demonstrate that teaching load had a significant negative effect on quality service delivery in private chartered universities in Kampala, Uganda. The descriptive results showed that teaching load was high, especially in relation to marking, preparation, contact hours, and difficulty managing teaching responsibilities within official working time. At the same time, quality service delivery was moderate, with relatively weaker ratings for timely feedback and procedural consistency. This pattern is consistent with the argument that quality assurance outcomes depend not only on policies and structures, but also on the actual time and capacity available to academic staff (Harvey, 2024; Martin, 2018; Pham et al., 2022; UNESCO Office in Harare, 2025).

The correlation result ($r = -0.521$, $p < .001$) and regression result ($B = -0.451$, $\beta = -0.521$, $p < .001$) confirm the explanatory power of teaching load. The finding is consistent with Job Demands-Resources theory, which predicts that sustained job demands reduce performance when not balanced with adequate resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Demerouti et al., 2001). It also aligns with recent lecturer burnout evidence showing that heavy teaching, research, management, and student-support demands contribute to job stress, burnout, and weakened professional functioning (Cadena-Povea et al., 2025; Cao et al., 2025; Yingying et al., 2025).

The findings also support the logic of the SERVQUAL model. Service quality is shaped by reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangible support (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Seitova et al., 2024; Stankovska et al., 2024). Heavy teaching load directly affects reliability and responsiveness because overloaded lecturers may struggle to return marked work on time, respond to students promptly, prepare thoroughly, and participate consistently in quality improvement routines (Kenny & Fluck, 2023; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024; OECD, 2025).

The qualitative findings deepen the interpretation by showing how teaching overload travels through institutional systems. It delays feedback, limits student consultation, weakens lesson preparation, reduces participation in quality assurance activities, and forces institutions to rely on coping strategies that may not fully resolve the problem. These themes correspond with the literature showing that quality assurance becomes fragile when improvement routines depend on staff who are already overstretched by teaching

and assessment demands (Harvey, 2024; Martin, 2018; Pham et al., 2022; UNESCO Office in Harare, 2025).

A critical implication of the findings is that quality service delivery cannot be improved through quality assurance policies alone. Universities may establish quality assurance offices, conduct audits, and produce documentation, but if academic staff do not have enough time to teach, assess, consult, and engage in improvement processes, quality assurance risks becoming compliance-focused rather than improvement-focused (Harvey, 2024; Martin, 2018; Pham et al., 2022). This critique is important because it shifts attention from blaming individual lecturers to examining the structural conditions under which academic service delivery occurs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Kenny & Fluck, 2023).

The findings are also humanly significant. Behind the statistics are lecturers trying to prepare classes, mark scripts, respond to students, attend meetings, update curricula, meet deadlines, and remain professionally committed. The study does not suggest that academic staff lack commitment; instead, it shows that commitment alone cannot compensate indefinitely for structural workload pressure. In this sense, workload governance becomes both a quality assurance issue and a staff wellbeing issue (Cadena-Povea et al., 2025; Cao et al., 2025; Yingying et al., 2025).

5.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that teaching load has a statistically significant negative effect on quality service delivery in private chartered universities in Kampala, Uganda. Academic staff experienced a high teaching load, while quality service delivery was moderate. The correlation and regression findings showed that teaching load was a meaningful predictor of quality service delivery, and qualitative evidence explained that heavy teaching load delays feedback, limits consultation, weakens preparation, and reduces participation in quality assurance processes. These findings are consistent with current workload, service quality, and quality assurance literature (Harvey, 2024; Kenny & Fluck, 2023; NCHE, 2024; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024; Seitova et al., 2024).

The central conclusion is that teaching load is not a minor operational issue; it is a structural determinant of quality service delivery. Universities that seek to improve service quality must therefore treat workload governance as part of internal quality assurance, human resource planning, staff wellbeing, and student experience management (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Cao et al., 2025; Martin, 2018; UNESCO Office in Harare, 2025).

5.3 Implications

The findings have important implications for university management. First, private chartered universities should recognise that quality service delivery depends on the amount of time academic staff have to prepare, teach, assess, give feedback, consult students, and participate in improvement activities (Kenny & Fluck, 2023; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024; OECD, 2025). Secondly, workload allocation should become a transparent institutional governance issue rather than an informal departmental arrangement (Harvey, 2024; NCHE, 2024).

Secondly, the findings imply that quality assurance units cannot function effectively if academic staff are too overloaded to participate meaningfully in quality routines. Curriculum review, moderation, student feedback analysis, and departmental planning require protected time and administrative support (Martin, 2018; Pham et al., 2022; UNESCO Office in Harare, 2025).

Thirdly, the findings have implications for student experience. Students judge service quality partly through feedback timeliness, lecturer availability, clarity of instruction, consistency of procedures, and

responsiveness to academic concerns (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Seitova et al., 2024; Stankovska et al., 2024). Therefore, reducing excessive teaching load is indirectly a student-support intervention.

5.4 Recommendations

Private chartered universities should adopt transparent workload frameworks that account for teaching hours, course units, class sizes, assessment, marking, consultation, supervision and quality assurance responsibilities. Holistic workload models provide more accurate estimates than contact hours alone (Kenny & Fluck, 2023).

University management should control class sizes and assessment loads by recruiting additional staff, providing teaching assistants and protecting formal student-consultation time. Staffing and workload decisions should reflect enrolment patterns and student–academic staff ratios (OECD, 2025).

Quality assurance units should coordinate audits, curriculum reviews and academic planning with teaching and marking schedules. Universities should also provide targeted faculty development in assessment, feedback, learner-centred teaching and digital technologies. UNESCO emphasises that effective internal quality assurance requires institutional coordination and a sustained quality culture.

The National Council for Higher Education should strengthen workload-governance standards and require universities to demonstrate how teaching loads, staffing ratios, consultation time and quality assurance responsibilities are allocated and monitored.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

Longitudinal studies should examine the combined effects of teaching, supervision and administrative workloads on quality service delivery and determine whether faculty development reduces cumulative workload pressures.

Comparative studies should establish whether the relationship between teaching load and service quality differs between private and public universities due to variations in funding, staffing and governance structures (OECD, 2025).

Further research should incorporate students' perspectives on how teaching load affects feedback, lecturer availability, instructional quality and academic support.

Workload-audit studies should determine the actual time required for teaching, preparation, marking, consultation, moderation and quality assurance to inform evidence-based staffing, budgeting and workload allocation in Ugandan universities (Kenny & Fluck, 2023; NCHE, 2024; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024).

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