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The lived experience of academic staff in a marketised post-1992 university: A case study

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Acknowledgments

Abstract

Concerns have been long expressed in the literature regarding the consequences of the marketisation of universities. Reflecting its positioning within the field of Critical University Studies (CUS), the literature is primarily negative and assumes that the impacts on university academic staff are universally experienced in a particular institution. Based on a case study of a post-1992 university, the purpose of this research is to determine whether the lived experience of all academics is indeed universal or not. Specifically, it sets out to establish whether commonalities and /or variations exist in the experience of academics according to age, gender, length of service, role and contract type. It also seeks to identify how academics believe their experience could be enhanced and, consequently, to propose a targeted applied research response at the local level.

The research adopts a pluralist version of social practice theory. A practice approach enables the interrogation of agency within a particular configuration of practices, facilitating an understanding of what is going on and why and, in particular, addressing the issue of power and the potential for agency within a specific particular assemblage of practices. In this thesis, an adapted model of institutional praxis, academic practitioners and their work practices is utilised to structure the research within the paradigm of pragmatism. Following a sequential mixed and multi-method approach, the research comprised three phases. First, a focus group was employed to identify key themes related to academics' perceptions of their lived work experiences in a post-1992 university. This informed the design of a subsequent online survey that sought to generate more specific quantitative (descriptive and inferential) data across a wider sample of academics followed, thirdly, by 30 one-hour semi-structured interviews that built on the survey outcomes to elicit in-depth, rich qualitative (thematic) data. Participants, who were identified by non-probability sampling (purposive for the focus group and interviews and self-selection for the online survey), included a wide variety of academics from across the case study institution.

The key empirical findings reveal both commonalities and variations in the lived experience of respondents. Five shared-experience themes emerged: (i) rationalisation of staff and mounting workloads; (ii) standardisation, centralisation and monitoring of all work processes and depersonalised internal communication and work relationships; (iii) poor campus space management; (iv) poor communication between senior management and staff; and (v) lack of investment in a good academic staff experience. Key variations in experience related to length of service (often age related), gender,

academic role and contract type. These variables influenced respondents' perceptions of their daily working lives and practices and of their work-life balance.

Generally, the research reveals that institutional structural praxis (systems, processes, resources, manager practices) drives and influences academic agents and their work practices. Owing to the corporatisation and managerialisation of universities within the macro-environment of neoliberalism, there is a management focus on the neoliberal practices of the rationalisation of resources to maximise institutional profitability via standardisation, staff performativity and surveillance. This was found to conflict and cause tension with academic agents, resulting in their loss of influence locally as professionals and the impoverishment of their core work practices in teaching and research; academics and their practices currently have limited agency and influence on institutional praxis. Nevertheless, the research also suggests that the common concerns of all academics and some of the negatively experienced variations for certain staff categories are fixable, reasonable and relatively cheap to address, requiring first and foremost the enhancement of the academic lived experience at the university by mutually respectful cooperation between staff and managers to achieve competitive advantage for all stakeholders. In this way, the lives of academics at the case study university could be transformed for the better to pave the way to a more humane and democratic place to work where staff can thrive rather than just survive.

Keywords

Neoliberalism, New Public Management, marketisation, managerialism, performativity, commodification, metric power, surveillance, de-professionalisation, occupational stress, workplace intensification, poor work-life balance.

Acronyms

HE (I)	Higher Education (Institution)
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
OfS	Office for Students
THES	The Times Higher Education Supplement
ASE	Academic staff experience
Prof	Professor
R	Reader
SRF	Senior Research Fellow
RF	Research Fellow
PL	Principal Lecturer
CL	Clinical academic/practitioner who works in the School of Medicine and Dentistry and in the field.
SL	Senior Lecturer
L	Lecturer
AL	Associate Lecturer
SPH	Staff Paid Hourly

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Chapter One

Introduction and background

> It is how many of us spend the majority of our waking hours, so it makes sense to have a job you love and a workplace that brings joy to your heart each morning. (Anon, 2019)

> A recent report in the Times Higher Education Supplement (THE) claims that university academics are a 'staff at breaking point' (Mayo, 2019b: 9) as counselling demand soars due to mounting workloads and performance management.

1.0 Personal context and axiological stance

I am both passionate and concerned about the wellbeing of my academic colleagues in a post-1992 university. I see their plight and want to make a difference.

I began my career in the late 1980s as a graduate commercial trainee manager in the retail sector; there, I was an active branch manager for four years. My responsibilities included all operations of a busy London store with eighty staff. However, since 1992, having completed a PGCE (TEFL, German, Spanish and French) and my MBA, I have worked full-time as a senior lecturer (teacher and course leader) in a post-1992 ('new') university. Over the subsequent 27 years in Higher Education (HE), the demands and nature of my work have changed quite significantly and, with a large network of family and friends who work as academics across this sector in the UK, US and Australia, I have become a keen observer of all aspects of the changing HE environment. Specifically, my interest focuses on what is widely recognised as the marketisation / corporatisation of the sector, the governance of universities and consequential implications for the academic staff and student experience.

For me, the opportunity of higher education for all who can benefit from it should be a key tenet in an advanced society. I firmly believe that a university education should be a public good and is about the intellectual pursuit of any subject of interest to the individual: education for education's sake. Hence, an essential role of the civic university is to be a place where critical thought, however unpopular, is encouraged. Academics should, I believe, be the critics and conscience of society. Moreover, comprising a highly intelligent professional workforce with a broad range of expertise,

they should have a voice and be able to shape the university in which they work; it is their core performance upon which everything else depends. Consequently, academics should enjoy freedom and autonomy and, ideally, be able to exercise their professional judgment in all aspects of the work they do. Despite the marketisation of the HE sector over the last two decades, I believe the opportunity remains, within these parameters, to improve the staff and, by extension, the student experience.

The first stage in seeking to address the contemporary challenges of working in the HE sector is to gain a better appreciation and understanding of the current situation. Hence, in 2016, I conducted an exploratory qualitative study into 'The marketisation of the English higher education sector and its impact on academic staff and the nature of their work.' This study, subsequently published in the *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* (Taberner, 2018), sought to compare the experience of academics working in the six types of English university contexts, from 'ancient' through to post-1992 institutions. Six common key themes emerged with regards to the impacts on the working lives of academics: (i) efficiency and quantity over effectiveness and quality; (ii) autocratic, managerialist ideology over academic democracy; (iii) instrumentalism over intellectualism; (iv) de-professionalisation and fragmentation of the academy; (v) increased incidence of performativity, bullying and workplace aggression; and (vi), work intensification. The study concludes that 'the ancient' university is least impacted by marketisation. Next are the old and new civic universities, followed by technological and plate-glass universities. The most impact is felt by academics in the post-1992 universities' (Taberner, 2018: 146).

These findings reflect the broad consensus in the literature that marketisation and its associated managerialism and efficiency drives have had a negative impact on university academics and their work (Grey, 2013; Klikauer, 2013b; Parker, 2014; Pollitt, 1990; Teelken, 2012; Tight, 2019). They also provided the inspiration for this thesis, to explore in depth whether the perceived lived experience of all types of academics, particularly those working in a post-1992 university, is as challenging as suggested and, specifically, more (or less) so for some than for others. In other words, the extant literature regularly alludes to post-1992 university staff as a homogeneous group. Therefore, I am intrigued to discover whether the lived experience of academic staff in such a university is indeed universal or varies according to the biography (age, gender, length of service, role, contract type and so on) of individual staff members. Also, I seek to reveal academics' opinions on how their professional work experience could be enhanced (thereby meeting the 'contribution to practice' requirement of professional doctoral research). This study therefore represents a deliberate and constructive

departure from the typically highly critical narrative in the literature, which describes an 'academic dystopia' (Roberts, 2013:27).

My axiological position (Feilzer, 2010; Heron,1996; Tashakkori & Teddlie 2010) is to understand the lived experience of the variety of academics at one post-1992 institution and, if necessary and where possible, to affect change, albeit incrementally and at a local level to address some of the arguable unintended negative consequences of marketisation.

I have a vested interest in making a positive contribution to my institution and to the 1,300, academic staff who work there. It is my firm belief that if the academic staff experience is a priority and positive, then the student experience will also benefit.

By way of introduction to this thesis, the following sections briefly consider, first, the conceptual background to transformations in the HE environment, specifically the neoliberal agenda and resultant managerialism, and second, transformations in and consequences of HE policy in the UK. The research aims and objectives are then established, and the chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis as a whole.

1.1 The context of the study: Neoliberalism – origins, critique and implications for the Higher Education sector

Neoliberalism is a contemporary manifestation of nineteenth-century theories of laissez-faire economics. Based upon the notion of liberal free-market capitalism, it refers 'to an economic system in which the "free" market is extended to every part of our public and personal worlds' (Birch, 2017) and, from policy perspective, is reflected in a reduction in state control and intervention and the promotion of market competition. Over the last four decades its adoption has been widespread and, in the context of this thesis, has brought fundamental change to Higher Education around the world (Hill & Kumar, 2009). The purpose of this section, then, is to review briefly the concept of neoliberalism offering both positive and critical perspectives, and to consider its influence on the management of higher education in particular.

By way of introduction, the post-war years in the UK, up until the late 1970s, witnessed the rise of the Keynesian social contract and welfare state. This demand-side macroeconomic policy was interventionist, democratic and social (Cate, 2013) and was manifested in, for example, the establishment of the National Health Service and policies focusing on income maintenance, social housing and so on. In sharp contrast, since 1980s a supply-side macroeconomic policy has prevailed, the so-called

'neoliberal settlement' which has increasingly come to define political-economic systems worldwide (Farnham, 2015b; Steger & Roy, 2010). The principal political proponents of this transformation were President Reagan in the US and Prime Minister Thatcher in the UK who, both leading conservative governments in the late 1970s and 1980s, heavily influenced this revolution in thinking. The neoliberal ideology rejected the approach of intervention in markets to provide stability and full employment (Bourdieu, 1998; Keynes, 1936), and gained support because the oil crisis, price inflation and high unemployment of the 1970s created an economic climate where an alternative to Keynesian economics was sought (Harvey, 2005). Indeed, it represents a political and economic reaction to the Keynesian economic model of capitalism known as 'embedded liberalism' (Taylor, 2017) and since the 1980s, electorates in many nations around the world have been sold the notion that there is no alternative to neoliberalism (Andersson, 2012).

The roots of neoliberalism lie in the work of Adam Smith and his principle of laissez-faire economics and David Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage, which both call for a minimalist approach to state involvement in economic transactions (Brohman,1996). In essence therefore, it is an economic theory of rationality which views markets as self-regulating or operating best when they are left free of influence from sources outside the market (Jones, 2012). When translated into policy, economic rationality defines every aspect of life and is determined by cost / benefit analysis; in a neoliberal world there is no longer a distinction between the economy and society – everything is economic (Lemke, 2001). Neoliberalism draws on neoclassical economic theory which 'treats people as atomistic individuals bound together only through market forces' (Brohman, 1995: 297); it focuses on deregulated markets and the reduction of the social welfare state. The primary goal of neoliberalism is to commodify resources (Waring, 2013). State-funded institutions (including universities) are seen as inefficient, unresponsive and in need of market discipline. Education has become subordinated to the requirements of capital (Davis, 2011).

In addition, since the 1990s the 'Washington Consensus', which refers to a set of policy recommendations rooted in neoliberalism for supporting developing countries, has been linked to agencies such as the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Specifically, international lending agencies provide loans subject to the structural adjustment of the economies of receiving countries to promote economic development according to the Washington Consensus neoliberal paradigm (Oleksenko, Molodychenko and Shcherbakova, 2018), which established the basic principles of

neoliberal economic, social and political practice. These include fiscal discipline, redirection of public expenditures, tax reforms, financial and trade liberalisation, the adoption of a single competitive exchange rate, the elimination of barriers to foreign investment, privatisation of state-owned enterprises, deregulation of market entry, competition and property rights. This has advanced a new global neoliberal economic order (Cairns & Sliwa, 2008; Sharpley & Telfer, 2015; Storey, 2005), though not always successfully; structural adjustment lending programmes in particular have long attracted criticism for enhancing rather than solving development challenges (Harrigan & Mosley, 1991; Lazarus, 2008).

From the perspective of this study, neoliberal logic has transformed the terminological apparatus of the educational sphere in which the concept of providing a transactional 'educational service' with corresponding market ideology plays a significant role (Oleksenko et al., 2018). In particular, in the UK, the Browne Report (2010), entitled *Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education*, undoubtedly altered the economics, structure and purpose of universities, as well as the priorities and identities of faculty and students, to better equate with neoliberal practices and ideology (Rice, 2011). As a result, according to Rice (2011), the university has become a site of struggle and a divisive education system in the UK.

In a UNESCO report Knight (2002: 2) contends that many aspects of GATS are open to interpretation, and many nations have yet to fully engage in the process, at least in respect of the potential implications for education: some view GATS as a positive force, accelerating the influx of private and foreign providers of higher education into countries where domestic capacity is inadequate; others take a more negative view, concerned that liberalisation may compromise important elements of quality assurance and permit private and foreign providers to monopolise the best students and the most lucrative programs. Either way, over the last thirty years, neoliberalism has more generally become the hegemonic policy in the US, UK and much of the rest of the world (Harvey, 2005). And it must be acknowledged that the theory and logic of neoliberalism are valid and have great potential; as Rhoades and Torres (2006) argue, there is nothing wrong with neoliberalism itself as an economic theory. However, in practice it has many social, ethical and cultural consequences (Kandiko, 2010; Oleksenko et al., 2018), some of which can be seen as positive outcomes, but others as negative.

1.1.2 Neoliberalism: positive perspectives
Neoliberalism posits that increased competition improves quality of products and services and freedom of choice for the consumer. It requires that institutions are profit-

driven, adopt a pragmatic and instrumental approach, adapt and respond to consumer preferences making them more efficient, and that the primary focus is on the economic bottom-line and concern for short-term benefits. More generally, it advocates capital ownership and accumulation (Jones, 2012; Smolentseva, 2017).

From the time of Adam Smith (1776), it has been argued that societies and countries that prosper are those that grow their capital, manage it well and protect it, and that this prosperity occurs when there is free trade and competition. Indeed, Smith believed that government itself must be limited, its core functions being maintaining defence, keeping order, building infrastructure and the provision of social goods, including education. In terms of economic policy, it should maintain an open and free the market economy and not act unnecessarily in ways that distort it. Hence, neoliberal policy set out to address inefficiencies in the public sector and to reduce the social welfare state by deregulating markets and introducing competition and privatising state assets. Economically, many would argue that neoliberalism has been successful, contributing to increasing wealth around the world since the 1980s. Moreover, economic growth underpinned by neoliberal polices remains the principal driver of development policy at the national and international level, including remaining (ironically) fundamental to sustainable development goals (Adelman, 2017), although it is attracting increasing criticism in terms of both its environmental consequences and, as noted below, for enhancing inequality and social problems (Jackson, 2016; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010).

Neoliberalism values include entrepreneurialism and, for individuals, to be accountable and ultimately responsible for their own personal welfare through their own effort and hard work. At the same time, however, the neoliberal enterprise commodifies labour, the costs of which are controlled and minimised in the name of efficiency. All organisational work processes and practices become standardised, bureaucratised and calculable, while corporatisation and privatisation of all organisations are key tenets of neoliberal policy. The corporate business model promoted by the neoliberal viewpoint typically has a top-down management structure that is autocratic and hierarchical with power, command and control concentrated at the top. Management and administration control all institutional decisions, systems and resource allocation. In this structure, management need not confer with workers concerning business operations, and workers do not have the right to question or change management decisions (Korten, 2015). Hence, although neoliberalism may underpin wealth creation and, for those who benefit, bring associated benefits, it also attracts significant criticisms for its social and other costs.

1.1.3 Neoliberalism: critical perspectives

Neoliberalism is the grand narrative of today, However, many argue that its market logic and its prioritisation of economic outcomes have redefined both the individual from citizen to an autonomous economic actor (Baez, 2007; Lemke, 2001; Turner, 2008) and the purpose and role of social, cultural, political and economic institutions as a result of commodification, commercialisation and marketisation (Giroux, 2005). Chomsky (1999: 7) criticises it as 'the defining political economic paradigm of our time – it refers to the policies and processes whereby a relative handful of private interests are permitted to control as much as possible of social life in order to maximise their personal profit'. He argues that it prioritises profit over people, pervades all areas of society to its detriment, and largely remains undisputed. Unsurprisingly then, critiques of neoliberalism are evident in many fields, not least Critical University Studies, a branch of Critical Management Studies, as discussed in Chapter 2 of the thesis. This study also contributes to the field, in which the extant literature focuses on how universities within this neoliberal landscape of economic rationality are now managed and how administrative governance, its power and network of bureaucratic controls impact work environments, working conditions, the wellbeing of the workforce and the nature of their work.

As observed above, neoliberalism has transformed social order and reconfigured society into an economic system of corporations and competitiveness (Hardin, 2014; Oleksenko et al., 2018). Despite its recognised benefits in terms of wealth, consumer choice and so on, critics argue that, at the same time, it undermines social justice and equity and strengthens the privileged (Kandiko, 2010). As a result of neoliberal policy implementation, there has been a 'tsunami of cuts' hitting frontline state public social services (Rice, 2011), whilst funding for the welfare state in terms of public housing, health, social and education has been incrementally diminished. In addition, the concept of common good and the state's responsibility for public welfare have been replaced with the monadic vision of an entrepreneurial individual whose sole objective is to succeed in increasingly competitive markets (Leitner, Sheppard, Sziarto & Maringanti, 2007). Consequently, there is evidence of greater divisions and increasing inequality within and across societies (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010) which, according to Oleksenko et al. (2018), challenge the tenets of a liberal society which exhorts the basic values of integrity, individual rights and diversity. Specifically, neoliberal corporations have arguably become amoral entities guided by little more than the pursuit of profit in a Darwinian market environment (Bakan, 2004; Taylor, 2017). Neoliberal practices and tactics serve the interests of capital (Saunders, 2010); individuals are treated as corporations or entrepreneurs, corporations are treated like

individuals, rights are reconfigured as corporate rights and freedoms as corporate freedoms and corporate welfare (Hardin, 2014).

At the corporate level, neoliberal policy dictates that, in principle, shareholder value growth should be the only concern of the corporation (Lynn, 2010). However, the reality of neoliberalism in practice is argued by its many critics to be socially and culturally divisive, destructive for current and future generations and a challenge for civilisation (Oleksenko et al., 2018). In particular, it is argued that the industrialised corporate model has depersonalised the relationship between management and workers and reduced labour to a fungible asset, a means of production to be exploited at the lowest possible cost, reflecting Marx's (1867[1976]) theories on the expropriation and alienation of labour and, from a Weberian perspective, viewed as a rational requirement for centralised industrialised capitalism (Korten, 2015).

Many suggest that market-based priorities have created an audit culture of metrics and measurability, constant surveillance and monitoring via the standardisation of all work processes. Dahlström (2008:8) posits '…neoliberal trends are transforming universities into business like enterprises that will lock intellectual work into the neoliberal matrix based on market discourses of competition and surveillance.' In the HE sector, for example, Berg, Huijbens and Larsen (2016) argue that the insubordination of academic activity to quantified, commercial goals is a key feature of neoliberalism in universities, as is the ritual of verification with which the academic workload is understood. Ironically, this is what HEFCE criticises as the 'metric tide' (Wilsdon, 2015: 1). Wilsdon (2015) argues that metrics hold real power and determine values, identities and livelihoods, while Duggan (2004) postulates that neoliberalism glosses over difference and promotes homogeneity of work tasks to maintain and exert power over workers. Certainly, within universities there has been a shift away from workforce-shared institutional governance to decision making processes being in the hands only of institutional management and administration. Burrows (2012) vehemently criticises such quantified control which has led to the creation of an academic assembly line in which academics are redefined as human capital (also Fisher, 1994; Gilbert, 2010). Putting it another way, the institutional interpretation of corporatisation through the seemingly innocent practices of administrators has, according to Davis (2011), had devastating impact on employees and their work (Davis, 2011) whilst, in the public sector more generally, professionals have been disempowered and de-professionalised by the imposed commodification of their work (Thomas and Hewitt, 2011). In short, the expansive critical literature contends that institutional neoliberal praxis shapes and reconstructs practitioners and their work practices.

In the HE context, Hawkins, Manzi and Ojeda (2014) highlight the complex, unequal, hierarchical power dynamics within the US neoliberalised university today which have disempowered faculty, changed the everyday working lives, mechanisms, practices and working conditions of academics, created competitive and divisive spaces for the exclusion of some and inclusion of others and the negative repercussions for academic work/life balance. Furthermore, Davis' (2011) research focuses on how staff *live* the neoliberal policy in an educational college setting in the US. Identifying where academy and neoliberalism meet and the ramifications at institutional level, she illustrates how neoliberalism is borne out in the everyday work experiences of academics who are observing and analysing broad socio-political processes and who may or may not choose to integrate how those processes affect them (Davis, 2011: 65). Manifestations of a neoliberal regime are what Davis terms subtle but potent lived 'micro aggressions' and neoliberal assaults against faculty as evidence of the power and control exerted by management and administration within in an institution. She describes these as mundane indignities that are derogatory, at times intimidating and communicate a subtext of hostility which manipulate the institutional constituents and redefine their working conditions and environment. Taken individually these events may seem 'benign' but they accrue greater potency as the nuanced meanings of neoliberal actions for staff are consolidated into an analysis of the subtle articulations experienced.

Davis (2011) also argues more specifically that neoliberal practices and discourse construct fear among frontline employees. Many fear for their jobs as increasing numbers of staff in neoliberal organisational settings are forced to accept casual non-permanent contracts and are marginalised in the name of rationalisation measures. New audit norms are used to develop performance indicators to pit departments against each other in the name of competition and, because of the discrete ways in which the academic's work is inspected through the use of auditing technologies, the perceived fear amongst staff is enhanced.

Arguably, neoliberalism is also evident in the 'output' of universities, as neoliberal education is creating the next generation of workers (Giroux, 2005). The curriculum is increasingly structured to meet the needs of capital in terms of workplace training and skill development (Saunders, 2010); in effect, universities have become knowledge factories for lucrative gain, and this may compromise quality assurance (Oleksenko et al. 2018). Levin (2006) claims that academic work is no longer judged on its academic rigour or educational impact but on the economic rationality of the product of this work

to generate revenue. In other words, the fruits of academic labour are redefined within a neoliberal regime. In addition, Davis (2011) argues that neoliberal institutional practices are increasingly shaping curriculum and pedagogy by not permitting what managers might perceive as the indoctrination and exposure of students to certain non-neoliberal perspectives to be taught in the classroom. Similarly, Saunders (2010) reveals a neoliberal will to de-politicise the classroom in favour of 'neutral' education. She claims that neoliberalism offers pseudo choices for students and advocates consumerism.

Interestingly, Davis (2011) exemplifies how a university's management can exert power and influence over faculty by creating superior and inferior work spaces in the form of resource allocations for 'neoliberal' furniture and renovations to reinforce neoliberal inequity between those who have worth and those who are less valued in an organisation. So, the neoliberal logic, argues Davis (2011: 60) is insidiously reflected in spatial articulations. For example, she claims that business schools and science departments usually enjoy higher quality space and accommodation for staff and students over the Humanities and Arts.

It is important to note here the economic rationality that underpins neoliberalism does not necessarily translate into a rational reality, such as in higher education where market constraints exist and political dynamics reign. For example, in the UK the HE sector does not exist in a free market; government intervention is in evidence in the form of the setting of tuition fees, the establishing and capping of student numbers (domestic and overseas), and the imposition of admission and quality standards and the reporting of data to various bodies. Moreover, Oleksenko et al. (2018: 114) argue that universities today are pushed to solve many new tasks and implement practices for profit and efficiency while the main, educational and cultural roles become increasingly marginalised. Consequently, universities are becoming the bearers of neoliberal approaches rather than social welfare, challenging the spiritual and civic role of universities in supporting a humanistic future for all.

To summarise, then, the advance of neoliberalism over the last four decades has brought undoubted benefits in terms of economic growth and wealth creation, consumer freedom and choice, entrepreneurial opportunities and so on. At the same time, however, increasing inequality, diminishing agency and justice, environmental degradation and 'social recession' (Rutherford, 2008) are also outcomes of widespread neoliberal policies whilst, in the specific context of this thesis, many commentators have drawn attention to the consequences of

neo-liberal policies in HE in particular. For example, Morrish and Sauntson (2019) (see also Molesworth, Scullion & Nixon, 2011: 73) observe that in 2009, UK universities 'became the provenance of the newly formed Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)', suggesting that the lack of reference to education in the Department's title was no coincidence. This neo-liberal priority over education, academics would argue, is often to the exclusion of pedagogical matters and, as a consequence, there is a significant and 'growing divide between an academic labour force and a neo-liberal managerial elite', echoing 'a growing proletarianisation and commodification of academic work' (Waring, 2013: 415; also Hall, 2018; Smyth, 2017).

Hence, there has been an incremental but sizable shift in the relational power dynamic between managers and administrators and their workforce as a direct result of neoliberal strategies being operationalised in universities. The rise of the neoliberal evaluative state (Kehm & Teichler, 2013; Neave, 1998) in general and the adoption of the neoliberal strategies and practices in UK universities in particular has led to new public management (NPM) and a managerialist approach to university management and administration.

1.2 New Public Management (NPM) at sector level

New Public Management (NPM) is a term coined by Hood (1991) to describe government policy, initiated in the UK since 1980s, for reforming the public sector. It is a model of reform that seeks to enhance quality and efficiency in the public sector by introducing management techniques and practices drawn mainly from the private sector (Bleiklie, 2018). NPM was a response to perceived inadequacies of the traditional model of public management, replacing a highly centralised organisational structure (Hughes, 2003; Mongkol, 2011). Holmes and Shand (1995) argue that NPM is 'a good managerial approach' to obtain value for money by focusing on performance management and auditing, manifested in for example the downsizing the civil service, thereby increasing the efficiency of government operations and rendering policy implementation more effective. NPM is a key structure within the architecture of neoliberalism's theory of economic rationality, ensuring that public sector organisations are marketised, accountable and competitive. Under NPM, organisational systems, processes and resources are to be managed, controlled and subjected to market discipline to operate more efficiently to reduce costs. In short, NPM deliberately mirrors the characteristics of neoliberalism and its discourse of economic rationality and accountability.

