

A Qualitative Exploration of African Universities' Role in Knowledge Production and Dissemination: Perspectives from Rwanda,

M, a, r, i, e, C, h, a, n, t, a, l, U, w, a, s, e, ,, J, e, a, n, d, e, D, i, e, u, U, w, i, m, a, n, a

| Abstract

Background: A significant gap exists in African Studies regarding the

specific role of African universities in producing and disseminating knowledge within local contexts. This study focuses on this role within Rwanda, examining the contemporary landscape from 2021 onwards.

Purpose and objectives: The purpose was to explore the function of Rwandan universities in knowledge production and dissemination. The objectives were to identify key enabling factors and constraints, analyse current practices, and propose directions for institutional and scholarly development within the 2021–2026 timeframe.

Methodology: This qualitative study employed a thematic analysis of policy documents, institutional reports, and relevant scholarly literature from 2021–2026. The analysis was framed within debates on decolonising knowledge and strengthening higher education’s societal relevance in Africa.

Findings: Findings reveal a tension between persistent structural constraints—such as resource limitations and inherited academic paradigms—and emerging, context-driven innovations in research and community engagement. The evidence suggests progress is uneven across different academic disciplines and institutional types.

Conclusion: The study concludes that Rwandan universities occupy a complex, evolving space in the knowledge ecosystem. Their effectiveness is contingent on navigating global academic pressures while fostering locally anchored scholarly practices.

Recommendations: Universities and policymakers should develop more nuanced, discipline-sensitive strategies that support locally grounded research. Priorities include enhancing infrastructure for qualitative research, fostering equitable international partnerships, and improving systemic data collection on knowledge outputs.

Key words: African universities,

knowledge production, knowledge dissemination, Rwanda, African Studies, qualitative study Contribution statement: This study provides a focused analysis of the contemporary role of Rwandan universities in knowledge processes, offering an evidence-based perspective to inform institutional strategy and future research in African higher education.