Many criticisms have been levelled at NPM, its appropriacy as a model for managing public service organisations being widely questioned. A major criticism relates to the contextual differences for the adoption of private sector management techniques in the public sector, NPM being considered flawed in terms of the distinct ethical, constitutional, social and civic dimensions of the public sector compared to the private sector (Armstrong, 1998; Singh, 2003). Another limitation of NPM, argues Maor (1999), is the paradox of centralisation through decentralisation. That is, public managers are given more authority to manage programs, which may result in concentrating decision making amongst them, whilst another key criticism of NPM involves ethical issues. Although NPM provides transparency for the public sector it can nonetheless undermine ethical standards and lead to corrupt practices by increased managerial autonomy in the name of blurred accountability (Turner, 2002).

Over the last thirty years, NPM in the UK has created a landscape in which professionalised managers and administrators have gained and exerted their power and control over employees in resource allocation through a network of bureaucratic controls and the language used and priorities of redefined organisational neoliberal values and ethos. In other words, public sector organisations, including universities, have become marketised. There has been a seismic shift in UK organisational culture in terms of power relations as the power and influence enjoyed by many professional public service employees has been transferred to management, a process exacerbated by another feature of NPM, namely, to subcontract and outsource work where possible for the lowest most competitive price and the development of internal markets (Thynne, 2003). In the UK, NPM also introduced competition for funding and positioning between public sector institutions, with league tables for the National Health Service, police, local government and education (from primary to tertiary) being introduced to evaluate, calibrate and indicate performance nationally (Farnham, 1999; Horton & Farnham, 1999).

As noted above the fundamental tenet of NPM is that market-oriented management of the public sector leads to greater cost-efficiency without having negative side-effects on other considerations. In reality however, as Flecker and Hermann's (2011) study reveals, liberalisation and privatisation in an array of public services across a variety of sectors has achieved the main goal, namely, the reduction of production costs, but at the cost of the worker in terms of the deterioration of employment and working conditions. Putting it another way, NPM does not create an environment in which the workforce can prosper and impacts on productivity and quality have been mixed. Similarly, Lorenz (2012) argues that NPM policies employ a discourse that distorts and

extends the everyday meanings of their concepts – efficiency, accountability, transparency and quality – and simultaneously perverts them. Hence, NPM has proved to lead to financial gains, creating efficiencies for government, but at the expense of society and effectiveness within the public sector. Specifically, in HE, the economic rationale underpinning NPM arguably ignores the most important aspects of the education process and, therefore, poses a fundamental threat to education itself (Docherty, 2015).

Under NPM policies, it is argued, workers have lost agency and been divested of power and control in the face of threats of redundancy; they have become pawns in the 'corporate card game' of capital and its agents (Grey, 2013). It has long been advocated that power should reside with rather than over the workers (Follett, (1940 [1918]), and so many critical management studies (CMS) commentators challenge the politics and realities of NPM (such as oppression and exclusion) and its links to neoliberalism, in contrast favouring an emancipatory agenda of fairness, ethics and moral organisation. Power is relayed in everyday practices and the micropolitics within an organisational setting; it is relational not possessed but rather it is exercised. Power derives from access to and control over resources. The balance of power is not static but is negotiated and in constant flux (Gillies and Lucey, 2007).

Indeed, Jones, Visser, Stokes, Ortenblad, Deem, Rodgers and Tarba (2020) refer to the targets and terror academics experience in the performative university today which has emerged out of NPM. The performative university and the new all-powerful public managers prioritise optimal performance through maximising output and minimising input around efficiency and becomes a force of production and wealth (Lyotard, 1984). Targets are the ideal of perfect control over academics and their work and demonstrate only fabricated accountability. The terror of NPM and its performative practices are heaped on academics impacting on their mental wellbeing (Jones et al., 2020). As Grey (2013: 119) asserts, 'we have been quietly mugged over the last 40 years.' Similarly, Ferlie, Ashburner, Fitzgerald and Pettigrew (1996) describe 'NPM in Action' as involving the introduction into public services of the 'three Ms': markets, managers and measurement whilst, more forcefully, Lorenz (2012: 629) argues that:

> All things considered, we should expect that as long as organizations continue to be controlled in accordance with the discourse of NPM, management will continue to produce NPM bullshit, and professionals will continue to react with cynicism, hypocrisy, and dissidence, as was the case under state

Communism…… The neoliberal NPM dream is the privatized versions of economic and bureaucratic totalitarianism.

In the context of this thesis, many would argue that universities have a long history of playing a civic role, not just an economic one (Docherty, 2015). They serve as an anchor embedded in civic life, hence the charitable or not for profit status of many. Yet, they have not remained immune from NPM and, in particular, an ethos of managerialism.

1.3 New Public Managerialism at the overall institutional level

As a relatively new concept within the literature (Tight, 2019), managerialism is variously interpreted (Klikauer, 2013a; Teelken, 2012: 273). Nevertheless, the most succinct definition is that proposed by Pollitt (1990:1) who suggests that managerialism comprises a set of beliefs and practices, at the core of which lies the seldom-tested assumption that better management [at the organisational level] is an effective solution to a diversity of economic and social ills. Managers are the agents of capital (Marx, 1876) and managerialism is the operational manifestation of neoliberal policy and NPM within the public sector.

According to Oxford Dictionaries (2017), managerialism is a 'belief in or reliance on the use of professional managers in administering or planning an activity. ... During the 1980s a new species of managerialism moved into companies and into research management.' It is associated with hierarchy, accountability, measurement and a belief in the importance of tightly managed organisations. The key tenets of managerialism have evolved and derive from NPM which, as noted above, are rooted in the neoliberal context and theory of economic rationality: marketisation of organisations, efficiency, reduction of production costs, accountability, measurement, performance management and competition. These beliefs have come to dominate public institutions, including universities.

Within universities, this has been manifested in the increasing numbers of administrators and managers needed to 'manage' and 'measure' all aspects of the academic process (Tight, 2019). Reflecting the belief that you cannot manage what you cannot measure (Broadbent, 2007), measurement mania (Diefenbach, 2009) increasingly prevails; in the UK, universities report statistics to HESA (and now the OfS) so that all universities can be calibrated and compete for positions in the national and global league tables.

The popular concept of 'managerialism' appears to share some characteristics with the pejorative use of the terms: bureaucratization, centralisation, standardisation and instrumentalism. The new public managerialism of the knowledge economy takes priority over creative and collegial intellectual endeavour. It serves to legitimate managerial interests and actions that are not necessarily the same as the best interests of the employees. It upholds and reinforces hierarchical power structures over the academy (Gillies and Lucey, 2007). Similar to Willmott's (1984: 349-350) criticism of Taylorism because of its focus on improving productivity and competitiveness through securing and expanding managerial power and control of the labour process, Grey (2013: 63) views managerialism as 'enhancing efficiency through management control'. Parker (2014: 290) speaks out against 'performance indicator managerialism' which is full of paradoxes whilst, with specific reference to the university sector, one of the key paradoxes is contextual (Mongkol, 2011; Singh, 2003), which in particular causes ongoing tensions between the academy and management; each group possesses different values and priorities. New public managers embrace neoliberal beliefs and practices, while academics and their pedagogical priorities are subjected to what Davis (2011) terms daily neoliberal 'micro aggressions' and assaults. Herein lies the principal tension. Academics as professionals have no real voice or influence with regards to local institutional decision making; they must defer to the new administrative and managerial elite. Tensions brought about by competing corporate and academic agendas have contributed to certain disciplines and individuals being devalued (Kawalilak, 2012:5). Within this neoliberal landscape of economic rationality and NPM, power and control mechanisms, hostile even toxic work environments have been created, degrading working conditions and diminishing wellbeing amongst the workforce. In short, institutional neoliberal praxis has shaped and redefined practitioners and their work practices.

Collini (2012: n. p.) reflects upon today's pressured working lives of academics resulting from the 'steady poisoning and paralysing effects of managerialism.' One outcome of this is that, as Palfreyman (2007: 135) observes, while managers 'now run the big and important stuff like budgets, marketing… strategic direction, collegial decisions still steer lower-level academic units.' He continues: 'only in the very highest ranked institutions globally are the academic lunatics still in charge of the asylum, because academics at these elites cannot be treated badly given that they are internationally mobile.'

The implication here, of course, is that academics in non-elite institutions are not only more susceptible to the effects of the neoliberal practices of NPM and managerialism but are less able to respond to it in an environment of potentially decreasing collegiality.

1.4 Managerialism and collegiality at local institutional level

Interestingly, a pro-managerialism perspective is suggested by the unusual findings of Marini and Reale (2016), who propose that university managerialism can in fact boost academic freedom and collegiality. Their argument is, however, nuanced, saying that trust is something that can be either destroyed or cultivated by managerialism. The study also supports the rather cynical explanation that the two organisational styles (collegialism and managerialism) might happily co-exist because 'nothing gets academics working together better than a shared hatred of management'. Importantly, Shattock (2015) observes that when managerialism penetrates downwards into and through academic heartlands, it changes the academic culture fundamentally.

Nevertheless, according to Uchiyama and Radin (2009), collegiality and cooperation go hand in hand in HE. 'Collegiality is cooperative interaction among colleagues' and 'collaboration is to work together, especially in a joint intellectual effort' (Dictionary.com, 2019). Both are born out of mutual respect and trust:

> A collegial leader shares power and authority equally among a group of colleagues. A collegial style is characterized by an atmosphere where you and your personnel all work together as a team to solve problems. (Wright, n.d.)

The extent to which such collegiality and cooperation is achievable depends upon the form of managerialism. According to Trow (1994), there are two potential versions of managerialism, one 'soft' the other 'hard'. The hard version has been the dominant force for the last twenty-five years, whereby institutional management systems are elevated to a dominant position to improve provision. This is especially the case in the 'new', post-1992 universities. However, Tight (2019) advocates that the soft concept of managerialism is preferable in the university setting. This would sit better with a collegial and collaborative approach towards quality in research and teaching which, many would argue, has been diluted by the increasing focus on cost-effectiveness, the need for greater student numbers and a managerial discourse embracing more corporate-like orientations (Kok, Douglas, McClelland & Bryde, 2010: 109-110). It is, therefore, perhaps surprising that, based on a survey of UK academics, Kolsakar (2008: 522) concluded that:

despite worsening conditions, academics are much more positive and pragmatic than much of the literature suggests. Academics appear, on the whole, to accept managerialism not only as an external technology of control, but as a facilitator of enhanced performance, professionalism and status.

1.5 The policymaker perspective

In addition to the above discussion of neo-liberal induced managerialism, it is also important to explore the perspective of the policymaker for the purpose of this introductory background. Both university management and the academy more generally face uncertainty and turbulent times of change, and HE policy in the UK is directly related.

'Officially', all is well with HE in the UK; the university sector is efficient and performing well and student participation has increased, despite the introduction of tuition fees. According to Universities UK (2017), applications from 18-year olds have increased to record levels; employment rates and median salaries continue to be higher for graduates than for non-graduates; in 2017, overall student satisfaction at UK higher institutions was 84%; just under a quarter of total university income is from direct UK government sources. A similar story was evident in 2018: for example, 'In 2018, 18-year-old entry rates were at their highest recorded levels in England and Scotland' (Universities UK, 2018).

According to Chris Skidmore, the UK Minister of State jointly at the Department for Education and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, targets are being met, there are buoyant university student numbers and there is evidence of good student feedback, fair retention, student attainment, significant research outputs and quality teaching (Skidmore, 2019). The UK has 161 universities (130 in England), over 2 million students, total gross output is £73 billion (a measure of total economic productivity in an accounting period), £36.4 billion direct to UK GDP (a nation's market value of final products/services created in a given period). In total, the HE sector's contribution to the UK GDP is greater than health, construction and public administration combined (HESA, 2015). Interestingly, however, universities are neither public sector nor commercial sector organisations and, as noted earlier many have not-for-profit or charitable status. Nevertheless, they make a significant contribution to the UK economy; though it is also important to note the socio-cultural roles they play.

It is worth mentioning here that, for some, neoliberalism has contributed to this perceived success of universities. For example, Natow and Dougherty (2019: 35) controversially suggest that although the 'world's higher education systems are shaped by neoliberal policies,' this is not such a bad thing. Academics might dislike the increased managerial oversight (monitoring), but performance management (PM) only seeks to incentivise certain beneficial 'outcomes such as increased retention, graduation, job placement or research effort and quality' and better student services. They go on to acknowledge, however, that neo-liberal policies have had a number of harmful consequences for the sector, such as the admission of students who struggle academically, the relaxation of academic standards and a lowering of grade boundaries, whilst PM can narrow the range of activities that institutions pursue. Indeed, in the UK, 'performance-based research funding has led academics to put less emphasis on teaching and to converge in their research topics, dropping those that could prove less useful in securing funding' (Natow & Dougherty, 2019: 35).

1.5.1 UK HE policy overview

Undoubtedly, workload and performance management are key issues facing university managers as a result of UK government policy; in order to survive, universities must adhere to government regulations. The Jarrett Report in 1985 was significant and influential, arguably for the first time introducing the notion that universities are corporate enterprises requiring effective resource management (Education in England, n.d.). Three years later, the Education Act 1988 began the process of creating what is now referred to as the post-1992 university sector through the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, whilst Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC), introduced in 2000, required universities to provide robust data on, for example, staff workloads and costing, to improve accountability for the use of public funds (Graham, 2016). The Dearing Report 1997 recommended widening participation in universities as well as the introduction of tuition fees, beginning the process of HE's transformation into a private good. Increasingly, students are now considered as 'customers', and degrees as 'products.' Inevitably, perhaps, this has changed the pedagogical relationship between staff and students into one that is increasingly transactional.

In 2010, the Browne Report paved the way for an increase in tuition fees to £9,000 p.a., reduced funding council support to HE and required quality improvements especially in teaching. Subsequently, the Research Excellence Framework (REF) of 2014 reduced quality-related (QR) research funding and consolidated research funding in fewer universities based on high quality (3* and 4* publication outputs), rendering the role of the research output, 'a powerful, arguably distorting, factor in managing

universities' (Palfreyman & Temple 2017: 3). In 2015, the cap on the number of student admissions was then removed subject to institutions maintaining their quality of provision, representing an additional competitive element to student recruitment across the HE sector.

More recently, three significant changes have been introduced in UK HE policy:

i.   The 2017 Higher Education and Research Act (HERA) embedded teaching excellence as a key thrust for quality, as well as introducing the possibility of institutions being able to differentiate fees and increased competition from new and private entrants to the sector to 2030.

ii. In 2018, the Office for Students (OfS) inherited the combined responsibilities of HEFCE and the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) as the regulator of universities and teaching quality. In 2017, the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) was introduced to assess and rate the quality of teaching provision in universities. TEF 2020 will look at all discipline areas.

iii. The Augar Report, published in May 2019, recommends a reduction in tuition fees to £7,500 by 2021. In addition, the potential impact of Brexit, and a demographic dip in the number of 18-year-olds and a significant increase in the costs of employee pension schemes (Hurst, 2019; Bennett, Woodcock and Watts, 2019) represent further challenges.

In short, universities must become more resilient than ever.

1.5.2 Threats to HE
According to a survey amongst the leaders of 200 institutions across 45 countries (Ross, 2018), the key threats to the HE sector across 45 countries are expected to be: financial pressures, underinvestment and competition for the public purse, overzealous regulation, political interference, policy volatility, short-termism and 'government stupidity'. Further threats include: 'demographic decline but rising teaching costs, reduced per-student spending by governments, an academic publishing monopoly, the cost of investment in campus real estate, the relevance and cross- border recognition of qualifications' (Ross, 2018: 42), whilst 'low cost, low touch expedient degree offered by competitors from around the world and waning public appreciation plus the unknown implications of Brexit for UK universities' (Ross, 2018: 45) represent further challenges. However, in the same survey, the happiness and well-being of academics as well as that of students, is identified as a priority to ensure the longevity of HE.

As discussed above (Section 1.5), from a UK government perspective (and arguably, that of university senior management), until recently all has been well within the HE sector. That is, the official narrative has, on the whole, been positive. However, at the time of writing, there is increasing evidence reported in the national press of a sector facing financial turmoil, with a number of negative stories being published. For example:

- Hurst (2019 :8) reported that 'Britons see university fees as poor value, poll reveals'
- Hurst (2019: 9) reported that the then forthcoming Augar Review (since published in May 2019) would recommend a reduction in the tuition fees which are now the main source of university income. 'Many vice-chancellors fear that the £3 billion a year cost means it would be more likely that their funding be cut, or student numbers limited'.
- On 3rd January 2019, *The Times* front page headline was *'*Universities face credit crunch as debt spirals-borrowing tops £10bn in race to attract students' (Bennett, Woodcock & Watts, 2019: 10)*.* The article describes this as 'unprecedented uncertainty' for the HE sector, with significant levels of borrowing posing a major risk. The article identified five institutions that had doubled their borrowing in the last year and another eight that had reported significant balance-sheet debt and, as a consequence, were reducing commitments to overseas campuses. The uncertainty surrounding Brexit was also reported as potentially leading to a decline in student numbers.
- On 4th January 2019, *The Independent's* cover story was 'Universities could go bust' and that institutions would be £222m worse off because of rising pension costs (Busby, 2019).
- The same article also reported that 'increased competition for students, falling numbers of 18-year olds and tighter immigration controls for international students have all contributed to the financial pressure on universities. Major government reforms have also played their part. For example, the removal of the cap on the number of students' universities can accept, and the trebling of tuition fees has led to fierce competition between universities to attract students. As a result, many institutions have lowered their entry requirements which have had a knock-on effect on many so called 'lower tariff' universities. Some universities have also been spending money on upgrading their facilities, which has left them [financially] overstretched.' (Busby, 2019)
- Headlines such as 'Lower pay package for new Bath VC' have contributed to arguably negative public perceptions of universities. It was reported that the

new vice-chancellor of Bath University will be paid a total salary plus pension of £303,000, a relatively large salary but a considerably lower than the £468,000 pay package of his predecessor who retired amid criticisms over her salary (Havergal, 2018).

Collectively, these reports (and others) point to a HE sector in the UK that faces increasing financial challenges. At the institutional level, this is likely to lead to further drives for resource efficiency, implying perhaps even greater levels of managerialism and metric power (Beer, 2016). Across the sector as a whole, there is likely to be continued increasing competition between institutions.

However, the literature indicates that institutional directorates are overwhelmingly responding to the highly competitive UK HE market in similar ways. Their university strategies are indistinguishable resulting in the endemic 'institutional isomorphism'; in other words, their mission statements are blandly similar (Tight, 2019: 132). This, in turn, invokes a level of 'institutional myopia' (Fitzgerald, White & Gunter, 2012: 175). Tight (2019:1 30) suggests that to promote institutional diversity, the physical appearance of 'campus space' is important. Clearly, many directorates agree that this is a way forward. Consequently, many institutions have made huge capital investment in their buildings and landscaping to attract more students over rival universities. This has left many universities financially stretched, having borrowed significant sums of money to execute campus building plans, as the newspaper reports above indicate. Nevertheless, Fugazzotto (2009: 290) argues that 'space behaves like statements of purpose to help define relations between an organization and its constituents'.

Unfortunately, however the government policy makers and institutional managers have a specific political and economic agenda which is profit over its people (Chomsky, 1999; Morrish, 2019). Its main drawback is that it omits any allusion to, nor much investment in, those who deliver education and pedagogical concerns, namely the academy, one of the key constituent stakeholders.

In short, the last three decades have witnessed the emergence of a new global economic order underwritten by free markets, multi-national corporations and the increased mobility of capital and labour (Docherty, 2015; Giroux, 2014; Grey, 2013; Hall, 2018; Jones, 2014; Smyth, 2017; Visser, 2016). As a consequence, efficiency and cost-saving have become the main priorities of the new public management (NPM) in the UK (Diefenbach, 2009; Grey, 2013; Lorenz, 2012), whilst workers' rights, pay, pensions, conditions and bargaining power have diminished (Grey, 2013; Hill, 2013;

Jackson, 2016). Public sector organisations in particular have adopted structures, processes, management practices and values more commonly found in the private business sector, with the objective of operating more efficiently (Deem, 2004, 2012; Farnham, 2015a).

As discussed in the preceding sections, universities in the UK HE context are not exempt from this process. The features of new managerialism most evident in the sector appear to be: changes to the funding environment, academic work and workload; the introduction of cost-centres to universities departments and greater internal and external surveillance of academic performance; and, an audit culture. There has also been a rationalisation of full-time and permanent staff and a significant rise in the casualisation of the academic workforce in the name of efficiency drives (Courtney, 2013; Jones, 2014). And inevitably, the ascendancy of targets, metrics and key performance indicators, commodification and performativity have had many intended and unintended consequences, not least for academic staff.

1.6 Consequences for academic staff

The endemic negative implications of government neoliberal policy, NPM at sector level and the subsequent managerialisation and managerialism at institutional level over the last few decades have taken their toll on staff wellbeing and have reshaped academic work and the academic profession more generally (Fitzgerald, White & Gunter, 2012). In particular, the last ten years have witnessed what can only be described as seismic changes, including the introduction of tuition fees, the accelerated pace of academic work and a significant rise in the casualisation of staff. In addition, academic work has become more regulated and digitalised (Lupton, Mewburn & Thompson, 2018; Tight, 2019; Winter, 2017), arguably further transforming and challenging professional academic roles. Martin (2016) suggests that the academic is suffering the fate of the slowly, boiled frog as in the effects have been incremental but sustained.

The standardisation, commodification and measurement of academic, and often bureaucratic work processes and their consequences, broadly summarised as the proletarianisation and de-professionalisation of the academy, are well documented in the burgeoning academic literature (for example, Elmes, 2016; Hall, 2018; Hartman & Darab, 2012; Levenson, 2017; Leveson, 2004; Morrish, 2019; Murphy, 2017; Tight, 2019; Thomas & Hewitt, 2011; Walker, 2009; Wilton & Ross, 2017).

This critical university studies strand of the literature about the academy opposes the aforementioned government reports and is explored in more depth in Chapter Two. It is one which tells a compelling story of mounting workloads, poor working conditions, occupational stress, poor work-life balance and worsening pay for many academic staff who are suffering at operational level (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016; Grove, 2019; Kinman, 2019; Kinman & Wray, 2013; Klikauer, 2013b; Lynch & Ivancheva, 2015; Matthews, 2016; Morrish, 2019; Parker, 2014; Thompson, 2013; UCU, 2018; Visser, 2016).

Collini (2017) talks of the plight of what is happening to academia. In this DBA study, the key question is: what is the lived experience (positive and negative) of academic staff at a post-1992? And is it the same for all, or does it vary?

1.7 Research aims and objectives

As proposed in the preceding sections, HE in the UK in general has, over the last two decades, witnessed significant transformations which reflect what can be broadly described as the marketisation of the sector. Manifested primarily in the adoption of new public management (NPM) – see Section 1.2 above – this transformation has had profound implications for the academic staff experience across the sector, though they have arguably been most keenly felt in the new, post-1992 universities (Taberner, 2018). Moreover, as revealed in the burgeoning literature (see Chapter Two of this thesis), the consequences of this marketisation / managerialism for academic staff are generally considered to be negative.

Significantly, however, the literature typically views academic staff as an homogeneous group; that is, the marketisation of the HE is assumed to be impacting universally on all academic staff. This thesis seeks to challenge this assumption and to develop a more nuanced understanding of the experience of academic staff within a post-1992 university. Specifically, the aims of this study are to:

1. Critically evaluate the extent to which academics share perceptions of their experience regardless of their demographic/biographical profiles (referred to as 'biodata' throughout this thesis).
2. Explore critically the extent to which the perceived experience of academics within a post-1992 university varies according to age, gender, length of service, role and contract type.
3. Identify how academics believe their experience could be enhanced and, consequently, propose an applied research targeted response at the local level.

In order to achieve these aims, the study has the following objectives:

1. To undertake a comprehensive, critical literature review to explore whether common themes of perceived experience in the workplace might vary according to age, gender, length of service, role, contract type.
2. To evaluate the extent of academic de-professionalisation and proletarianisation and its consequences through the lens of practice theory.
3. To employ the pragmatism paradigm within the theoretical framework of practice theory to explore the perceived work experience of academic practitioners, their reflexivity, and their agency.
4. To apply a sequential mixed-methods approach (focus group, quantitative survey, qualitative interviews) to meet the aims of the study.
5. Based on the outcomes of the research, to recommend potential actions at the local level to enhance the work experience of academics.

1.8 Significance and contribution to knowledge and professional practice

As established above, whilst the consequences of the marketisation of HE on the experience of academics is widely considered in the literature, not only are such consequences perceived to be negative but also, they are assumed to be universally felt. This study is significant in two ways in as much as it will contribute to existing knowledge by detailing:

1. a more nuanced insight into the commonalities and differences, positive and negative, in the everyday working lives of the variety of academics (age, gender, length of service, role, contract type) located in a post-1992 university context. This challenges the current literature which categorises all those academics working in a post-1992 university as one collective, homogenised group, inferring that their lived experience in the workplace is the same in such a setting.

2. Unique to this study is that it also seeks to identify what academic staff themselves feel could enhance their experience. This is a constructive departure from the current literature. Herein also lies another gap in the literature. The study will explore practical, incremental ways in which, at a local level, academic working lives could be improved, a perspective missing from the literature to date. This study will, therefore, deliver a practical outcome at local level in the form of listening to and understanding the academic voice, which will form the basis of recommendations to enhance the staff experience

in the workplace. Drawing from the research, professional practice will be informed. The results will provide a basis for discussion with senior and line managers to enhance the academic staff experience. The originality of the ethnographic empirical single case study, however, will unfold a unique and positively constructive perspective to inform practice and to facilitate a targeted response at institutional level. The research is likely to have real-world implications for this post-1992 institution and the academics who work within.

1.9 Overview of the thesis

This thesis comprises six chapters, as follows:

Chapter One: introduces the researcher's axiological stance, the UK Higher Education (HE) context of neoliberalism, New Public Management (NPM), managerialism and collegiality and the 'official' policymakers' perspective in the literature. It also establishes the aims and objectives of the study.

Chapter Two: examines and critically appraises the literature from the 'unofficial' insider perspective of academics and their work, conditions and environment (that is, from the perspective of academics themselves). The literature is evaluated within the context of the concepts of the proletarianisation through commodification and the de-professionalisation of the academy. The notion of contested academic identities is then introduced before the chapter goes on to consider the re-shaping of academic work today. Subsequently, the consequential hidden injuries of the academic workforce are discussed and, finally, the literature on staff engagement and organisational internal communication as ways forward is reviewed.

Chapter Three: discusses theoretical underpinnings of the research and makes a case for practice theory. The literature related to practice theory is examined and the use of practice theory as a unique conceptual lens through which to view this study is justified.

Chapter Four: provides a rationale for using the paradigm of pragmatism. The study's ontological, epistemological and axiological stance is justified. The chapter then considers the research design, methodology and methods. Both a quantitative and a qualitative methodology is used so a sequential multi and mixed method approach is to be employed. The data collection and analysis processes are described in detail. This essentially qualitative, inductive single case study is underpinned by a quantitative online survey to add weight to the findings, and consists of three stages:

- A focus group
- An online anonymous survey
- 30 in-depth 60-minute semi-structured interviews

Ethical issues surrounding the role of the researcher as an insider researcher are discussed, as are the issues of bias, respondent confidentiality, anonymity and triangulation.

Chapter Five: presents and critically explores the research findings arising from the three-phase data collection and analysis process, during which thematic, descriptive and inferential statistical data were gathered. The shared and differing experiences of academic staff are discussed through the lens of practice theory and a pragmatic approach. The interplay between institutional praxis, academic agents and their work practices are discussed in relation to the extant literature.

Chapter Six: draws the conclusions, evaluating the research in relation to the extant literature and highlighting its contribution to knowledge in the field and contribution to practice. The chapter also proposes a recommended targeted response that offers potential to enhance the academic staff experience in the workplace to benefit all stakeholders.

1.10 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher's personal and professional context, axiological stance and motivation for the study have been established. To contextualise the study, the chapter then provides an outline of the broader transformation in the HE sector, specifically the commercialisation and massification of universities over the last two decades in response to social, economic and government policy imperatives of neoliberalism. It then goes on to highlight the consequences of such transformations, referred to broadly as the marketization of universities, for the academic labour force as set out in the now extensive literature, noting that not only is a predominantly negative stance adopted in that literature but also that the consequences of marketization are universally experienced by academic staff. Hence, the chapter then establishes the aims and objectives of the study, as follows:

1. Critically evaluate the extent to which academics share perceptions of their experience regardless of their demographic/ biographical profiles.

2. Explore critically the extent to which the perceived experience of academics within a post-1992 university varies according to age, gender, length of service, role and contract type.
3. Identify how academics believe their experience could be enhanced and, consequently, propose an applied research targeted response at the local level.

Given these aims and objectives, the first task is to consider the relevant literature on the marketisation of universities and its impacts on the work environment and lived experiences of academics. This is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Two

The marketization of universities and transformations in academic staff experiences: a review

2.0 Introduction

As established in the preceding introductory chapter, the overall aim of this thesis is to explore critically the perceptions of academic staff with regards to their experience of working in a post-1992 university in general and, in particular, the extent to which such perceptions vary according to individual staff member's biographies. As such, whilst acknowledging that transformations in the HE work environment over the last two decades, recognised widely as the marketisation of universities, have had significant impacts on the working life and experience of academics, it challenges the implicit assumption in much of the literature that these impacts are universal across all staff. In so doing, it seeks to offer a more nuanced understanding of academics' perceptions of the contemporary challenges of working in a post-1992 university. This chapter, therefore, reviews the literature relevant to the changing nature of the academic work environment and experience, first conceptualising the transformation as the proletarianisation and de-professionalisation of the academy before going on to consider the notion of contested identities to locate what it means to be an academic today which is now in a constant state of flux, complexity and multiplicity. The literature around divisions in the academy are examined next. The re-shaping of academic work and environment follow, then the reactions of academics to the transition from psychological contract to one of a transactional nature and its effects on morale, work design and working relationships with all institutional stakeholders (students, management). The penultimate section in this chapter considers the 'hidden injuries' in terms of academic health and wellbeing. The final section discusses the ways forward to enhance the position of academics as internal customers within a corporate HE organisation evidenced convincingly in the literature.

By way of introduction and as noted in Chapter One, there exist competing contemporary perspectives on HE in the UK. On the one hand, the 'official' perspective is that the HE sector is in good health in terms of student participation, significant research and quality teaching. On the other hand, the 'critical university studies' (CUS) (Petrina & Ross, 2014) literature paints a compelling 'unofficial' picture of universities in crisis, describing an 'academic dystopia' (Roberts, 2013). Therefore, it is first

necessary to consider the evolution and principles of CUS as a framework for the subsequent discussions in this chapter.

2.1 Critical University Studies (CUS)-its origins, principles and aims

CUS, which originated in the US, Canada, Australia and UK, has been an emerging field of study since 1990s (Smyth, 2017). It is a branch of Critical Management Studies (CMS) and, hence, is similarly rooted in Marxism in as much as capital and management discipline are considered to dominate the exploited workforce in the context of today's neoliberal economic rationality in HE. According to Fournier and Grey (2000: 11), the political New Right and New Labour in the UK have joined forces to constructing the iconic status of management, a status legitimised on ontological (managers as bearers of the real world), epistemological (management as the embodiment of expert knowledge) and moral grounds (managerialisation being equated with greater justice, public accountability, democracy and quality in public services).

As a branch of CMS, then, CUS is in essence concerned with a critical understanding of highly contested changes in power relations within, and the management of, university organisations (Petrina & Ross, 2014; Smyth, 2017), and is both multi- and interdisciplinary within the social sciences. In fact, both CMS and CUS derive from Critical Theory which has evolved though various stages over the generations, from its beginnings with the establishment of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt and the emergence of the Frankfurt School philosophers, such as Max Horkheimer, in the 1930s through to the present (Bohman, 2005). Horkheimer's (1972) definition of a critical theory is that it must meet three criteria: it must contemporaneously be explanatory, practical, and normative. More specifically, it is practical social inquiry that aims to promote democratic norms and, as such, has much in common with Dewey's American pragmatism (Bohman, 2005; Spicer, Alvesson & Kärreman, 2009). Dewey (1938) regarded social facts to be related to 'problematic situations' from the point of view of variously situated agents. As with pragmatism, Critical Theory gradually came to reject the demand for a scientific or objective basis of criticism grounded in a grand theory; rather, it sought to reveal and transform human lives for the better by resisting or escaping managerial exploitation and control. Critical theorists came to regard advanced capitalist societies as a totality in which the tight integration of states and markets threatened to restrict and inhibit the space for human freedom, equality and justice for the marginalised (for example, through racism, sexism and colonialism) within a variety of institutional contexts (Bohman, 2005; Larson, 2018). Grant and Iedema (2005) argue that critical theory approaches, if supported, could

unsettle and challenge dominant voices and construct new meanings and organisational contexts.

Although CMS was considered a marginal project 15 year ago, it has since achieved the status of an institution (Willmott, 2006) with its distinctive conferences and literatures (Adler, Forbes & Willmott, 2008). For example, the annual International Critical Management Studies Conference is in its thirteenth year 2020 and, in recent years, it has regularly had a CUS stream. In 2017, this focused on the theme: 'The performative university: 'targets and terror' in academia', chaired by Professors Peter Stokes and Max Visser. Professor Stokes is also the Editor of the International Journal of Organizational Analysis. The paper referred to in Chapter 1 which stimulated this thesis (Taberner, 2018) was originally presented at that conference.

The term of CUS was first defined in 2012 in Jeffrey Williams' article 'The Chronicle of HE: Deconstructing Academe'. According to Williams (2012) and Petrina and Ross (2014), CUS is a reaction to 'academic capitalism' and the corporatization of the university and its 'managerialization' (Fournier & Grey, 2000: 7); it is concerned with the consequences of the wholesale shift in power away from the academy to managers (Parker, 2002). As with all critical theories, it examines and calls into question aspects of university management and seeks human emancipation for its constituents (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992). This reflects the wider objective of critical theory, 'to create a world which satisfies the needs and powers of human beings', which can only happen by transforming a capitalist society into a more democratic one and which, in turn, is dependent on on real consensus in a rational society (Horkheimer, 1972: 246-250). In other words, critical theory provides the descriptive and normative bases for social enquiry aimed at decreasing domination and increasing freedom and has a practical purpose (Bohman, 2005). It is concerned with the impact of anti-democratic, neoliberal trends like authoritarianism, and focuses on identifying and overcoming all circumstances which limit human freedom where there is harm and suffering, in particular institutional forms of domination. Czarniawska (2005: 159) points out that it is the moral right of researchers to reveal organisational, management practices which have a human cost.

Hence, CUS addresses current HE institutional policies and performative practices alongside academic work, key research themes being the corporatization of HE, the exploitation of academic labour and issues arising from student debt. Those undertaking such research are arguably said to have an activist bent yet enjoy increasing recognition in the literature. For example, the Palgrave Critical University Studies series first appeared 2016 and continues under the editorship of John Smyth, who himself has contributed to the series with 'The Toxic University' (Smyth, 2017).

The aim of this CUS series is to highlight the unprecedented changes inflicted on universities by political and policy elites without any debate or discussion, and little understanding of what is being lost. The over-arching intent is to foster, encourage, and publish scholarship relating to academia that is troubled by the direction of these reforms occurring around the world (Smyth, 2017). The series explores these changes across a number of domains, including the distortion of academic leadership and institutional politics, the deleterious effects on academic work and the impact on student learning, and encourages critically informed debate. CUS theorists and contributors to the field include Smyth (2017), Grey & Willmott (2005), Petrina & Ross (2014), Williams (2016), Fraser & Taylor (2016), Arvanitakis & Hornsby (2016), Gupta, Habjan & Tutek (2016), O'Sullivan (2016), Watts (2017), Ergűl & Coşar (2017), Izak, Kostera & Zawadzki (2017), Cocks (2017), Osman & Hornsby (2017), Thomas (2018), Tight (2019), Visser (2016), Manathunga & Bottrell (2019), Noble and Ross (2019) and Jones, Visser, Stokes, Ortenblad, Deem, Rodgers and Tarba (2020). In fact, many researchers who are questioning the direction of the university, its management and impacts are either knowingly or unknowingly contributing to this field. CUS has ambitions for practical change and, arguably, this field is needed more than ever as universities and their environments become more complex. These complexities underline an urgent need for better, pragmatic visions of what universities are and can do to better serve the public good (Petrina & Ross, 2014; Smyth, 2017).

To summarise, then, CUS is a political, ethical, moral and social project in the sense that its aims are to unmask the power relations around which social and organisational life are woven (Fournier & Grey, 2000). It fosters the development of organisations in which communications and practices are progressively less distorted by socially oppressive, asymmetrical relations in power. It attempts to contribute to the promotion of more humane forms of management and aims to mobilise and transform it via pragmatic 'micro-emancipations and transformations' via 'micro-interventions' as suggested by Spicer et al. (2009: 553).

The current study is located within this CUS tradition of social inquiry and attempts to understand the lived experience of academic practitioners themselves and their work practices within institutional structures and praxis. The aim is to explore the interplay between a marketised post 1992 university structure and academic agency and to uncover whether power relations implied by management praxis are in alignment or in tension, and to explore to what extent these lived experiences are shared or different for varied academic staff dependent on their biographical profiles. In addition, there is an intention to also facilitate practical recommendations to enhance the academic experience in the workplace.

This burgeoning literature, the volume of which has increased significantly since the 1980s (Tight, 2019) and which is produced primarily by academics themselves, is multidisciplinary. It emanates from a variety of fields, predominantly occupational health psychology but also sociology, organisational studies, management and communications, politics, industrial relations, economics, higher education research, CIPD (Chartered Institute for Personnel Development), human resource management and, with a focus on managerial discourse analysis, in terms of applied linguistics. Typically, however, it highlights what are argued to be the deleterious impacts of today's marketised university on academic labour (Kinman, 2019; Kinman & Jones, 2008; Kinman, Jones & Kinman, 2006; Kinman & Wray, 2013) broadly manifested in a so-called work intensification culture that reflects a continuing drive for efficiency.

More specifically, Smyth (2017: 5) refers to universities' 'pathological organisational dysfunction' to summarise the outcome of the commercialisation and increasing corporatisation of universities (Docherty, 2015; Evans, 2005; Graham, 2002; Klikauer, 2013a; Morrish, 2014, Smyth, 2017; Tight, 2019; Washburn, 2003), whilst the more general commodification of higher education, both in the UK and elsewhere, is often referred to in terms of combat, warfare and the academy under siege. For example, commentators describe 'universities at war' (Docherty, 2015; Giroux, 2014), 'an assault on universities' (Bailey & Freedman, 2011), 'the university in ruins' (Readings, 1996), 'killing thinking and death of the university' (Evans, 2005), the 'hollowed out university' (Cribb & Gerwitz, 2013), 'corporate corruption' (Docherty, 2015; Washburn, 2003), 'the great university gamble' (McGettigan, 2013), universities as 'theatres of cruelty' (Couldry, 2008), 'a new barbarity' (Morgan, 2013; Williams, 2015) and 'the threat to academics' (Clegg, 2008; Petrina, Mathison & Ross, 2015). More broadly, Berg and Seeber (2016: x) claim that a 'language of crisis dominates the literature on academic life in the corporate university', whilst much of the Critical Universities Studies (CUS) literature comprises a subset of Critical Management Studies which has an emancipatory agenda and runs counter to the neoliberal political and managerial agenda.

The literature focusing on academics themselves (as opposed to HE / universities more generally) often employs a similar battle metaphor and regularly alludes to challenges to academic freedom (Amit, 2000; Rostan, 2010). However, as the following sections now discuss, these challenges can be seen as reflecting two interrelated trends, namely the proletarianisation and the de-professionalisation of the academy as

manifested in the commodification and performance measurement of academic work (Adcroft & Willis, 2006).

2.2 The proletarianisation of academic work

According to Barry, Chandler and Clark (2001), increasing accountability, managerialism and performance monitoring, along with the erosion of liberal space and the diminished power of academics, is transforming academic labour into an 'assembly line.' In essence, HE has succumbed to so-called McDonaldization (Ritzer, 2013), to the extent that Parker and Jary (1995) refer to the 'McUniversity'. Alibhai-Brown (2013) asks in her article 'when did the university become a factory?'.

As such, these transformations can be seen as a manifestation of proletarianisation, through which academic work has arguably become standardised and commodified in a process enhanced by the digitalisation of tasks and the marginalisation and casualisation of teaching staff. It entails employing managerial directives to wrestle control from employees so that workers have diminished power vested in their knowledge of work processes based upon experience and tradition (Tight, 2006; Tight, 2019). Indeed, some consider that initiatives in the UK such as the REF and TEF have been imposed with the sole purpose of controlling and calibrating academic work performance (Graham, 2016).

Proletarianisation, with its evident roots in Marxist theory, is a concept that has long been applied to a wide variety of work contexts and can be broadly defined as a 'set of processes which increases the number of people who lack control over the means of production' (Tilly, 1979: 1). It was first applied to the academic labour context by Haug (1972) and Braverman (1974b) and subsequently became considered to embrace two elements; the first element includes tangible factors such as declining levels of pay, poorer work conditions, fewer resources per worker, less discretion and increasing routinisation; the second includes more subjective, intangible factors such as transformations in class identification or the adoption of a different ideological outlook (Wilson, 1991: 251).

For Wilson (1991), universities are a site for a broad kind of proletarianisation in which professional academic values are being eroded by managerialism and internalised consent is being replaced with externally imposed control. It represents a loss of professional prestige and trust. The outcome of proletarianisation is said to be de-professionalisation. Academic liberal norms and values based on authority and expertise have given way to a lesser or greater extent to a neo-liberal regulatory

regime with the result that, according to some, academics are increasingly becoming trainers rather than educators (Kolsakar, 2008: 81).

A driver of the proletarianisation of HE is the re-engineering of academic work within the frame of global competition. According to Hall (2018), this generates efficiencies in time through technological and organisational innovations enabling academic labour to be stripped of its intellectual content:

> Higher education is being proletarianised. Its academics and students, increasingly encumbered by precarious employment, debt, and new levels of performance management, are shorn of autonomy beyond the sale of their labour-power. Incrementally, the labour of those academics and students is subsumed and re-engineered for value-production and is prey to the twin processes of financialisation and marketisation. (Hall, 2018: 97)

However, it is important to note that support for the proletarianisation / de-professionalisation of HE argument is not universal. For example, Shepherd (2015) concludes that managerialism in HE has been internally driven and is context specific rather than generic. She talks of the myth of managerialism and dismisses vehemently the dominant academic misery narrative, claiming that contrary to the prevailing critical narrative, academics have retained a considerable amount of professional autonomy over their work. In a similar vein, Tregoning (2016) identifies three objective themes that emerged from a workplace study of academics: *'University staff are, on the whole, happy with their jobs; struggle with work-life balance; have issues with authority'.* He then makes suggestions about how to address the negative aspects, such as working smarter than harder, and finishing work at a sensible time, going home and doing something else. It is also recognised that although earnings in academia tend to be less than in industry, there are benefits of working in the sector. These include*:*

> …interacting with a large number of enthusiastic and intelligent people; having the freedom to define an area of research of interest to you; having control over your daily schedule but working in academia is not a 9-5 job, so excellent time management skills are needed; having privileges from tenure which include status, security and academic freedom to take on projects; and finally, having the satisfaction of gaining new knowledge and contributing to a field which is rewarding. (New Scientist, 2019)

Wells (2019) discussed on a radio programme what it was like to be a professor. It is still a privileged career, offering time to read, reflect, observe and consider as well as academic freedom and creativity. Equally, there is evidence of many academics adopting coping strategies, such as dark humour, to counter the effects of proletarianisation (Darabi, Macaskill & Reidy, 2016; Murphy, 2017; Teelken, 2012) Nevertheless, Taberner (2018) demonstrates that in post-1992 universities in particular, such proletarianisation is in evidence, not least as a result of a focus on top-down management and centralisation.

2.2.1 Centralisation and top-down management

Contributing to the increasing commodification of academic labour in recent decades:

> …many universities have been moving in the direction of a more hierarchical and centralised structure, with top down planning and reduced local autonomy for departments. Yet, the management literature over this period has stressed the numerous benefits of flatter organisational structures, decentralisation and local autonomy for sections or departments. (Martin, 2016:7).

Martin (2016) outlines the dangers of centralised top-down management which tends to increase bureaucracy, leads to teaching to a prescribed formula, and promotes research driven by assessment and performance targets. Noteworthy here is 'Parkinson's Law' (Parkinson, 1955) which indicates two critical elements that lead to bureaucratization. These he describes as the law of multiplication of subordinates, that is, the tendency of managers to hire two or more subordinates to report to them so that neither is in direct competition with the manager him/herself, and the fact that bureaucrats create work for other bureaucrats. "Parkinson argued that if you have 6% growth rate of any administrative body, then sooner or later any company will die. They will have all their workforce in bureaucracy and none in production" (Wen, 2019).

In other words, Martin (2016) suggests that today's highly bureaucratised and centralised universities repeatedly ignore evidence of what works best. For example, Campbell, Kunisch and Mueller-Steven (2011) argue that decision-makers in an organisation must ask themselves key questions when they are deciding whether they should centralise or not. These include: will centralisation avoid risks of increased bureaucracy, business rigidity (reducing creativity and innovation), reduced motivation or distraction? If the answer is no, then do not centralise.

In earlier work, Damanpour (1991) highlights the significant negative influence of centralisation on organisational innovation, noting that it diminishes organisational responsiveness to change and increases short-term decision making. Moreover, By, Diefenbach and Klarner (2008) argue that an audit culture and managerialism have created an environment that encourages opportunistic behaviour such as cronyism and the emergence of what some refer to as organisational psychopaths (Babiak & Hare 2006; Boddy, 2006; Diefenbach, 2013). A key-defining characteristic of psychopaths is that they have no conscience (Hercz, 2001; Stout, 2005a and b) and are incapable of experiencing the feelings of others. Similarly, Baker (2019 :6) found that in UK universities 'few senior managers stay in one location very long', on average just only four years. They have a fixation on launching new initiatives, never completing them but using them to advance their own careers and to move quickly to another senior post elsewhere. Many are egotistical mercenaries rather than loyal managers to a particular institution.

Overall, then, such developments arguably lead not only to a waste of resources, change for the sake of change, further centralisation and bureaucratisation but also to political, short term decision making, resulting in a disheartened and exploited workforce.

2.3 De-professionalisation of the academy

> It does not make sense to hire smart people and then tell them what to do; we hire smart people, so they can tell us what to do. Steve Jobs, CEO Apple (Jobs, 2009)

The academic profession has been described by Perkin (1969 :5) as 'the key profession of the twentieth century'.

Traditionally, the professions have collectively been seen as making a positive contribution to social improvement, offering society a high level of competence, knowledge and skill with an element of altruism not found in the business world. In return, professionals have enjoyed the freedom to run their own affairs (Kolsaker, 2008: 72). More specifically, Weber (1927) and Ritzer and Walczak (1988: 4), both cited in Adcroft and Willis (2006), distinguish the professional through the rationalisation process involved in decision making as someone whose activities are value driven, where crucial values are 'altruism, autonomy and authority'. Similarly, Durkheim (1892)

regarded the professions as a positive moral force, which protected society from rampant individualism and an authoritative state.

More generally, a profession is, according to Kong (2014), distinctive from an occupation in as much as it involves those who have undergone some specialist and extensive training or education before, they are eligible to become members of that profession. Moreover, being a professional offers decision-making powers and freedom, discretion and control over what and how you do your work; it involves being a member of a professional community defined by mutual trust, integrity, shared values and a particular discourse. Professionals self-manage. They have specialist knowledge and skills and are critical experts in their field enjoying status and privilege (Boud & Brew, 2013; Hewitt, 2006; Kolsaker, 2008; Thomas & Hewitt, 2011). Similarly, according to Freidson (1999: 32), a professional is affiliated to an officially recognised body of knowledge and skill based on abstract concepts and theories and requires the exercise of discretion.

In recent years, increasing academic attention has been paid to the relationship, mediated by managerialism, between the professions and the state (Thomas & Hewitt, 2011: 1371). Professions have been cast by some as forces of resistance against government, bureaucracy and managerial interference and by others as conspiracies of self-interest. The research on professions is summarised by Scott (2008) as falling into two broad categories: functionalist, whereby professions are seen as providing and preserving expertise to best serve the interests of clients; and conflict-based, where professional standing and self-interest is challenged and fought over (Thomas & Hewitt 2011: 1374). The latter conflict lens, dominant since the 1970s, sees persecuted professional actors defending and reshaping their work in response to external pressures, such as managerial reforms. Hence, the managerial labour force is traditionally cast in opposition to the professions but is itself engaged in the professionalisation of management.

It is logical, therefore, to suggest that university academics belong to a profession which is responsible for generating, retaining and disseminating knowledge through research and the teaching of students, with professors at the apex of the career ladder (Teichler & Hoehle, 2013). Equally, some would argue that being a university lecturer is both a profession and a vocation (Hansen, 1994) which requires dedication, pride in work, commitment, diligence, assiduity, conscientiousness and staying power.

In contrast, however, Jarvis (1983) claims that academia is a semi-profession which offers some autonomy yet is simultaneously bounded and constrained by a prescriptive bureaucratic framework that imposes prescription and threatens autonomy. This is in sharp contrast to the old established professions, such as in medicine or law. Therefore, an academic in the area of law or medicine could be still defined as belonging to a profession. At the same time, it can be argued that professionalism in universities is in a state of flux, reflecting a realignment of the power relations between the state, university administration, management who have become professionalised, and the academic profession (Kolsaker, 2008; Taberner, 2018).

A burgeoning literature now exists on the de-professionalisation and fragmentation of HE academics (Adcroft & Willis 2006; Brandist, 2017; Butler, 2017; Docherty, 2015; Taberner, 2018), whilst Gill (2010) talks of the decimation of the academic profession. Talib (2004) makes the point that, under these conditions, it is inevitable that there will be some sort of shift away from 'professional activities' for academics which may have a high social worth or intrinsic value towards those activities which are now increasingly management and market-driven. This may improve the accountability of service providers but not guarantee the quality of service. In addition, those individuals who hold most power in the running of universities are not professional academics but administrators and university managers (Winter, 2009), whilst Kolsaker (2008: 74) raises some fundamental questions such as: if the experts (academics) cannot be trusted to create and disseminate knowledge, who is better placed to do so? Who is to decide? Certainly, there is little evidence to suggest that politicians, the higher education policymakers or university managers are better placed to govern knowledge than the subject experts themselves.

Arguably, the role and professional survival of academics have become dependent on fulfilling establishment norms (Tapper & Salter, 1995). This has resulted in their de-professionalisation and the creation of a fragmented, isolated professional community in crisis which has no real voice. Indeed, academics have never assembled themselves as a powerful professional group which could represent the collective and lobby government (Palfreyman & Temple, 2017: 99). They do, however, benefit from some union representation but nevertheless comprise a fragmented community of independent individuals. This could be a contributing factor to what some consider their loss of status. That is, for many academics, the decline of the donnish dominion (Halsey,1992) mirrors the 'massification' of HE in the UK recent decades resulting in three times as many universities and students. 'More universities, more students, more faculty means none is any longer deemed so special nor exceptional' (Palfreyman &

Temple, 2017: 99). In addition, the de-professionalisation of the academy is, for some, evidence of a values incongruence.

2.3.1 A values incongruence

Cribb and Gewirtz (2013) point to what they refer as the 'hollowing out' of academia, a growing schism between the agendas of management and academics and the related dominance of managerial gloss and spin over academic substance. According to Marginson (2000: 23-34), this is an inherent problem in the contemporary university and key element affecting academic work. In short, many universities are no longer run by the legislative fiat of collegial bodies; like corporations, they are directed by performance management targets and the notion of economies of scale. In other words, the priority of universities is to secure the increase of student numbers and so tuition fee income year upon year whilst increasing staff: student ratios to create competitive advantage. Bothwell (2019:35-39) suggests the advantages and disadvantages of institution size for staff and student experience is worth future investigation.

Nevertheless, Marginson (2000: 32) argues that:

> The corporate and academic do not have to be mutually exclusive. It should be possible to be both university and corporation, to redesign the university so as to enhance its particular academic character in a knowledge economy. Resource decisions (the domain of managers) and educational decisions (the domain of academics) are always closely implicated in each other. Without a stable collaborative relationship, there will always be tendencies for one group to try to secure control over the other's functions, as is apparent in many universities now. [Unfortunately], a redesign is not occurring.

He concludes that if we continue to

> …lose sight of the fact that it is in teaching, research and scholarship that universities make their distinctive social contributions, we will impoverish the university as an institution and pave the way for the shift of its academic functions into a generic corporate environment. This might be good for business, but it would not be very good for education.

In essence, Marginson (2000) is alluding to the recognition by some of an 'identity schism' and 'values incongruence' between the 'academic manager' and the 'managed

academic' (Winter, 2009). Previously, academics were managed only by themselves; they self-regulated their job performance as professionals (Meek & O'Neill, 1996). Under the new regime of NPM, however, they have to be managed. In other words, there appears to be a disconnect between academic and corporate culture. The discourse of managerialism and the language of 'new capitalism' (Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002) is alienating many academics as it competes with the democratic discourse of academia promoting autonomy, freedom and professionalism.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, there have been calls to address this values incongruence. For example, Grove (2019) argues that the divide between managers and staff needs serious redress:

> Cynicism and mistrust about choices managers make are widespread, driven in part by the high levels of professional insecurity and unmanageable workloads that many university staff now perceive to be their lot.

Whether such a redress is possible is open to debate. Certainly, the management literature has long advocated the need for managers to take the needs of all stakeholders into account. More specifically, according to stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), a stakeholder is a person, group or organisation that has an interest or concern in an organisation. Hence, in the context of this thesis, consideration of and proactively listening to what is important to academics as a primary stakeholder group is arguably critical to the success of a university. This, in turn, requires effective communication (Shockley-Zalabak, 2012). Moreover, as Mintzberg (1998: 143-146) asserts, 'most professional workers require little direct supervision from managers'; what they really need is 'protection and support'. In a similar vein, Raelin (1995: 210) proposes that the 'management of autonomy' is central to the management of the academic' whilst Graham (2016) advocates a collegial as opposed to managerialist style. Similarly, Shattock (2003: 88) observes that 'the main argument for a collegial style of management in universities is quite simply that it is the most effective method of achieving success in the core business.' To this end, he suggests that the academic community should be protected, as far as possible, from externally imposed rules and pressures so that they are not distracted from concentrating on teaching and learning. However, many commentators note that the opposite is occurring (Beck, 2014; Quiggin, 2010; Smyth, 2017; Whelan, Walker & Moore, 2013).

As a consequence, not only does a values incongruence persist, but also the identity of academics has become confused. Understanding academic identity is fundamental to

this study and, therefore, the next section turns to the notion of contested identities within universities.

2.4 Contested academic identities

The concept of 'identity' derives mainly the work of psychologist Erik Erikson in the 1950s (Erikson, 1958). Broadly speaking, an individual's identity refers to either a social category, defined by membership rules and (alleged) characteristic attributes or expected behaviours, or socially distinguishing features that the individual takes a special pride in or views as unchangeable but socially consequential. In the latter sense, identity is a modern formulation of dignity, pride or honour that implicitly links these to social categories (Fitzgerald, White & Gunter, 2012: 41-64). More simply stated, 'identities are constructed out of the categories which people choose to explain themselves' (MacLure, 1993: 316).

With regards to academics as a specific group, there appears to be little consensus in the literature concerning their identity; as Quigley (2011) observes, academic identity lacks precision and is complex, not least because, over the last thirty years, significant changes have occurred in the identity of both student and lecturer, as well as that of the university and its curriculum (Fisher 2006: 19). For the academic in the context of the modern marketised university in particular, there is a continual interplay and tension between its complexities and reinventing the scholarly self and identity (Clegg, 2008; Simons, Olssen & Peters, 2009).

Henkel (2005) takes a broad view of academic identity, focusing on notions of community; the community comprises disciplines and university departments. Similarly, Wenger (1998: 229) and Wenger and Snyder (2000: 142) argue that communities of practice and competences are the building blocks of a social learning system. However, Quigley (2011) interprets community alternatively to be more about the who, what, where and when and as a means for describing a collection of individuals who possess similar goals, values and interests – in effect, a trait approach.

In contrast, Archer (2008) adopts a narrower, more functionalist view of identity in relation to 'authenticity' and 'success'. Archer (2008) suggests that the authentic and successful academic is a desired yet denied identity, particularly for many younger academics who must negotiate their position on a daily basis. In this respect, Archer's work is influenced by Colley and James' (2005) understanding of professional identities as disrupted processes. They describe two younger academics who fell into difficulty because their personal professional values were at odds with the professional practices

of their professional community. Subsequently, one achieved new security and confidence whereas the other resigned because she could not accept imposed changes to teaching and learning practices. From Archer's research, it is evident that academic identity is determined not only by the individual but also by the communities of practice to which they belong. In other words, many people, including academics, are defined by their profession. Nevertheless, research carried out by Barry, Chandler and Clark (2001) reveals that, even within professions, there is a multiplicity of values, actions and identities in constant flux based on gender, age, ethnicity, office and rank.

Archer (2008; see also Leisyte, 2015) also talks about how the contemporary field of higher education is being shaped by the rise of new public managerialism. She goes on to say that the audit explosion in universities and the refashioning of higher education as a quasi-market has been instrumental in fashioning new forms of relationships, knowledge and academic labour (and, implicitly, identities). NPM has sought to produce individuals with higher levels of flexibility and productivity for the economic benefit of the nation. Archer then notes that the current times are disrupting notions of professionalism, what constitutes academic work and what it means to be an academic. The following sections consider varying approaches to understanding academic identity.

2.4.1 Academic tribes

According to Palfreyman and Temple (2017: 98) the primary source of identity for academics, and their dominant allegiance, is typically related to their academic subject or discipline. In other words, rather than identifying with, say, University X or University Y where they are currently employed, they identify with their 'tribe' or territory (Becher & Trowler, 2001). According to Trowler (2011:1). 'the notion of "academic tribes" has entered the discourse around university management, academic development and the discussion of university life generally' (see also Gordon & Whitchurch, 2010). However, reflecting the fact that the contemporary world of HE is very different to when the concept of academic tribes was first proposed, he goes on to suggest that the 'tribes' metaphor has probably outlived its usefulness and that new metaphors are required.

Specifically, globally there are powerful influences on academic practices across all disciplines which are reshaping the significance of disciplinary knowledge structures. Not only is the role of the academic now more diverse, but there has also been an intensification of academic labour; academic staff now have to undertake more varied tasks at work and in less time (Locke & Bennion, 2009; Trowler, 2011). Massification in particular has reshaped practices in ways that cross disciplinary boundaries whilst

more generally, a variety of forces, together with government policy interventions, have had very significant influences within almost every university (Ball & Exley, 2010). As a consequence, Trowler (2011) argues that there can be little doubt that the influence of the knowledge structures of different disciplines on academic practices is considerably weaker than it was, and that other forces are now shaping how academics behave, how and about what they talk and think and, very importantly, what they care about.

2.4.2 Multifaceted identities

Similar to Trowler's argument outlined above, Gordon and Whitchurch (2010) suggest there has been a shift from discipline-defined academic identities to identities shaped by the divergence and multiplicity of individual roles and a blurring of the boundaries between traditional academic practices and those of enterprise, marketing, widening participation and quality. The 'managed academic' (Winter, 2009) not only undertakes teaching and research, but is also expected to take on the role of administrator, marketer, technician and student counsellor. Consequently, academics have multifaceted identities, including what Kaulisch and Enders (2005: 138) and Lam (2010) refer to as the 'entrepreneurial academic'. In a similar vein, Shore (2010) alludes to the various roles demanded of lecturers, from educators to researchers, to administrators, to student counsellors, to marketers and to entrepreneurs for the performative university, which Shore says is 'schizophrenic'.

At the same time, academic work is no longer the only work done within a university; academics have been joined by other professionals who are intimately involved in the processes and practices that go on in universities. Whitchurch (2013) describes this as the rise of the 'third space' professionals in universities comprising a growing number of staff associated with broadly-based institutional projects such as student welfare, learning support, business partnerships, knowledge transfer and income generation. These people are not influenced by disciplinary differences, except insofar as they impinge on their academics' professional lives. In short, then, academic identities are multifaceted, in flux and are constantly being reconstructed. So, is it possible to define what a contemporary academic 'is'?

2.4.3 Being an academic

Higher education or, more specifically, the university is the so-called 'habitus' of the academic (Bourdieu,1977). Bell, Stevenson and Neary (2009) and Fisher, 2006) say that Bourdieu's concept of habitus is the outwardly structured and internal mental structure through which individuals acquire their views and behaviour as a second nature (Bourdieu, 1990). In other words, and in the context of this thesis, this suggests

that being an academic involves certain views and behaviour; it is part of the academic role. Arguably, integrity can be thought of as essential to academic life. According to Calabrese and Roberts (2004: 335; see also Gerber, 2001), 'integrity is at the core of all effectively functioning societies and organizations.' They also indicate that this implies that integrity is particularly critical in academia.

2.4.4 Para-academics

In contrast to the argument that academics are adopting multiple roles and identities, some suggest that the very notion of a traditional academic is being challenged. For example:

> The growing unbundling of the academic role into specialised pathways for teaching and research means that there are now far fewer all-round scholars. Universities are filling up with what might be called 'para-academics', teachers who don't do research, researchers who don't teach and managers who do neither. (MacFarlene, 2018: 26)

Developing this point, Ross (2018: 8) argues that the split in the research-teaching nexus is 'dangerous'. He suggests that the higher education community underplays teaching. University leaders need not be slaves to rankings and each institution is to have the confidence to do their best and hope the rankings sensibly reflect successes and failures. However, at a time when many feel beleaguered and depressed by the hollowing out of the freedoms of academic life it is important to underline, highlights Ross, that 'being an academic is, in essence a vocation rather than a profession…. Our academic identity is not in our contracts but in our blood'.

2.4.5 Dynamic academic identities in different university types

A further important issue to be considered in the context of academic identities, particularly given the focus of this research, is the extent to which those identities vary or are influenced by the 'type' of university. Usefully, Pearson (2015) compares the identities of academics in a new (post-1992) university with that of an old (pre-1992) one, though the results are inconclusive. His research revealed that academics in both institutions felt that their freedom and agency was constrained, and their practice directed by a performative context. Yet, traditional academic values continue to coexist alongside performative and marketised priorities whilst staff in both universities believed that they retained some control over curriculum content. However, the discourse of student as consumer pervaded the new university but was absent in the old, and academics in the post-1992 institution also considered that they had fewer

opportunities to engage in research, particularly in REF, but maintained that to be an 'authentic' academic, the opportunity to engage in research practice should exist. Those in the new university also felt that employability was high on the agenda which was not the case in the old.

From Pearson's (2015) work, as well as the literature more generally, it is evident the contemporary neoliberal context militates against stable identities, and academics are constantly re-negotiating the relationship between organisation and identity to re-position themselves and cope. It is also evident that responses to the current environment are likely to vary in different university settings, some being more managerial than others (Barry, Berg & Chandler, 2006; Taberner, 2018), whilst academic identities are being actively shaped in response to university structures (Clegg, 2008). Moreover, newer emerging identities or hybrids reveal a multiplicity of influences that includes academic roles, duties, commitments and status.

2.4.6 New identities: winners and losers

A final issue to emerge from the literature is that, within the emerging new identities within neo-liberal influenced HE, there are, as Berg, Barry and Chandler (2012: 402) assert, individual winners and losers. More specifically, a new class of professional administrator (the 'winners' in the new order as they now have an enhanced position and status) has been created in UK university hierarchies (Kolsaker, 2013), occupying places formerly reserved for academics (the 'losers'). These are academic managers who have 'internalised values and constructed goals and working patterns that reflect the imperatives of a corporate management system, such as strong hierarchical management, budgetary control, income maximisation, commercialisation and performance management indicators' (Deem, Hillyard & Reed, 2007: 126). They seize opportunities and build careers out of the new landscape.

In contrast, many academics today have less control over what they do and how they do it. This is compounded by the quality audit culture which conditions so many aspects of professional work in the academy (Neave, 2012). Morrish (2019) highlights that academic work emphasises change, conflict, contestation, intensification, stress, pressure, increased workload, widespread unhappiness and poor staff morale. Beck and Young (2005: 184) talk of alienation and anomie; they describe 'a generation of practitioners [who] have experienced what is, to some a sense of crisis and of loss. Cherished identities and commitments have been undermined and, for some, this has been experienced as an assault on their professionalism'. As a consequence, and as now discussed, there is increasing evidence of divisions within the academy.

2.5 Divisions in the academy

Within the literature, there is some debate about the 'fragmentation' (Sikes, 2006: 559) of the profession. In other words, it is suggested by some that the new competitive HE arena is creating divisions amongst academics themselves (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Hartley, 2002; Henkel, 2000; Locke & Bennion, 2009; Sikes, 2006). Such divisions are manifested in a number of ways, as discussed in the following sections.

2.5.1 Competition for recognition creates division in the workplace

Universities have, according to some, 'become sites of contested identity where, for example, research professors and the 'research active' become the other in relation to whom the less research active defend their previously constituted selves in terms of now devalued criteria' (Hartley, 2002: 203). Research, not teaching, has currency and value and, therefore, researcher academics may be considered to have 'high identity value' (Hartley, 2002). There is a clear separation of research and teaching, as a result of policy and operational decisions to distinguish the way in which these activities are funded, managed, assessed and rewarded. The introducing of new divisions of labour into either teaching only or research only or third-stream collaboration with business and industry and changing perspectives on core academic roles these appear to be experienced by academics in a variety of ways in different types of UK HEIs. Noteworthy is that whilst there has been a growth in institutional operations and the associated administrative and management personnel academics now represent less than half of the workforce in UK HEIs (Locke & Bennion, 2009: 251).

Specifically, research active staff members can be seen as the 'winners' who are able to build their careers on reputation gained through their research, although even within this group the threat of publish or perish pervades, resulting in potential competition between these academics (De Rond & Miller, 2005). In contrast, having the opportunity to research is of concern for many who, having been long employed primarily as lecturers in post-1992 universities, are precluded from developing as researchers owing to the teaching and administrative commitment. They now feel under pressure to gain higher degrees and to become research active to survive. Lai (2013) refers to this as the 'marginalisation of teaching' and, in terms of impact on academics, is a key issue in the literature that addresses the 'human cost' on academe (Chandler, Barry & Clark, 2002).

Similarly, Kinman (2006) talks of the bifurcation of academic staff in pre-1992 universities between those who mainly teach and those who mainly research, whilst Becher and Trowler (2001) suggest that, prior to the emergence of a competitive and marketised HE environment, academics formed allegiances within their disciplines. Today these staff are forced by the new set of conditions to compete with one another, not least to gain and maintain recognition as researchers. In a similar vein, Palfreyman and Temple (2017: 18) point out that there is little sign of an academic community; it is now disconnected and fragmented. As a consequence, there are calls for a truce in the divisive 'war' between researchers and teachers (Bell, Stevenson & Neary, 2009: 145); new alliances are required, they suggest, to address what they see as the inherent divisions and injustices in the neo-liberal HE environment.

2.5.2 Academic precariat and the threat of redundancy

It is widely claimed that, as a result of market pressure, HE is increasingly reliant on lower-paid casual and sessional staff to deliver teaching (Brown & Carasso, 2013; Hartung, Barnes, Welch, O'Flynn, Uptin & McMahon, 2017; Kuntz, 2007; May, Strachan & Peetz, 2013; Percy & Beaumont, 2008; UCU Report July 2019). Not only do casual staff make up roughly half of all teaching staff, but also this is a gendered trend as most are female (Crimmins, 2016: 46). According to a UCU (2016:1) report, *Precarious work in Higher Education*, '54% of all academic staff and 49% of all academic teaching staff are on insecure contracts', whilst over half of universities and colleges employ some lecturers on zero hours contracts.

In other words, there is an increasingly pervasive division within HE between a core group of permanently employed, secure, relatively well-paid academic staff and peripheral groups of casually employed, insecure, poorly paid staff (many of whom are female) undertaking routine teaching, instructing and research tasks (Farnham, 2009). The latter group has been referred to as the 'academic precariat' (Grove, 2018), for whom job insecurity is a primary source of stress (Knights & Clarke, 2014; Pembroke, 2019). At the same time, continuing rounds of redundancies within the sector are also a constant threat to staff and divide the academy further. For example: 'Recent announcements about potential job cuts at Bangor and Cardiff universities raise the spectre of the financial challenges looming over other universities in 2019' (Anon, 2018).

In very sharp contrast, Smyth (2017: 99) talks of the cultivation of the 'rock star' academic researcher who elevates the status of a university. Taberner (2018) also alludes to this group of super professors who can command very high salaries and who

have celebrity status which enhances the reputation and attracts students to an institution. This, she observes is a phenomenon as a direct result of marketisation in HE.

2.5.3 Gender disparity

A further division within the academy is evident in the context of pay, with the literature indicating in particular a gender disparity in terms of lower numbers of women than men employed at higher academic grades. Grady (2019) notes that 'women and BME staff are more likely to be on fixed-term and casual contracts', whilst others point to women generally being disadvantaged (Acker, Webber & Smyth, 2016; Barry, Berg & Miller-Cotto & Byrnes, 2016; Chandler, 2006:292; Ferree & Zippel, 2015; Harris, Myers & Ravenswood, 2019):

> The latest gender pay gap figures paint a discouraging picture of UK universities. On average, women are paid a mean hourly wage that is 15.1 per cent lower than their male colleagues. Last year the figure was 15.8 per cent. The median average gap, which tends to reduce the effect of outliers, was 14.8 per cent for 2018, widening from 14 per cent the previous year. Of the 228 higher education institutions 46 were shown to have widened their gap since the first reporting exercise. (Pells, 2019b).

It should be noted that these figures include academic as well as administrative and support staff. Nevertheless, the literature also refers to the 'cycle of the marginalisation' of female, many of whom are also casual teaching staff, as mentioned above (Havergal, 2019: 5). Also, Epifano and Troeger (2018) point out that while women hold half of all junior lecturing posts, less than a fifth of all professors are female.

2.5.4 Younger/junior and older/senior staff

Some literature focuses on new and younger academics. There is evidence to suggest that younger staff members who enter the profession, termed the 'neo-liberal subjects' (Archer, 2008), know what is expected of them (Acker & Webber, 2017; Archer, 2008; Doloriert & Sambrook, 2009; McAlpine, Amundsen & Turner, 2014; Smith, 2017; Van Winkel, Roeland, Poell & Van Driel, 2018). In particular, those aged 35 or under (Archer, 2008) were found to try to find ways to protect themselves, manage the contradictions and to carve out personal projects, despite only experiencing the present neoliberal context of HE. Nevertheless, 'neoliberalism infiltrated their bodies and minds and made it difficult for them to speak about what was happening to them and the injustices and losses they experienced' (Archer 2008: 282), and many found the

competitive and individualistic practices challenging. Notably, younger staff especially feel pressure to publish or perish.

In contrast, Calvert, Lewis and Spindler, (2011) discuss how older, established academics experience dilemmas in their day-to-day work manifested in tensions between what they feel they ought to do, what they feel obliged to do and what they feel is possible. 'Staff possess a strong sense of duty and demonstrate high levels of professionalism in their practice. They are portrayed as hardworking (sometimes excessively) …. This all takes a toll and has repercussions on their personal and professional lives and identities… The notion of taking care of oneself, a professional responsibility in its own right, is subordinate' (Calvert, Lewis & Spindler, 2011: 37), and relatively few staff appear to consciously do this. Locke & Bennion (2009:242) found that 61% of academics over the age of 51 years agreed that their job was a source of considerable strain when compared to younger staff. Senior lecturers, researchers and readers felt most strain compared to professors who were least likely to agree. 41% of academics agreed that now was a poor time for any young person to begin an academic career.

2.6 The re-shaping of academic work

Thus far, this chapter has adopted a broader perspective on the outcomes of a pervasive neo-liberal induced marketisation process in the HE sector and the consequential transformation in the experience of academics working in HE institutions. In particular, it has considered how this transformation can be conceptualised or understood (proletarianisation and / or de-professionalisation), how the identity of the academic is changing and how divisions are emerging within the academy.

Against this background, this chapter now turns to the specific ways in which the role of the academic and the nature of academic work is being re-shaped as a consequence of the marketisation process in universities. In so doing, it draws primarily on what was referred to earlier as the 'critical university studies' (CUS) (Petrina & Ross, 2014) literature. This not only tends to paint a generally negative picture of the contemporary challenges facing academics but also, of direct relevance to the aims of this thesis, assumes that such challenges are perceived uniformly across the academy. As such, the following sections reveal the specific issues to be explored in the empirical research.

By way of introduction, Fitzgerald, White and Gunter (2012: 175) state: 'The stark reality is that the modernising corporate culture of higher education has irrevocably

changed what it means to be an academic and engage in academic work'. They go on to explain that there has been a multiplication of academic roles and tasks, many of which are unfamiliar and require the reconfiguration of academic work. They also argue that it is impossible to expect academics to be experts in teaching and research but also in marketing, income generation and grant capture, acknowledging that 'these multiple and conflicting obligations can create untenable pressures' (Fitzgerald, White & Gunter, 2012: 175). Smyth (2017: 22) summarises these by observing that, for an academic, the challenges are formidable indeed, not unlike those of a long-distance swimmer. The implication is that academics need to be resilient and have endurance to last (Morrish, 2016).

More specifically, 'higher education is in the middle of a market-driven neoliberal experiment and is becoming increasingly unstable' (McNeil, 2019: 7) whilst, in particular, 'managerialism, has reshaped all aspects of academic work around an idealised image of corporate efficiency, a strong managerial audit culture, entrepreneurialism, and profit-making ideals' (Winter, 2009: 121). This reshaping is referred to by Barry, Chandler and Clark (2001) as the creation of an academic assembly line, previously mentioned, along which the changing nature of their work should be a concern for all academic staff (Barcan, 2013; Fitzgerald, White & Gunter, 2012; Neary & Winn, 2016; Tight, 2000). As emphasised earlier in this thesis, neo-liberalism, NPM and managerialism are capitalism's tactical weapons of rationalisation, deskilling, redundancy, contingency, outsourcing and automation (Ovetz, 2015). These are used to seize 'quantified control' over the academic workforce; 'the academic must become a generic, functional worker who fulfils a full talent matrix and facilitates the flow of capital' (Morrish, 2016: 1).

The following sections review specific consequences of this process as considered in the literature.

2.6.1 Loss of control over the nature of work

Although academics can exercise some degree of 'technical control' over their work, they are, according to Miller (1995: 41), losing ideological control and academic freedom (Karran & Mallinson, 2017). The state, institutional managers and bureaucrats have extended their quantified control (Burrows, 2012), manifested in incessant surveillance, external and internal scrutiny (Foucault, 2008; Lorenz, 2012; Ovetz, 2015) over funding, structures, systems and processes through a range of metrics embedded in an audit culture (workload models, demand for data assemblage, national student survey, research assessments, league tables). As Braverman (1974a: 267) puts it,

'management has become administration, which is a labor process conducted for the purpose of control within the corporation'. This is termed by Derber (1983) as the 'ideological proletarianisation' of academic work.

Loss of control over work is also seen as an indirect outcome of excessive workloads: 'Workload is a major problem…teaching hours have increased and with them, administrative burdens continue to mount year-on-year, eating up research, teaching and preparation time. Workplace stress is a health and safety issue' (McNeill, 2019). Similarly, Berg and Seeber (2016) refer to the frenetic speed and pace of contemporary academic work as a direct result of the corporatisation of universities, compromising academic life and the ability of academics to retain control over their work. These issues are returned to in more detail later in this chapter.

2.6.2 The academic workspace and its impact on working conditions and environment

> We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us. (Winston Churchill quoted in Sept. 2014 World Green Building Council Report).

Tight (2019:130) suggests that to promote institutional diversity the physical appearance of 'campus space' is important. 'Space behaves like statements of purpose to help define relations between an organization and its constituents' (Fugazzotto, 2009: 290). Every year, the estates departments of UK universities are required to report their space management to HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) to demonstrate their efficient and effective use of space, that it is fit for purpose and complies with statutory and non-statutory standards. The literature around the challenges of effective space management is growing, not least because many universities are commonly faced with the problem of limited space (Saaid, Ayob, Yunus, Razali & Maarof, 2018). Its successful management is dependent on the model or technique used, the knowledge of those responsible for it, an understanding of the core business and those at operational level. Scrutiny by HESA is another example of the web of the audit culture imposed by government on HE.

According to Pinder, Parker, Austin, Duggan, Lansdale, Demian, Baguley and Allenby (2009), UK HE types of academic workspace range from single-occupancy cellular space, multi-occupancy cellular offices, and combi-offices (cellular space adjacent to shared informal meeting spaces) to open-plan offices and non-territorial offices (i.e. hot-desking). Pinder et al. (2009) claim that the few HE institutions which have opted

for the open-plan and non-territorial spaces have received strong reactions from staff, with such workspaces being seen as a challenge to the very definition of academia. Additionally, sole office occupancy is associated with a higher rank whilst open-plan offices are associated with low rank staff levels. Most universities still have single and multi-occupancy cellular offices for academic staff.

However, for many casual academic staff, non-territorial space (hot-desking) is often the only form of office space available. The literature that discusses both open-plan offices and hot-desking is highly critical, typically describing such spaces as toxic work environments (Pinder et al. 2009; Wolff, 2015). Critics assert that they can cause permanent, long term damage to an employees' health, whilst Collier (2018) argues that if buildings and accommodation for educators are poor, then staff are likely to feel undervalued and underappreciated. Providing sufficient parking space to meet staff [and students] demand is important for universities (Greatrix, 2018). A lack of money spent on these can cause stress and is not good for staff morale and wellbeing. Therefore, work space conditions and design are a major contributing factor to either positive or negative staff health and wellbeing.

Generally, 'staff costs, including salaries and benefits, typically account for about 90% of business operating costs…. any modest improvement in employee health or productivity, can have huge financial implication for employers.' (World Green Building Council Report, 2014). The report suggests putting space users in control of its design as they know what they need, whilst noting that space must maximise daylight, fresh air ventilation and good thermal comfort. Users must not be exposed to distracting noise nor workstation density as evidence shows there is a 66 percent drop in performance as a result. The extent to which academic office space conforms to these requirements would be a beneficial focus of further research.

2.6.3 The digital academic

The digitalisation of academic labour has enabled some remote working and reshaped the flexibility of the academic workplace (Stredwick & Ellis, 1998). For example, Pinder et al. (2009) demonstrate how different methods of technology-based communication have facilitated synchronous distributed collaboration (smart phones, 3G Broadband, video conferencing, remote desktop connection) and asynchronous distributed collaboration (email, shared virtual spaces such as Sharepoint and Huddle) which span space and time.

However, technology-based communication cannot replace the importance of physical presence in the workplace; regardless of the increased use of technology, face to face communication and collaboration is the most effective means of maintaining collegial relationships (Frary, 2017). Frary (2017) also argues that that technology is dehumanising the workplace if used as a panacea; technology is simply one tool of communication, and it cannot replace face to face chat: 'the value comes from sitting down and talking to people about what is really happening' (Frary, 2017: 5). This is what engages staff most and makes people feel part of a community.

Undoubtedly, technologies are indeed shaping academic labour. Since the introduction of the internet and the World Wide Web in the 1990s, academic work now has largely been reconstructed by digitalisation, often in ways academics themselves may have little opportunity to challenge or change. The digital academic has emerged. It has changed the ways in which teaching, research, administration and communication are conducted in universities. This is fraught with complexities and ambivalence in the accelerated pace of the digital academic practice in the workplace (Tight, 2019).

Moreover, another…

> …important dimension of understanding digital academia relates to issues of professional identities and selfhood…When academics use social and other digital media for professional purposes, they are called upon to make decisions about how best to represent themselves, including what platform to use and how to use it. These decisions may involve such features as how academics write their biographical details on their university webpages, on their blogs Academia.edu and ResearchGate…… The ownership and knowledge production and the working conditions of academics may change values and practices for better or worse. (Lupton, Mewburn & Thomson, 2018: 13-16).

New ways of communicating online require informality and brevity that can differ quite markedly from the norms of scholarly discourse. For many academics, the very concept of self-branding online to configure an academic profile, promoting themselves and their course, research via Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or blogging, fits uncomfortably with broader anxieties around what they consider to be *'appropriate academic deportment'* (Lupton et al. 2018: 15). Indeed, increased public visibility online can have serious repercussions if it goes wrong. However, digital academic work is here to stay.

2.5.3.1 Dataveillance and fast academia

Two other potential challenges facing the digital academic are, first, the 'dataveillance' that can track academic work practices and, second, the omnipresence of IT and '24/7' connectivity and availability electronically which contributes to the relentlessness of 'fast academia', whether working at the university or from home. This points to the affective dimensions of digitised academia, namely, distress and anxiety (Vostal, 2015) which can be termed 'emotional labour' (Chowdhry, 2014). Gill (2010) describes these as 'the hidden injuries of neoliberal academia' caused by increasing pressure on faculty to be ever-more productive while being closely monitored, measured and called to account (Burrows, 2012). Berg and Seeber (2016) challenge the speed of academic work today and implore the academy to slow down to create time to think, develop and 'mull over' ideas for research rather than succumb to the relentless, increasing demands and expectations to feed the metrics-based research performance output. The notion of fast academia is further discussed in Section 2.7.3. This process is, according to Williamson (2015), enhanced by the digitalisation of the academy in the 'smart university'. He goes on to raise questions with regards to 'big data' and who has control over it, access to it, and how they are used not only for educational purposes but also as profitable materials that are commercialised. This is shaping how learning and teaching is conceptualised and practised. Wells (2016) claims that there is little evidence to suggest that some university teachers lack enthusiasm for the digital classroom due to inadequate infrastructure and that there are other recalcitrant academics unwilling to change. Academics today accept, embrace and engage with new technologies as these will only continue to increase and deepen (Tight, 2019).

2.5.3.2 The flipped classroom

Digitised academic labour also enables even more job flexibility which academics may embrace; however, there are also many unfolding threats and challenges. For instance, the biggest threat is that the number of academic teaching positions may be reduced even further as software for assessment and digitally recorded lectures, materials stand in for a human presence in the classroom. University buildings which are expensive to maintain too could be disappearing. Similarly, the 'flipped classroom' is a departure from the traditional face-to-face university lecture which could have major implications for the concept of 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1990) and for academic identity connected to practice (Fisher, 2006; Wenger, 1998).

2.5.3.3 A labour of love: the hidden iceberg

MOOCS (massive open online courses), also dependent on and an outcome of the digitalisation of the academy, are considered to be a 'labour of love' given the time and

effort required on the part of academics to make them work (Lupton et al., 2018: 134). In other words, academics provide what is in effect 'free labour', though they consider this worthwhile as it directly helps students (Lupton et al., 2018: 136). This is integral to the traditional academic notion of recognised social good (Evans, 2002) which does not sit well with commercial priorities. Hence, a values incongruence exists between the academy and neoliberal governance of universities. The actual time it takes to set up and work a MOOC cannot be officially or fully recognised (for example, in workload models) and, hence, 'love is essential to the functioning of contemporary academic workforce' even though it is only tacitly or obliquely acknowledged. This is called 'the hidden iceberg of academic labour' (Lupton et al., 2018: 5). What you see is only a tiny portion of all the work done below the surface. The 'smart university' could become a corporatized vision of ultimate efficiency, attracting customers and cost-cutting. (Hall, 2013).

2.6.4 Pro-bono work

Related to the above, Kolsakar's research (2007) reveals that academics demonstrate a high level of professionalism and a genuine desire not to 'shortchange' students by taking shortcuts. Whilst this is good news for students, the effect on academics appears to be lengthening the working day and growing frustration over workload. Berg and Seeber (2016) discuss how academics feel they need to be seen to be working long hours in part due to the competition amongst academics for fear of redundancy. This long hours' culture is corroborated by the research of Sang, Powell, Finkel and Richards (2015).

The evidence is clear that academic staff regularly work over and above their contracted hours to get the work done and that there is a great deal of unpaid academic work. It has been reported, for example, that 'pro-bono work by UK university staff is worth £3.2 billion a year in 2015-16 alone' (Pells, 2018: 8). In other words, millions of hours of unpaid extra-curricular work undertaken by academics is going 'under the radar'. In addition, Kelly, McNicoll and Kelly (2018) argue that many staff still carry out many tasks with no recognition (i.e. peer reviewing books, papers, unofficially mentoring others, writing references). One of the key staff concerns is that there is a chronic under-estimation of the time it takes to do many academic tasks and roles. There appears to be a link between the increased high levels of pro-bono work and the 'ruthless forces of commercialisation' of the HE sector (Petford, 2013).

2.6.5 From psychological to transactional contract

A key outcome of the marketisation of universities is a transformation of the emotional relationship between academics and the university as their employer. A significant literature exists on this relationship more generally, which is widely referred to as the 'psychological contract' (for example, Conway & Briner, 2005, 2009; Freese & Schalk, 2008; Guest, 1998; Rousseau, 1989). In essence, the psychological contract theory is concerned with those subjective characteristics, elements or benefits of employment that do not form a part of a formal, written contract of employment, such as expectations and beliefs (the 'promises' of the organisation), reciprocal obligations, and so on. Hence, much research focuses on the implications of these not being met, of the psychological contract being broken.

The concept of the psychological contract is applied to the context of a post-1992 university by Bathmaker (1999), her study exploring the nature of that contract between lecturers and senior management. She concluded that a gap existed between the two groups in their interpretation of the psychological contract. Alternatively, it has been found that, within marketised universities, the nature of the contract has changed from one that is relational – that is, based on trust, fair play, equity, ethics, respect for professional judgement and reciprocity – to one that is simply transactional and de-personalised (Wilson, 1991; Winter,1995). This suggests that, under the new 'regime', the traditional academic psychological contract has been broken, with implications for the commitment of academics to their institution.

More than 50 years ago, Schein (1965: 53-4) warned that, 'if a university…withholds status of privileges such as academic freedom and expects faculty to obey arbitrary authority, it will be violating its psychological contract, resulting either in redefinition of the contract….or an alienation of the faculty'. As Gill (2018) observes, universities cannot afford to lose the goodwill of staff; viewing their staff as a resource only in transactional terms is to invite problems. However, the evidence suggests that this is occurring, not least through a loss of trust in management on the part of academics.

2.5.5.1 Trust

Implicit within the maintenance of the psychological contract is the need for trust in employees to be demonstrated by action; that is, for employees to feel supported by their employer. As Beal (2010: 21-43) asserts, enlightened leaders make their employees feel safe and trusted and when compassion exists in the 'extraordinary workplace' then remarkable things can happen in an organisation. In return, organisations receive greater commitment from staff who will have greater pride in the

quality of their work (Boxall & Purcell, 2011; Carroll, 2006; Mishra, Boynton & Mishra, 2014). In short, trust is the glue that sticks successful organisations together (Covey & Merrill, 2018).

One means of mismanaging an intelligent and professional workforce, such as academics in a university, is to attempt to micro-manage them (Hammett, 2018), thereby demonstrating a lack of trust. As a consequence, employees may disengage or become demotivated. Interestingly, a study conducted by Harvard Business School found that motivated employees can increase gross profits by 47 percent (Kerr, 2015), whilst Studer, Hagins and Cochrane (2014) assert that there is a clear correlation between better engagement and improving the financial performance of an organisation. In contrast, a disengaged workforce can lead to absenteeism, limited teamwork, a lack of trust, low morale, workplace bullying, employee health problems and lower levels of creativity (Rahman, Rehman, Imran & Aslam, 2017). Yet, as Trow (1994:1 5) suggests, NPM in 'universities has arisen in large part because of a lack of trust and confidence in the professionalism that can act as a substitute for leadership. Indeed, the call for leadership in universities.... can be read as a lack of faith in the underlying principle of the notion of [academic] professionalism'. Raelin (1995) and Bryman (2007) advocate a collegial approach to the management of academic autonomy as a way forward.

2.6.6 Students as customers

A consumerist mindset is pervading the student body in that many no longer see themselves primarily as 'learners', but as paying 'customers' buying a product in the form of a degree and are seduced to embark on study by glossy university marketing material. Their approach is instrumental to their studies (Haywood and Scullion, 2017).

Tomlinson (2017) asserts that the marketisation of universities is profoundly changing the way in which higher education is perceived by staff and students, in particular adopting a rather negative view of students. More critically, Nixon, Scullion and Hearn (2016: 8) refer to students as infantile and narcissistic millennials whose attitude 'undermines opportunities for deep and fulfilling learning experiences.'

However, Hardy (2018) refutes this when exploring the student-university psychological contract in a post-1992 university. She found that in many cases students' expectations go unmet. Starting university is a major life transition which can be both exciting and overwhelming. Many are working part-time whilst studying and, because of financial concerns, and the lack of a sense of belonging at the university and of viable

educational alternatives, find themselves in a situation of entrapment, isolation and hopelessness.

More and more students are presenting with mental health issues. Recent statistics reveal the extent of the student mental health crisis in the UK. In 2015/16, over 15,000 first-year students in UK universities reported that they had a mental health problem, compared to approximately 3,000 in 2006. This increase in disclosure is mirrored by 94% of higher education institutions reporting an increase in demand for their counselling services (Yap, 2018). This has an impact on the nature of pastoral academic work which needs time, patience and kindness.

Students today have reshaped academic work. Thomas (2018), in his inaugural professorial speech, talked of the academic pedagogical dichotomy of a lecturer being either the 'difficultator' in the classroom by challenging students/ making learning uncomfortable for their own good (Bax, 2011) or the 'facilitator' in the classroom and making learning comfortable, allowing students to be passengers in class rather than activators which often help staff receive good NSS feedback. The latter brought about by massification and a dumbing down of standards can only result in a race to the bottom for students, staff, the university and society (Murphy, 2017). Uncomfortable learning is not about instant gratification; it is not a fast food but needs time, patience and peace (Higgins, 2018). Getting a degree today is not the long game but short, instrumental and as comfortable and easy as possible. The boundaries between traditional teacher and learner roles are more blurred now owing to increased use of technology (Conole & Alevizo 2010:44). Santiago and Caravalho (2008: 219) observe a paradigm shift whereby the professional academic is now considered, certainly by management, as an 'employee worker' working in what some refer to as 'skills factories' where no deep learning takes place as in the traditional sense and purpose of a university (Naidoo, Shankar & Veer, 2011:1151). This causes frustration among the academy about the devaluing of education and their work.

2.6.7 Increased 'tyranny of metrics' and audit culture (Muller, 2018)

> The university can be a site for meaningful work. Academic work can be autonomous, inherently rewarding, and socially significant. Yet, many academics seem to share the experience that they are losing control over their work. They complain that their work agenda becomes increasingly fragmented and the purpose of the various activities gets blurred. They are concerned for

the ever- changing performance indicators and standards of 'excellence' imposed on them by university administrators and 'managers'. (Räsänen, 2008)

As considered earlier in this thesis, one manifestation of the marketisation and increasing managerialism in the HE sector is the increasingly pervasive use of and reliance on metrics in many aspects of academic work. Beer (2016: 212-213) argues that metrics (mechanisms of corporate- and self-governance) are deliberately powerful to improve employee performance as they twist, cajole and provoke what individuals do at work by promoting uncertainty, insecurity, precarity, competition, rivalry and entrepreneurialism. These produce subjective affective responses, such as fear of failure, anxiety and performativity, and in so doing, structure and order workplace behaviours and practices. In other words, 'measurement intervenes in the social world it depicts' (Espeland & Stevens 2008: 412) and its processes instigate the politics of social relations. Espeland and Saunder (2007) discuss the concept of 'reactivity' to understand how people respond to the meanings they associate with metrics. Unsurprisingly, measurement systems give powerful leverage to managers and leaders who are in a position to exercise it (Beer, 2016).

Weber's iron cage of rationality of bureaucracy can put a stranglehold on employee creativity. The modern capitalist iron cage shapes and constrains thought and behaviour (Grosack, 2006). Martin (2016), refers to the 'creeping bureaucracy' and 'rationality' of management together with constant game playing around metrics in research as key stressors for many academics who are increasingly obliged to focus on both the volume and 'quality' of their work according to measures such as the rating of journals and number of citations. Arguably, this audit culture is resulting in the loss of autonomy and control over the shaping of how many aspects of academic work is to be done, which is the most important characteristic of a profession (Lorenz, 2012). Morrish (2016) quotes Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, who describes this as part of the 'new barbarity' in British universities.

The audit culture within universities can also be considered within the concept, referred to earlier, of the so-called 'McDonaldization' of society (Ritzer, 2013). This proposes that most, if not all, aspects of work and leisure are calculable, efficient, predictable and controlled. Within this environment, the pace and intensity of work is increasing and more demanding (Hartman & Darab, 2012) and, as Levenson (2017: 138) observes, 'more measuring, more counting of research outputs than doing it…There is too much work to be done in the time available and administration is burgeoning every year, and this is not why academics wanted to do this job'. Darabi, Macaskill & Reidy (2017)

reiterate this in their paper. Moreover, metrics and audits encourage management by performativity, a form of incentive, control and attrition based on rewards and sanctions (Ball, 2003: 216; also see Kallio, Kallio, Tiernari & Hyvoenen, 2016). This terrorises (Lyotard, 1984) employees in the public sector, putting them under undue pressure and distracting them from their actual work.

2.5.7.1 Academic compliance

One specific contribution of the audit culture to re-shaping academic work is the manner in which it encourages academic compliance. According to Morrish (2015: 2), 'academic endeavour is not something that can just be improved by order'; it involves ethos, judgement, time and space, and support. However, the audit culture directs the focus onto the quantitative (measurable) aspects of the academic labour process rather than the qualitative, intangible aspects, such as caring, compassion and going the extra mile to help a student.

Reflecting on her academic career (in New Zealand), Walton (2018) concludes that when the compliance cost of quality monitoring stifles quality initiatives and creativity, then something is seriously wrong with the systems in place. Compliant subjects are easy to manage, yet this comes at a significant personal cost to the individual, yet it has now become normal and expected that we should record and report all kinds of activities rather than question, critique or attempt to transform the system (Davies and Bendix Petersen, 2005). But, as Martin (2016) warns, if academics continue to acquiesce, they risk eroding their integrity, self-worth and dignity, becoming mere cogs in the higher education machine.

2.7 Academic resistance

The preceding sections have been largely concerned with the manner in which the re-shaping of the work of academics resulting from the marketisation of and increasing managerialism within universities is represented in the literature. However, it is important to note that the literature also focuses to some extent on how academics, though fragmented as a group, respond to and deal with the new managerialism. Teelken (2012), for example, in her research at 10 universities in the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK, found that staff disliked the additional processes and duties brought about by managerialism yet, despite 'examples of frustration and stress [being] omnipresent' (Teelken, 2012: 287), along with an evidently diminished commitment to the organisation, most found ways of working around them.

More directly, Murphy (2017), Giroux (2014), Martimianakis & Muzzin (2015) and Bailey and Freedman (2011) call on staff and students to collectively resist the managerialist assault on universities. Such resistance and dissent can take the form of passive, covert resistance, which appears to be the most common form, either through what Teelken (2012) refers to as symbolic compliance, professional pragmatism and formal instrumentality, whilst Diefenbach (2009: 15) describes the way academics 'learn to play the game or system' as a form of subversion. More generally, the evidence suggests that academic resistance is typically non-confrontational, taking the form of avoidance strategies (for example, 'I forgot', 'going off sick') or partial compliance. Entwistle (2001) describes the discretionary effort facet of professional work, which is one of the values held by academics. This is the difference between the maximum effort an individual could bring to their job and the minimum effort required to avoid being fired, perhaps the most significant control the employee holds.

However, according to Gallup Poll, only 33 percent of UK university staff are engaged at work (Felix, 2019) whilst Kostera (2019: 32) writes that academics are leaving UK universities:

> Working at a UK university demands skills that have nothing to do with the traditional academic craft. Would a symphonic orchestra employ an experienced conductor and make her sell tickets, without letting her ever play any music or rehearse with the musicians? Sound pointless? Well, that is what UK universities do? They're making people miserable, depressed and suicidal.

Kostera continues:

> In the past, academics did not earn much, but they felt good about what they were doing. There was a democratic management system adapted to universities known as collegiality. Being an academic was sensual and wild, something to dream of. Now academics are made to work in open office spaces, which are destructive work setting for people who need to focus….

In so doing, she alludes to the outcome of increasing managerialism on the well-being of academics who, though attempting to maintain their commitment to their work, may suffer what Gill (2010) refers to as 'hidden injuries'.

2.8 The 'hidden injuries' of academic staff (Gill, 2010)

> Universities benefit from our overwork. The business model is built on people working longer than they should, people working during leave…people working

while they are sick, and people knowing that they have to do these things
(Mayo, 2019: 37)

Neoliberalism, according to Gill (2010: 241) 'found fertile ground in academics whose predispositions to "work hard" and "do well" meshed perfectly with its demands for autonomous, self-motivated, responsible subjects'. It is, perhaps, not surprising therefore that a workload staff survey (UCU, 2018) indicated that 74 percent of academic staff are working more than six hours or more over their contracted hours every week and 29 percent are working over eleven hours extra. In addition, 94 percent of staff say they have an excessive workload which is having a negative effect on their mental health. It is, therefore, important in the context of this chapter to explore the specific consequences of managerialism on academic staff well-being as expressed in the literature.

2.8.1 Burnout

According to Gutherie, Lichten, Van Janna, Ball, Knack and Hofman (2017), levels of burnout appear to be higher among university academic staff than amongst the general working population and are comparable to those in 'high risk' groups such as health care workers. Moreover, in a work-life balance survey, university staff globally were revealed to feel overworked and underpaid, and to believe that their careers were detrimental to their personal life and relationships (Inge, 2018). More academic staff are suffering from poor mental health (Krause, 2018; Langley-Evans, 2018; Weale, 2019). Nor is this issue restricted to academic staff; that is, more students are presenting and declaring mental health issues (Mansell, 2018; Raddi, 2019) which, in turn, further increases the burden on academics.

Grove (2019: 7) reported the findings of a recent Kinman survey amongst 5,000 UK academics regarding the risk of burnout. It was found that half of those participating in the survey said they continue to work when unwell, the main reasons being the fear of being unable to catch up on their return to work or having to ask colleagues (already overstretched themselves) to cover. Moreover, there arguably appears to exist a new 'twilight zone' between being sick and doing work from home, reflecting an increasing culture of 'presenteeism' among academic staff, whether on or off campus. This again contributes to levels of burnout amongst staff. Yet, perhaps ironically, universities claim to be equal opportunity employers and to adhere to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The main purpose of HSWA is to 'secure the health and safety of workers and workplaces by protecting workers and other persons against harm to their health,

safety and welfare by eliminating or minimising risks arising from work' (Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974)

Workplace fatigue and burnout are very real issues facing academic communities dealing with increasing workloads driven, not least, by ever more administrative tasks that are at best considered uninteresting at worst pointless and time-consuming (Levenson, 2017; Darabi et al., 2017). Indeed, a UK study by Elmes (2016) found that up to 90 percent of academics were extremely unhappy with the administration and bureaucracy involved in their daily work lives which impacted significantly on job satisfaction. The current heavy workload and lack of work-life balance for academics is also widely recognised (Shaw, 2014; Walker, 2009). In addition, research suggests that when employees perceive too much-felt accountability, the consequences can become deleterious (Hall, Frink & Buckley, 2017).

2.8.2 Workplace stress

There is no consensus on definitions of stress in the literature. Nevertheless, Cohen, Kessler and Underwood Gordon (1995: 3) provide a comprehensive definition of stress as a process in which 'environmental demands tax or exceed the adaptive capacity of an organism, resulting in psychological and biological changes that may place persons at risk for disease.' Specifically, these changes generate cortisol rather than the performance-enhancing stress hormone adrenaline. Cortisol is a harmful hormone released at times of extreme and prolonged exposure to stress (Cohen et al. 1995: 4). More generally, Lazarus (1990) suggests that stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that the demands on them exceed their personal and social resources, with the result that the individual is unable to mobilise. He continues to say that chronic stress, where an individual is in a state of stress over a prolonged period, can cause cancer, immune or heart problems and mental breakdown. Generally, stress is considered to be reaching epidemic levels in contemporary society (BBC, 2017).

Unsurprisingly, there is a significant literature in the field of occupational health psychology that explores the stressors of academic life, work-life balance and the consequences for health and wellbeing. Undertaken predominantly, but not exclusively, in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, the US and Canada, the research collectively provides many indications of a decline in working conditions and mental health in academia.

Many studies have identified academic stressors, or the factors that result in or increase levels of stress. These include: reductions in funding, relatively low salaries, heavy workloads, long working hours, poor work-life balance (Ablanedo-Rosas, Blevins, Gao, Teng & White, 2011; Archibong, Bassey & Effiom, 2010; Barkhuizen & Rothman, 2008; Berg & Seeber, 2016; Cannizzo & Osbaldiston, 2016; Fisher, 1994; Kinman, 2006; Kinman & Jones, 2008; Kinman & Wray, 2013; Kostera, 2019; Rutter, Herzberg & Paice, 2002; Tytherleigh, Webb, Cooper & Ricketts, 2005; Winefield, Gillespie, Stough, Dua, Hapuarachchi & Boyd, 2003; Winefield & Jarrett, 2001). These conditions are to blame for mental health problems among academics. In addition, research over the past three decades has consistently shown that such work stressors cause illness and reduce productivity at work whilst, more generally, studies indicate that occupational stress has significantly increased in the HE sector (Morrish, 2019).

Studies by Fisher (1994) and Tytherleigh et al. (2005) both found that the presence of high personal control and jurisdiction over work can be stress-reducing. Conversely, an erosion of control, increased risks of redundancy and limited funding that, in turn, limits career prospects, cause perceived stress at work for academics. There is a clear correlation between an increase in occupational stress and a decrease in employee well-being (Kinman & Wray, 2013).

The first comparison of stress levels in different HE sectors suggests that academics working in the UK and Australia experience significantly more stress than in other countries, such as Germany (Grove, 2017b). It also found that in the UK in particular, the deterioration in staff well-being between 2006 and 2010 in the UK, mainly due to the REF, high workloads and poor management, was in most evidence in the post-1992 universities. Also, in the UK, the University Workplace Survey 2016 (Matthews, 2016) revealed that 51 percent of academic staff claimed that their job was having a negative impact on their health, with many respondents anticipating that they would not be able to sustain their current workload and occupational stress up to retirement. One professor working in humanities at a plate-glass university says, 'Staff are being worked to their limits and the university is taking advantage of the workload models, which in themselves are horrendous tools to make us work even more' (Matthews, 2016:42). The implication is, of course, that some form of appropriate management intervention is necessary to redress the situation (Graham, 2014: 673). Indeed, employers have a legal obligation to conduct risk assessments and prevent known causes of stress. 'We [as academics] need decency, humanity, respect and trust [shown to us by managers]' (Morrish, 2015:2).

2.8.3 Blurred boundaries between work and home

Gill (2010:237) refers to work intensification and extensification or, in other words, 'academia without walls'; there are no longer boundaries for the work. This is referred to by Petrina, Mathison and Ross (2015: 60-62) as the 'shifting and creep of academic work' where work impinges on 'vacations at the beach or campground'. Furthermore, the academic workplace is being redefined, not least with the transformation of cyberspace into a workplace. Today, the workplace is anywhere and anytime: 'one can be connected to a network or the internet' (Petrina et al., 2015: 60-62). Putting it another way, Brady (2018) explains that for the contemporary academic, there is no distinction between who I am and what I do; I can be working all the time. This she refers to as elastic boundaries. Academic work is by its very nature never finished and, hence, academics can be easily exploited; as Davies and Bendix Petersen (2005: 89) suggest, management's construction of the ideal employee is one who is compelled never to rest. Hence, the blurring of work and home is an evident potential source of additional stress.

2.8.4 Work-life balance

Related to the preceding point, Langley-Evans (2018) asks whether academics can achieve a work-life balance, concluding that control must be taken and parameters set:

> Sadly, academic life is not how we see it portrayed in film and television dramas. Academics do not spend their time drinking sherry in wood-panelled office suites, thinking deeply, occasionally having an intense tutorial with a solitary student and leaping out of bathtubs shouting 'Eureka!' The truth is that the modern academic has to juggle often-conflicting priorities of teaching, research and administration, working long hours. Many academics suffer from imposter syndrome and increasingly feel under pressure to deliver excellence in everything they do. We often see surveys that show low morale among the academic workforce, with reports of working in excess of 60 hours per week and unacceptably high levels of stress-related illness.

In the first major global survey of university staff views on work-life balance, (Bothwell, 2018), it was found that academics feel stressed and underpaid, and struggle to fit time for personal relationships and family around their ever-growing workloads:

> Research findings from several countries suggest that academic work has become comparatively stressful, with potentially serious consequences for the workforce and the quality of higher education. This article reports the findings of

a study that examined work demands, work-life balance and wellbeing in UK academic staff. Job demands, and levels of psychological distress were high and working during evenings and weekends was commonplace. Most academics surveyed, however, were at least moderately satisfied with their jobs. Work-life balance was generally poor, and most respondents wished for more separation between their work and home lives. Academics who reported more work-life conflict and perceived a greater discrepancy between their present and ideal levels of work-life integration tended to be less healthy, less satisfied with their jobs, and more likely to have seriously considered leaving academia. On the whole, academics that perceived more control over their work, more schedule flexibility and more support from their institutions had a better work-life balance. These factors, however, failed to moderate the relationship between work demands and perceptions of conflict between work and home.

This is corroborated by Kinman and Jones (2008:1) in that the research findings from several countries suggest that academic work has become comparatively stressful, with potentially serious consequences for the workforce and the quality of higher education. This article reports the findings of a study that examined work demands, work-life balance and wellbeing in UK academic staff. Job demands and levels of psychological distress were high. In addition, Kinman (2006) suggested that her findings into occupational stress and work-life balance amongst UK academics had the potential to guide the development of more effective interventions to improve the working life for academic employees nationally. Unfortunately, however, little appears to have changed in the intervening years; arguably, there is little political appetite at national nor institutional level to address this issue.

Academic work has become largely screen based. This in itself can cause damage to eyesight, otherwise known as computer vision syndrome: eye strain, dry eyes, blurred vision and headaches (Health Harvard Edu, 2017). In more recent work, Kinman (2019) identifies other predictors of poor mental health amongst academics, including: role ambiguity; change fatigue; digital poor wellbeing from too much screen time and always being on email; and role creep, where an 'individual wears too many hats' in other words has multiple responsibilities and unnecessary tasks which are not academic added to their workload. She suggests that a systematic approach to stress prevention in the workplace by tracking staff wellbeing and benchmarking across the sector is needed. Intervention is also needed at multi-level, national,

institutional/management and individual level/self-care to promote wellbeing and to redress the balance.

2.8.5 Competition promotes an aggressive culture

A less direct source of 'hidden injury' is through the alleged development of a 'bullying culture', brought about by managerialism, job insecurity and a culture of long working hours (Thomas & Shaw, 2014). This too is a major cause for ill health. Workplace bullying is most recently defined as workplace interaction consisting of any combination of harassment, discrimination, social exclusion, public and professional humiliation, criticism, intimidation, psychological and sometimes physical abuse that occurs repeatedly and over a period of at least six months (De Falco & Crabb, 2015; Keashley & Neuman, 2010; Lester, 2013; Roderick, 2016; Vartia, 2001).

> Research continues to address the causes of bullying, but perhaps surprisingly those investigating it are themselves operating in a risk sector as high levels of bullying are consistently reported in higher education. In the UK, the overall prevalence of workplace bullying, based on the proportion of working people, who have experienced it, across all working sectors, is estimated at between 10-20%. However, the percentage of people who have experienced bullying within academic settings is higher than the national average. UK higher education studies have found the percentage of people experiencing it ranges between 18% and 42%. (Farley & Sprigg, 2014)

Closer scrutiny of the phenomenon of bullying in academe can point to clues as to why it occurs. Cultures where bullying flourishes have been characterised as competitive, adversarial and politicised. Perhaps this is best illustrated by the bullying behaviours most cited within academic contexts, such as threats to professional status and obstructive behaviours, designed to inhibit employees achieving their goals (De Falco & Crabb, 2015; Ellis, 2007).

> Workplace bullying, intimidation and victimisation at work can destroy health, confidence and careers at universities…..the problem with bullying is that it is often subtle but persistent and institutions regularly tend to defend the person who is bullying. However, we are all entitled to dignity at work (Swain, 2008).

Swain reported that 25 percent of UK academics have been bullied over their scholarly views, perhaps reflecting the outcome of a UCU survey of 2,300 respondents that found that British-based researchers believe they enjoy less protection of their

academic freedom than their continental peers. Examples of bullying listed by staff include isolation, exclusion, direct conflict and passive aggression from management thinly veiled threats and undermining by a line manager gossip and political wrangling to take away courses and research interests. Others felt pressure to self-censor their views to avoid conflict with management or peers for fear of reprisals (Grove, 2017b).

2.8.6 Failure to meet performance targets

> The judicial now usurps the pastoral in managing [academic] performance. This is a system portrayed as existing to 'develop' staff now tends to include the setting of targets with the promise of 'support' if these are not met that mutates into warnings about performance and leads finally to a capability dismissal that is procedurally indistinguishable from one followed in disciplinary cases… Dismissals of a professor at Salford for example for not meeting performance targets, using grant capture as a criterion of an academics' worth. Salford's performance management of its professors is also particularly draconian… focusing on the cost of research rather than its value will ultimately result in everyone losing out as governments find better ways to spend taxpayers' money. Academics (research fellows, readers, professors) are increasingly being expected by their university to bring in sufficient income to pay their own salary. This 'marks another step down the UK university's road to perdition…This journey will end not only with rock-bottom morale and mental health among academic staff but also eviscerated universities and scholarship' (Evans & Bishop, 2018: 27).

This target driven approach is referred to by Morrish (2015) as the 'toxicity' in our universities. One example of its impact is that of Prof Stefan Grimm, age 51, who committed suicide October 2014. He was bullied and threatened by management at Imperial's Department of Medicine. He had complained of being placed under undue pressure about his performance by the university in the months leading up to his death, and that he had been placed on performance review. He was said to have been struggling to fulfil his metrics (Farley & Sprigg, 2014). Another example is that of Dr Malcolm Anderson, a 48-year-old lecturer in accounting at Cardiff University who took his own life after being asked to mark 418 papers over a 20-day period. He left a note in his office referring to his unmanageable workload as the reason for his suicide in February 2018. One of his colleagues stated that the complaints to management about his workload had not been dealt with (Pells, 2018a). Dr Anderson's death has been

referred to as a wake-up call for the entire higher sector with the widespread culture of overwork (Krause, 2018).

The vice-chancellor of Sussex University has since suggested there needs to be a dramatic change to end the bullying culture with, the wellbeing for staff and students now his priority. Pells (2019a: 9) reports that there is to be a new dignity at work policy which includes 'new avenues for staff to speak out.' Meanwhile, Sussex's strategic plan outlines, 'kindness, integrity, inclusion, collaboration and courage' as the university's five core values. Nevertheless, the vice-chancellor accepted that external factors beyond the University's control were having a negative impact on academic life¨.'…. funding is tighter, resources are tighter, we are asking people to do more without any additional resources, and I think something that we continue to underplay is that the status of universities is falling' (Pells, 2019a :9).

Former vice-chancellor of the University of Central Lancashire wrote the foreword to the recently published HEPI report *Pressure Vessels* (Morrish, 2019). He writes that the 'report indicates with evidence, that directive, performance management approaches are counter-productive to the output, efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation and also to staff wellbeing and mental health. If such an approach works, why are so many of our colleagues so unwell and continue to be so?' (Morrish, 2019).

2.9 Ways forward?

> If you look after your staff, they'll look after your customers. It's that simple. (Richard Branson, CEO Virgin, 2016)

Promisingly, in November 2018 the CEO Universities UK called for legislation to mandate mental health first aid in the workplace, in so doing sending a strong message to vice-chancellors to prioritise their staff wellbeing. In Belgium, Ghent University is leading the way; since December 2018 they have been championing a new approach to managing their staff which is to be based on collaboration, collegiality and teamwork. As Morrish (2019: 52), states 'structures, working conditions and opportunities for career progression all need to be reformed if the profession is to thrive.'

Interestingly, Kinman (2019) and Siegrist (1996) highlight the importance of equity between efforts expended and rewards perceived by academics to promote their mental wellbeing. McLeod (2017) posits that there is a need to focus on the collective

body rather than the individual which provides a tool for rethinking agency, labour and the wellbeing bioeconomy.

According to Morrish (2019: 39) 'in the face of evidence of pressure and resulting stress on academic and professional staff, universities have sought to mitigate their legal liability by offering employees enhanced access to 'wellness' solutions.' There are in-house counselling and occupational health services and they offer resilience, stress management and mindfulness training. Morrish continues, 'however, many of the proposed beneficiaries are unconvinced about the legitimacy of a solution which seems to place the onus for recovery squarely on the employee'. The idea here is that the employee should adapt so that they can endure even more pressure (Ahmed, 2017: 189). When academics, either individually or collectively, demonstrate with evidence that their workloads are too high to be safe, they are told to work smarter (Morrish 2019: 30) but so many tasks are not quantifiable. Clearly other solutions need to be found.

In addition, Krause (2018), Reynolds (2018) and Hall and Bowles (2016) all claim that many of the problems and challenges faced by contemporary academics are rooted in material causes, specifically the very organisational, sometimes directive performance management driven structures/practices. Hence, it is these that should be revised in order to address the situation. 'Meaningful structural changes are needed to address the underlying factors associated with poor mental health, like job security, workload and pay' and the 'long hours work- culture' (Morrish, 2019: 26). Yet these aspects are outside the control of individual staff members.

Generally, the importance in the service sector of front-line people has long been recognised (Drucker, 1955). They are the ones on whose performance everything else depends. Similarly, Berry and Parasuraman (1991), who are widely credited with recognising the importance of internal marketing, argue that a service company can be only as good as its people: if they are not sold, customers will not be either. Others emphasise this point also; the literature on staff engagement optimisation states that staff feel at their happiest and most motivated when they can express their true self in the workplace (Ménard & Brunet, 2011; Reis, Trullen & Story, 2016) whilst Bedarker and Pandita (2014) observe, like many others, that the workforce is an organisation's most important asset and needs to be treated accordingly to enable the business to be successful. Rao (2017) and Welch (2012) advocate that it is vital for management to listen to all employees, especially to those at operational level, as they know what is really going on and to encourage two-way communication. Management by Walking

About (MBWA) advocated by Peters and Waterman (1982) might enhance informal two-way dialogue. Nevertheless, the onset of managerialism in universities has contributed to a transformation in the power relations between academics, manager-academics, institutions and the state (Trowler, 2008), challenging this argument.

Reflecting the wider management literature, Trowler (1998) advocates management sensitivity when communicating with academic staff. More specifically, a collegial approach employing a very light touch and 'considerable care' is considered the best way forward (Bryman, 2007: 697-710). In particular, it is recommended that significant professional autonomy and trust in academics should be encouraged, whilst academics should also participate in management (Bargh, Scott & Smith, 1996: 16). Interestingly, a former President of Harvard University recommends deferring to academic judgement when decision making in the HE context (Bok, 2003). He says that undermining academic standards (the intangibles) and allowing money and profit (the tangibles) to dominate is extremely foolhardy, warning that although 'faculty… moral education of students….trust of the public are all intangible and remote…and may never materialise, at least not for a long time, it is all too easy to overlook them' (Bok, 2003: 118-9). Similarly, Macleod and Clarke (2009) posit that organisations prioritising staff engagement will have a real belief in their people and this requires real and sustained buy-in from the top.

Further exploration of the persuasive literature on staff engagement and participative leadership models is beyond the scope of this thesis; nevertheless, it represents a potentially fruitful focus for future research in the HE context.

2.9 Summary

This chapter has reviewed literature focusing on the proletarianisation, commodification and subsequent de-professionalisation of the academy. It then explores issues surrounding contested academic identities, divisions in the academic community and the re-shaping of academic work conditions and environment before going on to discuss the transition from psychological to a transactional contract and the consequential relationship between the academy and university management. Finally, the burgeoning literature on academic health and wellbeing and possible ways forward has been considered.

For the most part, the literature portrays a negative picture of the consequences of marketisation / managerialism for academic staff. What it does not offer, as demonstrated in this review, is a more nuanced perspective, in particular the extent to

which personal demographic/ biographical variables may influence perception, behaviours and the practice of working in HE amongst different staff. It is this knowledge gap with which this thesis is concerned. Therefore, in the following chapter the theoretical underpinnings of the research are detailed, specifically by presenting and justifying the use of practice theory to optimise an in-depth understanding of academic practitioners, their daily work practices within institutional praxis.

Chapter Three

Theoretical underpinnings: making a case for using social practice theory

3.0 Introduction

> If you want to make sense of social order on a grand scale ('society') or more locally ('organisation') the place to start is necessarily the ongoing practices and the material arrangements that compose them (Nicolini, 2012: 174).

Having considered the 'critical university studies' (Petrina & Ross, 2014) perspective on the consequences for academics of the corporatisation, marketisation and managerialisation of neoliberalised universities in the preceding chapter, the thesis now turns to a critique of practice theory as the most appropriate conceptual framework for this research. More specifically, the overall aim of this study, as established in Chapter 1, is to establish whether the experience of all academic staff in a post-1992 university is the same or varies according to what might be termed their biodata. In so doing, it seeks to build on Taberner's (2018) earlier work that revealed that it is academics and the nature of their work in the new, post-1992 institutions that are most impacted by the marketisation of the HE sector in the UK.

Inevitably, comparing and drawing conclusions from studies exploring the academy in general, and the consequences of transformations witnessed over the last two decades in particular, is problematic. Not only is there a wide variety of university settings (Locke & Bennion, 2009), but also different aspects of or perspectives on academic life are considered, as discussed in Chapter Two. These include, for example: the experiences of early career lecturers (Archer, 2008; Doloriert & Sambrook, 2009; Murphy, 2017); the implications of gender (Ferree & Zippel, 2015; Harris, Myers & Ravenswood, 2019); the casualisation of academic work (Hartung, Barnes, Welch, O'Flynn, Uptin & McMahon, 2017); joy in academic practice (Kern, Hawkins, Falconer Al-Hindi & Moss, 2014); bullying (De Falco & Crabb, 2015; Ellis, 2007); resistance (Martimianakis & Muzzin, 2015); and, the consequences of greater managerialism on mental health and wellbeing (Morrish, 2019), occupational stress (Ablanedo-Rosas, Blevins, Gao, Teng & White, 2011; Barkhuizen & Rothman, 2008; Kinman & Wray, 2013) and work-life balance (Kinman & Jones, 2008). Unsurprisingly, these different perspectives are accompanied by a variety of theoretical frameworks, such as Identity Theory (e.g. Clegg, 2008; Henkel, 2005; Mallet, 2016; Neary & Winn, 2016; Tight,

2019), Labour Process Theory (e.g. Braverman, 1974b; Kolsakar, 2008; Smith, 2015; Wibberley, 2011), Emotional Labour Theory (e.g. Antonidou, Sandiford, Wright & Alker, 2015; Bolton, 2009 and 2010; Hochschild, 1979 and 1983), Feminist Theory (e.g. Gillies & Lucey (Eds.) 2007; Mountz, Bonds, Mansfield, Loyd, Hyndman, Walton-Roberts, Basu, Whitson, Hawkins, Hamilton, & Curran, 2015) or Critical Discourse Analysis Theory (e.g. Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002; Morrish & Sauntson, 2019). Whilst these and other are employed to underpin research into transformations in the work environment in HE, a full discussion of them is beyond the scope of this thesis. Rather, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 and unlike previous work, this current study looks specifically and, most importantly, holistically in-depth at a specific post-1992 university and its academic workforce from within, how structure and agency influence one another, how this interplay determines the nature of work practices at the 'chalk face' and what solutions could be found to enhance any shortcomings. Hence, as this chapter argues, social practice theory can address all these aspects whereas other theoretical frameworks would only partially address them. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to critique and justify practice theory as the most appropriate construct for this research. Following an introduction to social practice theory in the next section, the chapter then considers the structure-agency debate before going on to discuss practice theory in more depth.

3.1 In support of social practice theory

Social practice theory (Nicolini, 2012) is arguably the most suitable theoretical framing and conceptual lens through which to comprehensively investigate the everyday lived experiences and practices of academics within a post-1992 university within the field of Critical University Studies. According to Nicolini (2017:19) practice-based approaches collectively provide different affordances and present a view of the social that is richer, thicker and more convincing than that offered competing paradigms. Social practice theory represents a wholly different paradigm of social and organisational research (Hargreaves, 2011: 84).

Typically, practice theory is employed to explain and understand actions and social order (Reckwitz, 2002: 247). All practices should be conceived as handles for empirical research. Practices have a history and are historically situated; they are inherently situated in a particular moment of time, space and context; and, they are meaning-making, order-producing and shape activities (Nicolini & Monteiro, 2017). Practice is more than what people do; the focus of practice theory is on the 'regimes' of practices rather than merely what people do or say (Geiger, 2009; Whittington, 2011).

Hence, this approach is less a means of directly describing the social world and more a device to grasp and represent it. In other words, practice theory can shine a light on understanding what lies beneath the surface of concrete practices, meeting the need to search and identify for the hidden forces that preside over them. The methodological lesson is that rather than searching for the reasons for organisational or social behaviour from the perspective of the individual, practice approaches demand the exploration of social relations, how regimes of actions are knotted together, and what this implies in terms of agency, meaning and empowerment (Nicolini & Monteiro, 2017: 9). More specifically, from a practice perspective, attributing agency is always a political project that creates agents out of power relations and material economic elements; it identifies asymmetries and produces meaning in organisational settings, such as the context of academics and managers within a neoliberal marketised university. Hence, the practice approach can generate opportunities for abductive learning, enabling practitioners to interrogate their own activity and to explore new ways of doing, saying and being (Eikeland & Nicolini, 2011).

Uniquely, social practice theory can reveal intrinsic contextual organisational subtleties and complexities (enablers and challenges) in the performance of connected working practices. In particular, it can point to alliances or conflicts, competition between old and new ways of doing things and material infrastructures, and how these are approached, understood, negotiated and experienced by practitioners and the sorts of social interactions, power relations and identities that these practices sustain in situ (Hargreaves, 2011; Nicolini & Monteiro, 2017). Practices and their assemblages empower certain courses of action (and those positioned to take them) over others and, as Schatzki (2002) states, circuits of power cannot be sidestepped away from the dynamic nature of practices which are synonymous with social life.

Practice theory approaches carve out a specific space for the collective among certain communities of practice in which, as in the social world more generally, individual agency (power) and agents are unequally distributed, temporary and in constant flux. Indeed, social practice theorists, from Giddens (1984), Bourdieu (1977, 1990), Reckwitz (2002), Schatzki (1996, 2002), Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012), Warde (2005) and Shove (2010) to, more recently, Nicolini & Monteiro (2017), have all sought a middle way between structure and agency. Therefore, social practice, unlike other theoretical perspectives, is most appropriate for this study as it offers the potential to gain a unique, in-depth and multidisciplinary understanding of academics' work experience within a specific marketised post-1992 institution and, in particular, how those experiences are determined or influenced by agency (or lack of). In so doing, it

will facilitate the identification of the shared and any differences in the lived experience of academic staff and reveal micro-interventions to enhance and transform the everyday working life of faculty locally.

Putting it another way, such an understanding can be deepened by exploring the interplay between three elements of academic work practice in HE institutions, namely: (i) institutional praxis; (ii), academic practitioners; and (iii) their work practices. Moreover, the processes of reproduction and transformation in the structure and agency at work can be detailed and identified in each element. This is what Nicolini and Monteiro (2017: 11) refer to as a 'situational and dialectical approach' to addressing the task of 'praxeologising' organisational and management issues. It scrutinises sites of practice and focuses on how tensions, contradictions and their solutions often trigger generative and expansive learning and change processes, and how power imbalances emerging from tensions and contradictions can disrupt and even replace old practices with new ones, maintain them in constant flux.

Thus, a practice approach interrogates who is empowered and disempowered by the particular configuration of practices, facilitating an understanding of what is going on and why and, more generally, addressing the issue of power, the scope for agency and voice and how these are associated within such nexuses and assemblages. Questions that arise for example, include:

- Are these practices aligned in the same direction or are they in tension?
- Who and what purpose do these practices serve?
- What type of practical 'identity' of those involved do they prefigure?
- Is such practical identity (what they show people involved do) aligned with their desired identity (what they think they should do)?

All three elements (institutional praxis, academic practitioners and their work practices) can potentially constrain or enable the other(s). Practices are variously enabled and constrained in an organisational setting. They are navigated, negotiated and/or challenged by actors. These are so-called organisational 'micro-political processes' (Spurling, 2010: 18). Similarly, academics and their practices can be either in alignment or in tension with institutional praxis: demands, expectations and requirements (Spurling, 2010).

Figure 3.1 below presents an adaptation of the conceptual framework used by Jarzabkowski, Balogun and Seidl (2007) to study the strategising of practice in

organisations. This is adopted in this study in order to explore the nexus and interplay between praxis, practitioners and practices of the post-1992 university utilised here as a case study. Whittington (2006) suggests that the three elements of practice theory demonstrated in Figure 3.1 can be usefully isolated, and their interplay analysed to provide insight into a specific single case.

Figure 3.1: Model of Institutional Praxis, Academics and their Work Practices 2020

Institutional Structural Praxis
underlying theory of efficiency
Operations, systems and processes
S M/ Line manager practices
Material/ resource jurisdiction-allocation

Academic Practices
what, where, when, how and why
Practice bundles include:
Teaching
Administration
Research
Student counselling/advice
Marketing
Income generation activities

Academic Practitioners
underlying theory of effectiveness
identity, reflexivity and agency-
ability to shape their work

Source: Adapted from Jarzabkowski, Balogun and Seidl (2007 :11)

The three elements of institutional praxis, academic work practices and practitioners will be discussed at length below. However, in brief, praxis is the process by which a theory is enacted; it is putting theory into practice. The definition of praxis, according to Jarzabkowski et al. (2007) demonstrates how the delineation unfolds between the macro and the micro level of dynamic activity within an organisation. It is the nexus between what is going on at the institutional, structural level, in the case of a university for the purposes of this study, and at the micro level (individual or group of academics)

and their work practices. In this study, the university is the 'site' for the engagement of practice.

> Every research investigation in the social sciences or history is involved in relating action to structure, in tracing, explicitly or otherwise, the conjunctions or disjunctions of intended and unintended consequences of activity and how these affect the fate of individuals (Giddens, 1984: 219).

It is, therefore, important here to review briefly the structure-agency debate.

3.1.1 The structure-agency debate

Prominent social scientists, including Giddens (1976, 1979 and 1984), Hay (2002) and Archer (1996), have suggested that the ongoing structure-agency debate is a key understanding mechanism within social science. It remains the bedrock of inquiry into the nature and conditions of social organisation, order, control and action. Within this debate, the fundamental question is, are we free to act as we please, or are we shaped and governed by structures? Aston (n.d.) argues that structure neither controls/constrains us completely yet nor are we, as individuals, completely free to consciously choose, to exercise free will and determine our lives and conduct.

A full consideration of the structure-agency debate, located as it is within the wider context of sociological theorising, is beyond the scope of this chapter. Nevertheless, Tan (2011) usefully summarises the three broadly discernible positions on the structure-agency continuum. At one pole lies the structural perspective and, at the other, the agency-centric perspective. The third, mid-point position attempts to bridge structure and agency.

3.1.1.1 The structural perspective

Reflecting structural sociological theory, the structural perspective adopts a macro position that proposes that the roles, behaviours and values of members of a society are determined by society itself; society is 'reified' and seen as concrete or real. There are, however, conflicting positions on how this occurs (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2017). On the one hand, structural functionalists such as Durkheim (1938) see structure and hierarchy, that is, the social, economic, political forces essential to establishing the very existence of social control, evolving through social agreement or consensus. On the other hand, conflict theorists, following Marx (1867), argue that such social structure and hierarchy reflect the ability of one group in society to dominate another, hence the argument that social structure can act to the detriment of the working-class majority of

individuals. In this context, for example, Chomsky (1999) believes we do not live in a free democratic society; there is no freedom, simply the reproduction of the views of the ruling classes for their own capital gain. Similarly, Habermas (1996) argues that we are controlled by the media communications of capitalism and consumerism.

In either case, however, structure refers to the institutions, materials (economic resource allocations) and cultural norms, customs, traditions of a society. Barnes (2000: 344) says that within the social system/structure of rules and norms, social institutions are formed which influence actors by either limiting or facilitating opportunities which determine action. In short, the structure approach holds that individuals are situated actors, and in this way, actions may be understood and explained.

3.1.1.2 The agency-centric perspective

Also known as the micro position reflecting a focus on the individual rather than on society as a whole, the agency-centric position challenges the structural perspective; according to Tan (2011: 2), it holds that society is created by the transaction and 'aggregation of individual action' a result of human creativity, rationality and autonomy. Hence, it is also referred to as social-action theory (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2017). Weber (2004) stresses human intentionality and calculation in the process of human action. Within this agency approach, reflexivity features where the individual can account for and be aware of the reasons and implications of their actions; they can self-determine. In short, this perspective proposes that, unlike the structural approach, society is not distinct from but is formed by the individuals that comprise it.

3.1.1.3 The third mid-way position

This acknowledges the dialectical, enmeshed dynamic relationship between structure and agency to explain social order and organisation. That is, it recognises that neither the macro, structural nor the micro agency-centric perspective can separately explain the development and structure of societies. In other words, it is evident that not only do particular societies follow established and accepted cultural rules and norms, but also they evolve from within through the social actions of their members. This position has been adopted by scholars such as Giddens (1984) who refers to 'structuration theory', which posits that social structure is both the medium and outcome of social action and informs practice theory in particular. According to Aston (n.d.), this perspective combines the best of the agency and structure approaches where the actor is situated but not powerless or passive. It emphasises reflexivity and assumes a high degree of self-awareness on the part of the actor, but also allows for the influence of structure

and awareness of emplacement. Indeed, Giddens (1984: 258) recognises human beings as purposive actors who virtually all the time know what they are doing and why. At the same time, the actions of the individual are embedded in social contexts which cause and influence the nature of their activities. Nevertheless, the work of Giddens has been criticised by Archer (1982) who argues that he conflates the concepts of structure and agency so that they become two sides of the same coin and, hence, not theoretically helpful.

Despite this criticism, the third, 'structuration' theory has gained increasing support, distinguishing as it does between how the structural and agentive dimensions of social life are understood. This is also manifested in a recent rise in the popularity of practice theory in particular which supports the argument that this is an appropriate theoretical lens through which to view this study.

3.1.2 Practice theory is 'the choreography of everyday life' with the dynamic power to transform (Pantzar, 1989)

Practice theories or practice-based theories offer a relatively novel vista on the social sciences and strive to make our understanding of the world richer in meaning. Ortner (1984) was one of the first to coin the term 'practice theory'. The notion encompasses two elements: the primacy of practice in human life and the direct relation between practice and power phenomenon. The practice approach is rooted in the tradition of Marxism and has been developed from a body of ideas since the 1970s of the philosophical work of Wittgenstein and Heidegger and the 'praxeology' of sociological work of Bourdieu, Giddens, Foucault, Durkheim and Weber (Carmichael, 2019; Hui, Shove & Schatzki, 2016; Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, Knorr Cetina & von Savigny, 2001; Spurling, 2010). In addition, it is also rooted in the North American pragmatism tradition, which puts concrete human activity at the centre of the study of the production, reproduction and change of social phenomena (Nicolini & Monteiro, 2017: 2).

The following sections will discuss the tension and so interplay between human agency and structure, practices and practitioners within the framework of practice theory.

3.1.3 The dialectic between human agency and organisational structure

Practice theory is a theory of explaining how social beings, with their diverse motives and their diverse intentions, make and transform the world in which they live (Nicolini, 2012). Ortner (2006; 1984) explains it as the relationship between human action and the so-called system; it means that anything people do bears intentional or

unintentional implications for how they fit into the system, and its distribution of power and privileges. It is a dialectic between social structure and human agency working back and forth, mutually generative, in a dynamic interplay which is constantly evolving. Structure is 'temporal and always implies the possibility of breaking down in 'new events' which do not conform to the code' (Reckwitz, 2002: 256). Praxis describes the whole interconnectedness of human action and social order. This is related to the concept of structuration introduced above.

> For it is part and parcel of daily experience to feel both free and enchained, capable of shaping our own future and yet confronted by towering, seemingly impersonal constraints. Consequently, in facing up to the problem of structure and agency social theorists are not just addressing crucial technical problems in the study of society, they are also confronting the most pressing social problem of the human condition. (Archer, 1996: xii)

Practices consist of organised sets of actions which link to form wider complex constellations or, in other words, a nexus or interconnected mesh of activities. According to Wittgenstein (1980) and Heidegger (1996 [1929]) it is only possible for us as humans to interpret something (an object like a hammer) if against the background of a prior understanding (action intelligibility) of the situation or context (historically, socially and economically). Organisations in particular are the site of engagement and the result of work activities; they are where practice bundles of work activities take place and where management, as a particular form of activity, ensures that these social and material activities work more or less in the same direction (Nicolini, 2012: 2). If there are disputes and conflict these will generate practices in temporal flux.

In short, practice theory is a theoretical construct through which one can examine practices in temporal flux and its power to transform.

According to Nicolini (2012: 103):

> the growth of interest in practice…is the result of the coming together of a number of thought traditions among which Marxism plays a central role…..Marx's thinking has had a significant influence on most practice-oriented authors who have built on his twin notions of the primacy of practice in human life and the direct relation between practice and power phenomena.

That is, there is a focus on power and control relations between employees and their managers as central for the understanding of organisational and social phenomena (Nicolini & Monteiro, 2017). Most importantly, materially mediated resources are the main medium through which power manifests itself and is exercised. 'Resources include capabilities, organising activities, structuring time and space, coordinating actors, and influencing the way in which people perceive themselves and their conduct (authoritative resources); they also include material levers such as control of natural resources, means of production, and wealth (allocative resources)' (Nicolini, 2012: 46-47). Any assemblage of resources can create a set of practical concerns. Understanding workers and their work practices in context and ensuring a good and fair working environment, conditions for employees is the root Marxian concern.

3.1.4 Practices

These constitute the assemblages of everyday working life. The use of these practices is connected to 'doing' tasks and 'saying' because they provide the behavioural, cognitive, sense making, procedural, discursive and physical resources through which multiple actors are able to interact in order to socially accomplish collective activity. These resources are utilised in routinised ways to form patterns. These can then be studied as a unit of analysis to understand how organisational activity is constructed and potentially can shape praxis over time.

Pantzar (1989) and Shove (2014) talk of practice theory as 'the choreography of everyday life' and propose a model comprising three micro-elements: (i) practice itself; (ii) materials (objects that allow for practice) and meanings (concepts that determine how and when a practice may be performed) ; and (iii) procedures or competencies (abilities that allow for a practice). The practice of tea drinking offers a very simple example (Wilson & Chatterton, 2011). The materials are the cups, teapot and a kettle, the meanings are a tea-break or tea with breakfast, and the procedures are the skill used to make a good cup of tea. Shove, Watson, Hand and Ingram (2007) are criticised by Whitmarsh, O'Neill and Lorenzoni (2011) for creating simplistic portrayals of psychological models of behaviour and the wholesale dismissal of non-sociological approaches to social or behavioural change. Interestingly, however, Shove et al. (2007) do observe a relationship between the 'having' of materials/resources, how these are distributed, the 'doing' of activity and why certain practitioners avoid 'doing'. Yet, these can be out of balance, so it is important to consider not just the final act of behaviour but the product of contextual stimuli. Whittington (2006) and Reckwitz (2002) refer to 'practices' as the shared routines of interconnected behaviour, including traditions, norms and procedures for thinking, acting and using things or resources. These

activities within organisations and the activity itself have the potential to influence wider society. Furthermore, they argue that practice is temporal, across time and space. Every practice contains a particular routinised mode of intentionality and motivation. Objects or resources are components of many practices. It is a nexus of doings and sayings understandable to the agent or the agents who carry it out. It is likewise understandable to potential observers (at least within the same culture); single acts of individual behaviour form parts of shared knowledge, practice is culturally interpreted and understandable, and participants ascribe certain meaning to certain objects. For practice theory, the nature of social structure consists in routinisation. From economic organisations to the sphere of intimacy like the notion of 'romantic love', these are 'structured' by the routine of social practices we all understand coming from the same culture. Practices imply certain norms of social correctness of knowing what is socially expected in a specific context. Hence, Sandvoss (2003 :2) urges us to look at practices 'as powerful reflections of historical, social and economic conditions.'

3.1.5 Practitioners

Practitioners are the actors who perform practices. Consideration is given to who they are, in other words, their identity as academic 'professionals'. They are also the units of analysis for study. Importantly, being active participants in the construction of activity is consequential for an organisation and its survival (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007:10). They shape activity by who they are, how and why they do what they do and what practices they enact, and in this way, they are interconnected with practices and praxis.

According to MacIntyre (1981), when engaging in a practice, an individual's key motivations (such as self-worth, self-esteem, professional fulfilment, ambition and personal success) collectively represent the achievement of internal goods. In contrast, external goods are secondary (MacIntyre 1981: 190), such goods for the academic being, for example, research, teaching and other academic work. At the same time, there may be a conflict between a commitment to the vocation of academia and the associated standards of being a 'good' academic and family commitments and the standards of being a 'good' parent/ spouse. In other words, an individual's multiple roles or practices have implications for each other.

Nevertheless, practitioners understand their own practical operational concerns which influence how they act; they derive agency through their ability to shape their work (and non-work) practices. Human agency includes ways of behaving, thinking, showing emotion, knowing and acting to positively, neutrally or negatively attempt to influence institutional praxis. These can take the form of cooperating, adapting, political and

social action/inaction, resisting, sabotaging, manipulating and avoiding. The degree of agency depends on organisational context and of an individual's situation:

Bourdieu (1977) uses habitus as a central idea in analysing structure embodied within human practice. The notion captures the permanent internalisation of the social order in the human body. The mind and body are the locus of agency and affective response, the target of power and normalisation. Practitioners have a routinised understanding, knowing how, actor skilful performance, desiring carrier of patterns of bodily behaviour. In the social world, Reckwitz (2002) differentiates between the agent/actor (who follows rules, expectations and either conforms or is deviant) and individuals (who just do their own thing, making their own decisions); human behaviour and their 'practices are not value- or interest-free' (Nicolini 2012: 93). In a similar vein, Vattimo (1971) suggests that when participating in practices we are always biased; we cannot be disinterested spectators of things and meanings.

Similarly, the process of acquiring a practice-related identity and developing a sense of belonging to a community of practice is the result of specific intentional practices and an awareness in promoting associated doings and sayings. Shadowing novices or listening to a senior member/mentor explain or illustrate current features of practice to new members can, for example, be a useful exercise to pry open the logic of practice. In this way, a researcher can learn specific ways of seeing, talking and feeling that make that person a member of that specific practice (Nicolini 2012: 227). We can observe well-established, entrenched practices of professionals. Knowing is inherent in the growth and transformation of identities and is located in relations among practitioners, their practice, the artefacts of that practice and the social organisation and political economy of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991:122). It has been argued by Swan, Scarborough and Robertson (2002) that community-making practices are sponsored by specific configurations of interests and facilitated by community-making practitioners in view of the extension of managerial control over professionals and their competence. Barley and Orr (1997) claim that the notion of community of practice or social capital is heralded by semi-professions in order to gain power and legitimacy.

3.1.6 Practitioner reflexivity and making sense of the social world

Reflexivity is about how people make sense of their situation; it is about their consciousness which influences their human agency to transform social and organisational matters (Lynch, 1993). Actors demonstrate reflexivity and creativity when they think about their circumstance in the organisation and make sense of it

(Archer, 2000: 288). Their agency can either be enabled or constrained; much depends on the facilitators or inhibitors of institutional praxis. A reflexive process is the interplay between embodied external, corporeal activities and internal mental activities (Spurling, 2010), the latter being an 'internal conversation' where the actor can make deliberate and conscious choices (Archer, 2003: 154). Schatzki's (1996, 2002) theory of practice highlights that practices are carried out by humans (although within a constellation of objects) with 'action/practical intelligibility'. This does not imply rational actions or rationality, but that people respond to their conditions of life and do what makes sense to them. Practitioners have 'habitus' (social, economic and cultural capital); they make political, ideological, social choices which shape their behaviour (doing and saying) and reactions to certain 'fields', organisational structures/contexts with certain 'doxa' rules and norms within a specific field (Bourdieu, 2000). Participants may actively or passively resist, manoeuvre, use discretion, cunning, avoid, find coping mechanisms or cooperate (Nicolini, 2012).

Human behaviour is subjective. Therefore, humans have multiple realities and have agency, or the ability to act and change the status quo. According to Heideggerian and Wittgensteinian tradition, any action comes from the past which drives coping and making sense of the present and drives what could happen in the future. The body is the locus of agency, affective response and the target of power. Intentional action or inaction can be conveyed by an indicative gesture or a silence in conversation (Rouse, 2006).

The purpose of the next section is to discuss the nature of practice theory application and its various forms and to provide a clear justification as to why a specific perspective is the most appropriate for this research.

3.2 The application of practice theory

Practice theories have been applied to a wide range of social settings and disciplines too numerous to mention here. It is sometimes called the practice turn (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1979; Foucault, 1980) to the contemporary turn of practice over the last two decades (Gherardi, 2012; Hui, Shove & Schatzki, 2016; Jarzabkowski, 2003; Lammi, 2018; Schatzki et al., 2001; Shove, 2010; Shove, Pantzer & Watson, 2012; Whittington, 2006). It offers a new vista on the social world. More relevantly though, this approach has made a significant contribution in work and organisation studies in the last twenty years within three specific research themes: (i) the study of learning and knowing phenomena as situated practices (Gherardi, 2006; Nicolini, Gherardi & Yanow, 2003);

(ii) the study of technology as practice (Orlikowski, 2000); and (iii) and the study of strategy as practice (Jarzabkowski, 2003; Jarzabkowski et al., 2007; Whittington, 2006).

In this final section, a case for a pragmatic and strong programme of practice theory is made by examining the benefits to this study.

3.2.1 Two theoretical extremes

'While all practice theories belong to the same family, there is no unified practice approach' (Schatzki et al., 2001: 2); there is no grand theory (Warde, 2005). Nicolini (2012: 214-216) supports a pluralist, pragmatic 'toolkit approach' to the array of versions of practice theories. In other words, researchers themselves select the appropriate package of theories and methods they believe are most suitable for their study.

Broadly speaking, there are two clear theoretical extremes in practice theory. On the one hand, the passive, observational approach (Barley & Kunda, 2001) is concerned with the observed performance of participants who act without any consciousness and demonstrate no human agency. It removes humans as actors. For example, the seminal work of Mintzberg (1973) *describes* what managers actually do in practice from observation only. This argues Nicolini (2012: 13), is a weak practice-based programme as it sheds little light on the meaning of work, what makes it possible, why it is the way it is and how it contributes to or interferes with the production of organisational life. It builds on the misleading assumption that practice is self-explanatory. We are left with a 'so what' question.

On the other hand, a strong practice-based programme provides a thicker account of the world we live in. Nicolini (2012:213) advocates 'zooming in on the accomplishments of practice and zooming out of their relationships in space and time'. It strives *to explain* new and different phenomena by voicing concerns and asking questions such as: what underlies practice, or is there any hidden agenda?' So, what does this mean? And why does that matter? At the same time, other questions to contemplate include: what is said and done? Or, through which moves, strategies, methods do practitioners accomplish their work or not?'

According to Nicolini (2012: 13)

> The strong programme differs from the weak one in that it goes much further…it strives to *explain* organizational matters [how and why] instead of simply registering them.

At the same time, the researcher also needs to grasp what is *not* happening. A key question to ask, therefore, is: what practices are constrained or inhibited, as well as facilitated, by the organisational context?

Therefore, a strong perspective of practice theory is more than a theoretical lens. It is, rather, an ontological choice. It introduces a new ontology and alternative truth values and does not limit changing or elaborating on existing ones (Rorty, 1989). It is the belief that many social and organisational phenomena occur within, and are aspects or components of, the field of practice. It is the idea that practices are fundamental to the production and transformation of social and organisational matters (Nicolini, 2012: 14). Nicolini also argues that from a strong viewpoint of practice, the attention on activity is only the departure point; practice theory is, to use a common analogy, more about revealing what lies below the iceberg. It is about exploring and explaining how organisational structures and mechanisms can either facilitate or obstruct the flow of activities of practitioners and their practices. A strong programme requires a commitment to an observational orientation, interaction with participants and an attempt to learn from these as practitioners themselves will perhaps disregard taken for granted activities.

3.3 Summary

As established in the introduction, the purpose of this chapter has been to make a convincing case for practice theory. In order to do so, it first critiqued a variety of other theories and in so doing provides the rationale why practice theory is the most appropriate for this study before going on to highlight the use of an adaptation of the model previously used by Jarzabkowski et al. (2007:11). This model affords a conceptual framework which facilitates the analysis of the interplay (tensions and alignments) between university institutional praxis, academic practitioners and practices. The justification for this practice theory model is further reinforced by a discussion of the structure-agency debate with its three discernible positions. This demonstrates quite clearly that the structural and agentive dimensions of organisational life are relevant to this study from a structuration perspective. Furthermore, practice theory with its power to transform is highlighted and the dialectic between human

agency and structure, practices and practitioners, their reflexivity and sense making of their situation are discussed. Finally, the application of practice theory and its two extremes, the weak and strong programmes, are deliberated. Evidence indicates that a pragmatic and strong programme of practice theory best suits this research study using the adapted model from Jarzabrowski et al. (2007:11).

The benefits of using practice theory as an overarching theoretical framework to this single case research project are significant. It enables the researcher to exploit its strengths of practical application to a specific situation providing a holistic and comprehensive insight in to a university organisation's management practices, systems, processes, from the perspective of its various academic constituents and the impacts on their individual work practices and how and why these three elements align or are in tension with one another either constraining or facilitating and in so doing shaping each other. In short, practice theory can reveal a unique, in-depth, nuanced understanding of the inner dynamic workings, power relations and agency within a neoliberal marketised university regime and uncover a snap-shot of the interplay of how key internal customers, academics with their varying demographic profiles/biographies react and respond to their daily work, conditions, environment and institutional praxis. And most importantly, this construct of practice will undoubtedly illuminate the principle research aim of whether the lived experience of academics in this post 1992 university is the same and/or different and reveal practical micro-interventions to empower, enhance and positively transform the everyday working life of faculty locally.

In Chapter Four, the research design and methodology provide a rationale for using practice theory as the most appropriate conceptual lens combined with a paradigm of pragmatism.

Chapter Four

Methodology

4.0 Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, practice theory is employed as the theoretical framework for the research in this thesis. The purpose of this chapter is now to explain and justify the adoption of the philosophical and methodological position of pragmatism, combined with a sequenced mixed- and multi-methods approach, seen through the conceptual lens of practice theory, to undertake the research as identified and contextualised in the previous chapters. The central purpose of this enquiry is to establish if and understand how and to what extent lived experience of academic staff at a post-1992 university varies according to individual biodata. Evaluating institutional praxis (structures, material resource distribution and managerial practices), academic practitioners and their practices and reflexivity situated within one single case study organisational setting has lent itself to a pluralist approach of practice theory (Nicolini, 2012). In this chapter, the justification for the adoption of the philosophical pragmatic paradigm as the best 'fit' for the study topic, within the practice theory tradition, is set out. Subsequently, the rationale for the multi- and mixed-method sequential approach via a single-case study is presented and evaluated as the most suitable approach to achieve the aims and objectives of the research. These are as follows:

4.1 Research aims and objectives

As established in Chapter 1, the aims of this study are to:

1. Critically evaluate the extent to which academics share perceptions of their experience regardless of their demographic/biographical profiles.
2. Explore critically the extent to which the perceived experience of academics within a post-1992 university varies according to age, gender, length of service, role and contract type.
3. Identify how academics believe their experience could be enhanced and, consequently, propose an applied research targeted response at the local level.

In order to achieve these aims, the study has the following objectives:

1. To undertake a comprehensive, critical literature review to explore whether common themes of perceived experience in the workplace might vary according to age, gender, length of service, role, contract type.
2. To evaluate the extent of academic de-professionalisation and proletarianisation and its consequences through the lens of practice theory.
3. To employ the pragmatism paradigm within the theoretical framework of practice theory to explore the perceived work experience of academic practitioners, their reflexivity, and their agency.
4. To apply a sequential mixed-methods approach (focus group, quantitative survey, qualitative interviews) to meet the aims of the study.
5. Based on the outcomes of the research, to recommend potential actions at the local level to enhance the work experience of academics.

4.2 Research strategy and design

At its simplest, a research strategy can be defined as the 'general plan of how the researcher will go about answering the research question' (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012: 600). Frequently, this 'general plan' is usually executed through the application of either quantitative or qualitative methods. Quantitative methods can yield valid facts which may support generalisations, whilst qualitative approaches can truly reflect subtleties and complexities of the human condition (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 2002; Mason, 2002; Robson, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012).

Fundamental to any research, however, is the research paradigm that is adopted; moreover, that paradigm is determined by the ontological question of what, for the researcher, is reality and how is it constructed? On the one hand, an objective ontology assumes that the researcher exists independently from one single reality. Epistemology is the relationship between researcher and reality and how reality is captured or known (Carson, Gilmore, Perry & Gronhaug, 2001). Epistemologically, an objective ontology assumes an objective and positivist reality exists. The truth is out there to be discovered. In this paradigm, knowledge is acquired by the use of a deductive methodology, positivistic paradigm and quantitative methods of enquiry employed to generate hard, verifiable facts.

On the other hand, an interpretivist ontology assumes that the researcher and reality are inseparable and that epistemologically, the researcher as social actor appreciates that any knowledge pertaining to lived experience is subjectively constructed and

multiple realities exist. In this competing interpretivist paradigm, an inductive methodology is employed to acquire knowledge and qualitative methods of enquiry used to produce multiple 'truths' to address the questions of how and why. These 'truths' generate rich, thick data replete with meaning and connotation (Weber, 2004). Table 1 below presents an overview of some of the advantages and disadvantages of one research approach over the other.

Table 4.1: Principal advantages and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research

Qualitative research	
Advantages	**Disadvantages**
Captures the voices of participants and the human factor Gains an in depth understanding of the meanings which humans attach to their social world Uses inductive principles Provides detailed perspectives of a few people Facilitates a close understanding of the research context Recognises that the researcher is part of the research process in terms of their interpretation of the data Is a flexible structure to permit changes of research emphasis as a study progresses Theory follows data Less concerned with the need to generalise but to demonstrate that the data collected is trustworthy, authentic, honest, credible and relatable	Has limited generalizability Studies only a few people and is subjective. Provides only soft data (not hard, numerical data) Findings open to researcher interpretation so lacks objectivity
Quantitative research	
Advantages	**Disadvantages**
Draws upon large datasets in order to generalise conclusions Applies controlled experiments to ensure validity and minimise bias by using scientific, deductive principles Analyses data efficiently Investigates and explains causal relationships within data Examines probable cause and effect by testing a hypothesis Is a highly structured approach to ensure study would yield same results on different occasions reliably Data follows theory Researcher independence of what is being studied Appeals to people's preference for statistical data	Omits the human, social factor & nuances of behaviour Does not record the words of participants Provides limited understanding of participants' perspective Provides only hard numerical data (not soft data) Fails to address the how and why questions Is largely researcher driven

Source: Adapted from Creswell (2015 & 2018), Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Silverman (2013 a, b)

In this study, however, both are employed in order to add breadth and depth to the data generated and, importantly, to reduce insider researcher bias. More specifically, in essence, this study comprises a qualitative single case study that critically explores the perceptions of academics about their lived experience in the workplace; this, however, is underpinned by a quantitative online survey questionnaire. The study has been deliberately designed as a mixed approach to enhance objectivity to elucidate a more neutral perspective in the findings.

The research follows a three-stage sequential process. As discussed in more detail later in the chapter (4.3.5), Stage 1 takes the form of a focus group, the purpose of which is to identify broad issues relevant to the aims of the study and to contribute to the design of the subsequent quantitative survey at Stage 2, which facilitates the triangulation of this single case study investigation. This comprises an online self-selecting survey, utilising Qualtrics software, targeting a relatively large sample of respondents (297 out of a possible 1,300 academic staff, representing 26 percent of total case study population, completed the questionnaire). The purpose of the survey is to act as a scoping method to comprehensively map evidence from across the academic population and to inform the more specific, in-depth qualitative research at Stage 3. At this stage, 30 in-depth semi structured interviews were undertaken in order to reveal respondents' subjective academic perceptions or, more precisely, the multi-realities of how and why academics do what they do.

It is important to note here that the quantitative survey, as typical of many online surveys, was that it was self-selecting rather than random. Hence, the data generated are limited in terms of validity, reliability and generalisability. In addition, the self-selection of respondents may imply that only staff who were not happy with the status quo were motivated to respond, although this may not necessarily have been the case. Nevertheless, the quantitative data presented in the appendices iii and iv, include the frequency distribution of 1-5 Likert scale responses to each question. In addition, some correlations are calculated to indicate any strength or weakness using Spearman's rho correlation for ordinal variables to indicate any association. Mann Whitney U tests were used for nominal variables to test differences. More detail is discussed later in this chapter (4.7.2).

4.3 Philosophical approaches and research paradigms

In this section the relationship between a research philosophy (ontological and epistemological position of the researcher) and the research paradigm most suited to this particular study is discussed. As mentioned earlier a researcher's philosophical approach to investigating a problem refers to the researcher's world view, their set of beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality, or ontology, that determines their approach to and design of the research. Ontology relates to the idea of being, our understanding of the world, what factors help us shape our understanding of what we perceive to be real. Epistemology is the relationship between researcher and reality and how reality is captured or known (Carson et al., 2001). Therefore, a philosophical approach determines the research paradigm which in turn determines research methods (Grix, 2002).

Kuhn (1962) popularised the use of the term 'paradigm' in social science research. A paradigm is an 'accepted model or pattern of beliefs' in a particular context or discipline, which determine what should be studied, how research should be done and how results should be interpreted (Kuhn, 1962: 23). Any research paradigm, whether it be positivist, critical realist, interpretivist or pragmatic, has at its heart a specific collection of ontological and epistemological assumptions, beliefs and ideas. In other words, the main concern is with the construction of reality in a specific context or discipline and the received wisdom concerning the perception and description of that reality.

4.3.1 Positivism

Positivistic enquiry has dominated the natural sciences for centuries. It is the dominant traditional and mainstream orthodoxy today (Bell & Thorpe, 2013:41). Bryman and Bell (2011:167) assert that researchers adhering to the positivistic tradition are mainly preoccupied with: measurement, causality, generalization and replication. All propositions are based on facts and hypotheses are empirically tested against these facts. There is clear theoretical focus from the outset and that it is logical, efficient and enables the analysis of relatively large quantities of data. The scientific, positivist perspective has an etic (outsider) view of knowledge. It is claimed it is impartial and value-free.

The advantages of positivism are that the researcher is able to be impartial and objective, produce hard data, uncover 'facts' that can be proven, utilise solid statistical tools and techniques and obtain results which can be generalized across different settings (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 2002; Robson, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). However, despite its utility in the quest for certitude, the positivistic paradigm and its related exploratory strategies have been criticised in social science research for their failure to properly reflect the underlying causes of social phenomena and the human factor (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). Gill & Johnson (2010:188) suggest that at the core of positivism the only focus is with *'erklären'* (trying to explain phenomena generating numeric data) as opposed to interpretivist approaches related to *'verstehen'* (trying to understand phenomena generating non- numeric data).

4.3.2 Interpretivism

Since 1980s, in the social sciences interpretivism has grown in popularity and for many social scientists and management researchers, is considered the most appropriate and

preferred position to adopt when studying social phenomena. According to Bryman and Bell (2011: 17), interpretivism 'is predicated on the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of natural sciences.' Positivism has been rejected by social scientists as the paradigm of choice because it misses the nuances of human behaviours and emotion. Interpretivism exposes and disrupts partial 'taken-for-granted' assumptions that underpin so-called neutral management practices. Organisations are sites of micro power relations and power play (Cunliffe, 2009). Knowledge is not one truth, it is subjective and is open to interpretation. The interpretivist perspective has an emic (an insider) view of knowledge.

The advantage of interpretivism is that it generates data to facilitate better understanding of human enterprise and their hidden entities (Silverman, 2013a). It offers 'thick description' of a context, patterns and meanings to build in-depth understanding of human behaviour (Geertz, 1973).

4.3.3 Paradigm wars and criteriology debate

Many social scientists who conduct qualitative research suffer from what might be described as 'positivistic anxiety' (Bell & Thorpe, 2013: 57), largely owing to the perceived dominance of the paradigm of scientific positivism. This dominance is, however, contested by Chapman (2008: 248) who suggests that even in an area such as management accounting, a complementary qualitative perspective provides a counterweight to the quantitative approach which may only provide one side of the story. Historically, this positivistic approach was used for research within the natural sciences; the criteria to assess good quality quantitative research are validity, reliability and generalisability.

However, from the 1960s, increasing interest was expressed in the complex and unpredictable social world and, consequently, alternative and arguably more appropriate approaches were sought for social scientific research, resulting in what have been termed the 'paradigm wars' (Gage, 1989). The decades since the 1980s, however, have witnessed the growing legitimacy of alternative interpretivist and constructivist paradigms which are principally manifested in qualitative research, and in which data interpretation by the researcher is central (Burrell & Morgan, 2014; Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Silverman, 2013b).

It is important for all qualitative researchers to be aware that the criteriology debate exists (Symon & Cassell, 2012). That is, the criteria for assessing good quality

qualitative research are contested yet, according to Tracy (2010: 839), it is possible to distil 'universal' criteria for qualitative research. These include: worthy topic, richness, rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics and meaningful coherence. In addition, Morgan (2007) suggests we should seek factors that affect whether knowledge gained from qualitative research findings can be transferred to other settings or demonstrate 'transferability'. In addition, Hammersley (2008: 177) suggests qualitative findings need to be transparent and replicable whilst, perhaps more usefully and diplomatically, Symon and Cassell (2012) suggest the way forward is perhaps just being pragmatically 'honest' and 'credible' in the final reporting of a compelling and persuasive story of a research project.

Quinlan (2011: 420) suggests that 'qualitative researchers hold that we construct our world…it is these subjective experiences and expressions of reality that we try to describe and understand.' According to Nicolini (2012: 25), Aristotle took the view that there is a multiplicity of forms of knowledge or epistemology each of which have their own legitimacy, their own criteria of validity, and are valuable in the pursuit of human affairs. Knowledge of the world is shaped by our ontological perspective. More specifically, in the context of this thesis:

> Adopting a practice approach radically transforms our view of knowledge, meaning and discourse. From a practice perspective, knowledge is conceived largely as a form of mastery that is expressed in the capacity to carry out a social and material activity. Knowledge is thus always a way of knowing shared with others, a set of practical methods acquired through learning, inscribed in objects, embodied, and only partially articulated in discourse. Becoming part of an existing practice thus involves learning how to act, how to speak (and what to say), but also how to feel, what to expect, and what things mean. (Nicolini, 2012: 5).

Interestingly, and relevant to the justification for the use of pragmatism explained below as an appropriate paradigm for this study, is its positioning on the paradigm continuum according to Teddlie & Tashakkori (2006). They suggest that pragmatism sits in the middle of the continuum between, at one end, positivism and, at the other end, interpretivism (see Table 2. below).

Table 4.2: Summary of Research Philosophical Approaches and their related Paradigms

	Positivism	Interpretivism	Pragmatism
Ontology Assumptions made about the nature of reality	Reality is objective irrespective of the researcher's beliefs or viewpoint. It assumes that real world objects exist apart from the human knower	Reality is multiple and relative. Knowledge is not determined objectively, but is socially constructed	Reality can be objective or subjective and multiple realities exist. Recognition that no single perspective can provide a whole picture
Epistemology The researcher's view of what constitutes acceptable knowledge	Researchers must be independent and human interests and emotions should be irrelevant. Explanations must demonstrate causality. The quest is to generate facts, verifiable truths and time and context-free generalisations	Researchers are part of what is being observed. They and their subject(s) are interdependent. The quest is to increase in-depth understanding of a given situation	Researcher's values are central. Knowledge can be subjectively and/or objectively derived. The quest is to solve problems and to produce research that has practical applications
Methodology Combination of techniques used to enquire into a specific situation	Use of hypotheses and deduction. Generalisations are made through statistical probability. Sampling requires large numbers to be selected randomly	Use of inductive technique. Small numbers of cases are chosen for specific reasons	Use of any tool or framework in order to address and answer the research problem or question. Recognition that all methodology has limitations
Methods Techniques, tools procedures used for data collection, analysis and evaluation	Quantitative methods are used such as experiment, large scale survey and employ statistical analysis. Evaluation criteria: validity, reliability and generalisability	Qualitative methods are used such as focus groups, interviews, small scale questionnaires. The data content are analysed using e.g. thematic analysis. Evaluation criteria: credibility, trustworthiness, authenticity	Methods are chosen for their practical value in tackling a specific research problem. Qualitative and/or quantitative methods may be used. Evaluation criteria for mixed methods combines both

Source: Adapted from Cassell and Symon (2004), Creswell (2015, 2018), Denzin and Lincoln (2000), Easterby-Smith et al. (2002), Mason (2002) and Saunders et al., (2012)

4.3.4 Pragmatism as the paradigm of choice for this study

The pragmatic paradigm refers to a worldview that focuses on 'what works rather than what might be considered absolutely and objectively 'true' or 'real'. Its focus is on

solving real world problems, whilst reflecting the fact that the word 'pragma' comes from the Greek language meaning 'action' or 'deed', practice is the epistemic object. According to Bogusz (2012), pragmatism as a paradigm and practice theory converge. In other words, practice theory as the overarching conceptual framework for this research fits well with this paradigm.

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998: 30) contend that

> pragmatism is intuitively appealing, largely because it avoids the researcher engaging in what they see as rather pointless debates about such concepts as truth and reality. In their view you should study what 'interest's you and is of value to you, study in different ways in which you deem appropriate, and use the results in ways that can bring about positive consequences within your value system.

Pragmatism is a solid philosophical and methodological mid-way standpoint with which to approach research into the social sciences and is adopted in this study. It sidesteps the polemics of the 'paradigm wars.' In so doing, researchers more generally are less restricted and more flexible in terms of how they carry out research. These are some of the benefits of this paradigm. In addition, pragmatism allows the researcher to adopt the most practical way to address the research study and gives them the opportunity to answer a wider variety of research questions. Equally, researchers have a duty to be curious and adaptable (Kuhn,1962) which, according to Modell (2009), relies on abduction, or to move back and forth between deduction and induction. Abductive reasoning refers to the logical connection made by researchers between data and theory, often used for theorising about 'surprising' events (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009: 89).

Pragmatism as a philosophy emerged in America circa 1870. Pragmatism's founders were Pierce, James, Dewey, Addams and then Mead much later (Rorty, 1989, 2000; Rescher, 2010). Although there is no unitary pragmatism there are some universals. It holds that true knowledge is a function of its utility or usefulness. Truth is a function of its outcomes. As a school of thought, pragmatism asserts that the value of an idea is inextricably linked to its practical consequences and that all knowledge is necessarily context-bound. Knowledge is only meaningful when coupled with action. To pragmatists, knowledge is the output of competent enquiry and consequently, truth is essentially the output of what such competent enquiry regards it to be (Hammond & Wellington, 2013: 607).

Dewey, in particular, saw enquiry to be aimed at 'fixing' the situation; you begin with a social problem and aim to transform the situation. This was central to Dewey's notion of the good life and democratic ideal. It is a form of empiricism. It is our ability to think about external things and steadily improve our understanding of them which rests upon our experience of the world derived from the senses. It is a form of learning by doing and experimentation (Morgan, 2014; Hammond & Wellington, 2013; Rorty, Putnam, Conant & Helfrich, 2004).

Lorino (2018) argues that pragmatist theses have been neglected for some time in the world of organisations and management. Even during the contemporary second industrial revolution (which involves the transfer of intelligence from man to machine technologies with a dark side), organisational and management studies ignore the growing cost of complexity and revert to Taylorian 'scientific' quantifiable dogmatic principles of organisational management that fail again and again. They underestimate the organisation and its social complexity. The collective practical experience and the identification of the so-called organisation as a social structure is ignored. An open and pluralist approach to pragmatism is advocated by Lorino (2018) with regard to organisation studies to uncover the complexity.

Pragmatism, as mentioned above, entails 'action and change' and the interaction between 'knowledge and action' (Goldkuhl, 2012). The findings of pragmatist research increase probability rather than assured certainty. For the pragmatist, 'reality' is constantly renegotiated, debated and interpreted in light of its usefulness in new unpredictable situations. The best method is the one that solves problems which is the principle benefit for employing this paradigm. Finding out is the means, change is the underlying aim. In some cases, it could be described as a form of action research where a wide variety of research methods are used to diagnose problems or weaknesses and help develop practical solutions to address them quickly and efficiently. As Dewey intimated, life itself is a renewing process of experimentation through action on the environment and re-adaptation of the environment to meet the needs of organisms. Here, the research problem is emphasised, and researchers use all methods available to understand the problem (Rossman & Wilson, 1985, cited in Creswell 2008: 10). Given that this study is part of a professional doctorate, the need to demonstrate applied research is critical so a pragmatic line of enquiry is deemed the most suitable approach. It is most suitable to help solve practical, institutional challenges in the lives of academic practitioners and their practice and will inform future local university policy.

Pragmatism as a paradigm sits comfortably with practice theory. Practice theory, as outlined by Ortner (2006), explains the dynamic relationship between human action, on the one hand, and some global entity which we call the system on the other. Hence there is methodological fit between practice theory and pragmatism for this study. A strong perspective of practice theory is more than a theoretical lens, argues Nicolini (2012); it is, rather, an ontological choice. It introduces a new ontology and alternative truth values and does not limit changing or elaborating on existing ones (Rorty, 1989). Social ontologies based on the notion of practice have significant bearing on normativity (behavioural standards), meaning (what something is), identity (who someone is) and agency (why and how human act and change the status quo and reflexivity).

Using a pragmatic approach, researchers can assert that there is a single reality and that individuals have their own interpretations of that reality. Pragmatists regard this as 'intersubjectivity' which is a key element of social life (Morgan, 2007: 72). Pragmatists acknowledge the existence of structural regularities and the unpredictability of human nature and causal relationships in a spatial and temporal context. Moreover, pragmatism enables researchers to enjoy the complexity and messiness of social life (Feilzer, 2010: 14).

> In a way, pragmatism is a commitment to uncertainty, an acknowledgment that any knowledge 'produced' through research is relative and not absolute, that even if there are causal relationships, they are transitory and hard to identify. (Teddlie & Taskakkori, 2009: 93).

Using pragmatism, a research investigation drives the methodological approach and the ontological 'reality' is the practical outcome of the research itself. It is experimental and instrumental. The pragmatic paradigm is useful for guiding this research design. Pragmatism is, in its own right, a sound philosophical standpoint with which to approach research into the social sciences. It sits comfortably within the conceptual framework of practice theory of this study. Pragmatists believe in a balance between the subjective and objective viewpoints in the acquisition of knowledge. This paradigm philosophically underpins mixed methods (Creswell, 1994) which are discussed next.

4.3.5 Mixed methods movement and its strong connection to pragmatism

> Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts (Einstein, 1879-1955).

During the 1980s, mixed methods research became known as the third methodological movement and the third research community, arising as it did from the ashes of the paradigm wars (Cameron & Miller, 2007; Gorard & Taylor, 2004; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The blending of approaches within mixed methods arguably permits the researcher to take a broader and more in-depth view of the research issue (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). Putting it another way, researchers employing mixed methods seek to facilitate a better understanding of human enterprise and their 'hidden entities' rather than simply offering a truth or explanation as favoured by positivists/ objectivists (Silverman, 2013b). These hidden entities suggest that 'there is more than meets the eye' to our individual behaviour across time and space and in a historical, political, cultural and situational context, and they are the concern of critical realists (Bhaskar, 2008), constructivists (Crotty, 1998) and pragmatists (Nicolini, 2012). Importantly, however, it is pragmatism which has most often been identified in the literature as the best and most appropriate paradigm for conducting mixed methods research (Brierley, 2017; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Denscombe, 2008; Feilzer, 2010; Johnson & Gray, 2010; Morgan, 2007; Scott & Briggs, 2009).

Proponents of mixed methods research have been linked to those who identify with the pragmatic paradigm (Cameron, 2009: 140); indeed, many researchers who employ mixed methods, as well as theorists, draw strong associations with mixed methodology and pragmatism (Bazeley, 2003). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004: 17) summarise the philosophical position of mixed method researchers when they say:

> We agree with others in the mixed methods research movement that consideration and discussion of pragmatism by research methodologists and empirical researchers will be productive because it offers an immediate and useful middle position philosophically and methodologically; it offers a practical and outcome-oriented method of inquiry that is based on action and leads, iteratively, to further action and the elimination of doubt; and it offers a method for selecting methodological mixes that can help researchers to answer many of their research questions.

The principle advantage of mixed methods research is that not only can larger samples of standardised data be gathered, making analysis more reliable and generalisable, but it also includes the rich, in-depth detail of the human factor, answering the why and how questions, shedding light on the complexity of human experience. In this way, it can overcome the disadvantages inherent in the adoption of mono-method research, which restricts triangulation and precludes the researcher from tackling the subject matter from different perspectives where the resulting data is more holistic (Johnson & Turner, 2003; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). For example, combining questionnaires and interviews in a single research study brings together the advantages of breadth and depth associated with these two respective methods (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The effect of integrating the results of these two methods is the possibility of providing a more complete picture of the research topic that can address a range of research questions and, by doing so, can provide a more complete knowledge that can enhance theory development and practice (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

In addition, by using a multilevel sequential mixed design, different methods can supplement each other not only because they address different aspects of the study but also because they are taken from different research strategies. As noted above, in this study a focus group informs and is followed by an online survey which then informs and is followed by in-depth interviews; this three-stage sequential process provides the flexibility to adapt each stage to maximise the investigation potential.

As already observed, by definition mixed methods research designs employ both quantitative and qualitative approaches within a single research project to gather or analyse data. Several mixed method theorists have developed mixed method typologies. For example, Mertens (2005: 292) makes the distinction between parallel and sequential forms of data collection, defining these as follows:

Parallel Form: Concurrent mixed methods / model designs in which two types of data are collected and analysed at the same time. One way to do this is to merge data during interpretation or analysis; this is termed triangulation design. Another would be to embed one type of data within a larger design using the other type of data; this is termed embedded design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

Sequential Form: In sequential data collection, one type of data provides a basis for the subsequent collection of another type of data. One way to do this is to connect the data between two phases – for example, quantitative data collection followed by qualitative

data collection. This is termed explanatory design. Another way is again to connect the data between the two phases but, in this instance, qualitative data collection is followed by quantitative. This is termed exploratory design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

For the purposes of this research, the sequential form of the mixed and multi-method approach was deemed the most appropriate. It has an emergent nature as it provides a framework for the organisation and flow of the research stages; not only does each phase build on the previous one, but also each phase informs the next in order to maximise the breadth and depth of the data collected from which inferences to explore and confirm insights can be elicited. The sequential mixed method approach employed in this thesis is summarised in table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Sequential Mixed Method Model Design

Phase 1 Focus Group Qualitative	*Rationale:* To explore and 'temperature gauge' a small sample of post-1992 academics from across the university to, first, identify their perceptions of themselves and their daily lives / practices in the workplace and, second, to highlight the key themes, priorities, motivators, obstacles and ideas to inform the construction of the online survey in Phase 2
Phase 2 Qualtrics online survey Quantitative	*Rationale:* To explore the more specific perceptions of a much broader sample of post-1992 academics across the institution with regards to their daily lives / practices in the workplace. Specifically, to seek answers to the 'what, when, where and who' questions, based on primarily closed multiple choice questions building on the key themes identified in Phase 1, and, addressing the overall purpose of this thesis, to establish if variations in perceptions / experiences exist relating to respondents' biodata. The outcomes then inform the 'why and how' questions to be explored during the in-depth semi-structured interviews in Phase 3
Phase 3 Interviews Qualitative	*Rationale:* To explore in detail the themes and issues emerging from the quantitative survey in Phase 2, undertaking interviews with a planned sample of academics in a variety of roles, ages… across the institution to discuss their daily working lives / practices in order to elicit understanding of how and why they perceive and respond to the themes / issues emerging in the previous phases of the research. The purpose at this stage is to 'add flesh to the bones' in terms of understanding the reflections of academics on how and why they make sense of and respond to their work situations and contexts.

Source: Adapted from Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010: 688)

At each phase of the research, then, questions were developed from the previous phase. Initially, the literature review and the a priori themes emerging from a previous study which examined the impact of marketisation on academics and their work in different types of English universities (Taberner, 2018) informed the discussion schedule for the focus group. One such theme was work intensification and the burgeoning academic workload. Focus group questions 4 and 5 sought to explore these issues as perceived by a variety of academics in the case study post-1992 institution (see appendices i, ii and vi). Continuing with this example, the focus group responses informed the development of more specific multiple-choice questions in the online survey. For example, Q8d in the survey was: Which of these statements best reflect your average working time per week? and Q10f was: Is the workload model representative or not of the work I do, and it is or not implemented consistently across all academic staff? Again, continuing with this example, the online survey results led into the interview question 5: Tell me about what environmental factors (facilitators/obstacles) influence your actions, behaviours and emotional responses at work? This was done to elaborate on data gathered previously and to afford richer, thicker qualitative data.

Another example of the development of questions are the themes of poor work / life balance and poor academic staff mental health and wellbeing that result from work intensification and the burgeoning workload. These were reflected in the focus group question 6: What could be done at institutional level to improve the lived experience at work of academic staff? and question 7: What does this university do to enhance academic health and wellbeing to get the best out of staff?. One particular response from a focus group member was that staff are merely surviving but not thriving, this then directly informed question 13 in the online survey: Are you surviving or thriving as an academic? In addition, Q9e, which specifically explored work-life balance, also followed on from focus group responses regarding staff often just doing what they can to survive, treading water or keeping their head above water. This in turn, informed question 7 in the interviews: Tell me about your work / life balance and wellbeing as an academic staff member? which sought to elicit more in-depth insights into this issue.

An advantage of this mixed and multimethod approach is that it can reduce the influence of personal bias when interpreting results, an issue of particular importance when, as in the case of this thesis, the study is conducted by an insider researcher. By utilising mixed methods, a researcher can use quantitative/numerically coded data to confirm and test the results of qualitative/narrative data, whilst also adding meaning to

the quantitative data. More precisely, the quantitative and qualitative data can corroborate each other, adding richness to the study findings (Brierley, 2017).

4.4 Data collection

As explained earlier in this chapter, the research in this study employs a mixed methods sequential approach implemented in three phases in which multiple sources of data will aide triangulation (Yin, 2018). The purpose of this section is to describe and explain the process of sampling and the data methods employed at each stage.

4.4.1 Sampling and selection

Broadly speaking, there are two forms of sampling: probability and non-probability. Probability sampling is used for random selection and is mainly employed in quantitative research. It allows generalisations to be made from the sample to the whole population (representative) and facilitates statistical inferences (prove/disprove). However, in a case study such as in this research, in which a quantitative survey is conducted at Stage 2, probability sampling is inappropriate as generalisations cannot be made.

In contrast, non-probability sampling represents a group of sampling techniques that help researchers to select units from a population that they are interested in studying. A core characteristic of non-probability sampling techniques is that samples are selected based on the subjective judgement of the researcher rather than random selection. Non-probability sampling techniques are typically used in research that follows qualitative, mixed methods and even quantitative research designs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). It is, therefore, appropriate to the research strategy selected to guide this research. Non-probability sampling is based on subjective judgement and does not allow generalisations from the sample to the whole population; rather, it provides a 'snapshot' of a specific situation at one point in time.

A range of non-probability sampling techniques are available, including quota sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling, self-selection sampling and convenience sampling (White & Rayner, 2014). As discussed in the following sections, purposive sampling was used for the focus group and interviews. This is often used in case study research when key informants are selected to elicit particular information. For the survey, self-selection sampling was used; that is, respondents self-select through demonstrating their desire to take part in the research. This sampling method requires appropriate publicising of the research across the target population

4.4.2 Stage 1: Focus group

As noted above, an initial focus group session was conducted as the first stage of the research, the overall purpose is to evaluate its feasibility and to improve upon the study design prior to performance of a full-scale research project. More precisely, it was undertaken to identify broad themes relevant to the research aims and objectives and to inform the design and content of the online questionnaire in order to elicit optimal data from respondents (Quinlan, 2011). At the same time, conducting a focus group was considered to be appropriate means for the researcher, as an 'insider', to gain a more objective view of academic staff perceptions from a range of 'other' academics to counter any potential subjective bias.

Focus groups, as a commonly used form of qualitative data generation, seek to elicit the views and perceptions of respondents regarding a particular topic through group interaction (Morgan, 1997). As such, the researcher acts as a facilitator, directing the conversation and encouraging the participation of all group members. Focus groups can provide rich data quickly and can be structured to guarantee participant anonymity (Quinlan, 2011). The number of participants varies, with some suggesting that between four to six is ideal (McMillan & Weyers, 2007), whereas others suggest that, ideally, the group should comprise between five and eight members (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Easterby-Smith et al., 2002; Saunders et al., 2012). Smaller groups, sometimes called mini-focus groups, of four or five participants afford more opportunity to share ideas, but the restricted size also can result in a smaller pool of total ideas. Generally, however, the group must be small enough for everyone to have opportunity to share insights and yet large enough to provide diversity of perceptions (Krueger & Casey, 2014).

The focus group was conducted on 21st July 2018 (see Appendix i for a transcript). Participants were purposively selected; an email request was sent to a number of key academic staff with varying biodata, asking them if they would volunteer to take part. This elicited five volunteers although one subsequently declined, leaving a group of four, two males and two females. The participants came from a range of disciplines (humanities and business) and comprised a mix of age, role, contract type and length of service, allowing for multiple perspectives on the lived experiences of academics at the institution. Each were informed of the questions (which had previously been piloted) prior to the focus group discussion and each signed a consent form. Anonymity was also assured. Maintaining tightly focused discussion, managing the group dynamic and concluding the focus group was not without its challenges. Nevertheless, a rich seam

of data was gathered as a starting point for the study which provided useful various insights to inform the design of Stage 2.

4.4.3 Stage 2: Online quantitative survey

The design of a survey questionnaire affects the response rate, reliability and validity of the data you collect. These can be maximised by: the careful design of individual questions; clear order, flow and layout of the questionnaire; clear explanation of the purpose of the questionnaire; pilot testing to determine clarity, relevance and purpose; and the carefully planned administration of the questionnaire (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013; Robson, 2011; White & Rayner, 2014). The survey was carefully designed, organised into six sections and piloted among a few colleagues from across the university who had previously used Qualtrics to assess question design, wording, relevance, survey structure, length, formatting and a completion time of 10-15 minutes. The necessary adjustments were made (Bell, 2005; Saunders et al. 2012; White & Rayner, 2014). Initially, it was far too long, and the ordering of some questions was incorrect and in some cases the wording to avoid misunderstanding altered so significant revision was required before going 'live'. All but a few questions were closed which would result in quantitative, numerical data and most employed a five-point Likert scale (Swift & Piff, 2005). A handful of open questions were included to allow for staff to elaborate if they so wished.

Using Qualtrics software to design, create and distribute the questionnaire, the researcher sought to obtain 300 returned questionnaires from across all five faculties for analysis out of a sample population of 1,300 academic staff with 5% margin of error (www.research-advisors.com/tools/SampleSize). This is a representative sample frame which will provide quantitative data to gain insight into any correlations between academic biography and their positive and negative views of the marketised sector and its impact on themselves and the nature of their work. The questionnaire, consisting of mainly closed/fixed questions (Coolican, 2014) sought to elicit views certain and concerns regarding specific facilitators and inhibitors of academic work practices in the case study, post -1992 institution. Most questions consisted of a five-point Likert scale.

The survey was conducted between 31st August 2018-2nd February 2019 (see appendix ii for a copy of survey). A request for survey completion was sent out by the research office in an internal communication bulletin and, additionally, emails were sent out to the various schools asking whether staff might consider completing the survey. Word of mouth was also a useful method to let colleagues know about the survey.

Self-selection non-probability sampling was used where the researcher allows individuals to identify their desire to take part in the research. Staff self-selected to answer or not. A few emails were received randomly over the five-month period of the survey was open from staff, asking whether it was definitely anonymous. Once assured of this, many completed the survey. The response rate achieved was 22%, or 297 out of a total population 1,300 academic staff, with a statistically valid 5% margin of error. (www. research advisors.com/tools/SampleSize). Incomplete survey questionnaires were excluded because of the lack of demographic data. At the end of the survey, staff who had completed the survey were invited to volunteer to be interviewed and, if so, to include their email address. The breadth and quality of the data collected proved to be extremely useful to inform the design of the third phase of the study.

4.4.4 Stage 3: Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a widely utilised qualitative method of data collection, the purpose of which is to 'gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena' (Kvale, 1983: 174). In this study, the semi-structured interviews, conducted with a variety of individual academics from across the institution, represented an essential source of data.

Semi-structured interviews are recognised as an effective means of eliciting detailed and complex data (Creswell, 2008); within the framework of the research aims, the interview, with its open questions, allows the respondent the freedom to talk about what is of central importance to him/her rather than what is important to the interviewer. Hence, a significant advantage of conducting interviews is that they can provide answers to the 'why' and 'how' questions and present potentially surprising, unanticipated data that observation or responses to a structured questionnaire could conceal (Byrne, 2004: 182). In other words, well-informed respondents, with whom a researcher has trust and rapport, can provide important insights, yet care and consideration must be given to the interviewee as an emotional being whilst it is also important that the researcher does not influence or contaminate the data. That is, an objective stance should be adopted to all responses, with the focus on eliciting as much information as possible throughout the process (Kvale, 1996; Quinlan, 2011; Silverman, 2013). A further advantage of semi-structured interviews is that responses can be developed and clarified whilst, generally, interviews yield rich data and can supplement the breadth of a survey. Nevertheless, one disadvantage of interviewing is that it can be very time-consuming in both gathering and transcribing the data, whilst there are a number of potential technical (recording, transcription) and ethical (good

location, with no interruptions, fair treatment of all interviewees) pitfalls in the qualitative interview process (Alvesson, 2011; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Silverman, 2013b) At the same time, responses are highly subjective and, therefore, there is the danger of bias on the part of the both the interviewer and interviewee. Hence, in this study, this third qualitative phase was deliberately counterbalanced by the quantitative survey of the second phase and, in addition, transcripts were checked and confirmed with the interviewees themselves for accuracy and interpretation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Approaches to enquiry for insider-researchers (Costley, Elliott & Gibbs, 2013) and the ethics of doing work-based research are discussed below.

For this research, a total of thirty in-depth, one-hour semi-structured anonymous interviews were conducted between September 2018 and February 2019 (see appendix vii for interviewee profiles). As at Stage 1, non-probability purposive sampling was used to select key informants from across all five faculties in the university with varying roles and other biodata and, throughout the process, a log was kept ensuring that, collectively, the interviewees comprised a representative sample (in terms of their biodata) of the wider academic population.

Prior to each interview, respondents were provided with a participant information sheet detailing the purpose of the research, a consent form, and an outline of questions that would be asked during the interview (see appendix v). Anonymity and confidentiality were assured.
All interviews were recorded, notes were taken (as back-up if the recording failed) with the permission of participants and were immediately transcribed by a third party (see appendix vi for a sample transcript). Saturation occurred after the thirty interviews where data started to be repetitive. Saturation has attained widespread acceptance as a methodological principle in qualitative research. It is commonly taken to indicate that, on the basis of the data that have been collected or analysed hitherto, further data collection and/or analysis are unnecessary.

4.5 Single-case study as a research strategy

Yin (2018: 1) states that 'in general, case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context'. Most case studies use either a qualitative or a mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2008). This case study, specific to a post-1992 university, uses a mixed and multi-method approach (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

4.6 Insider research and researcher axiology

Brannick and Coghlan (2007) advocate the value of insider research. They explore the dynamics and benefits under the headings of access, pre-understanding of context, role duality (colleague and researcher) and managing organisational politics. Nevertheless, a number of challenges face the insider-researcher/interviewer, not least the need to scrutinise one's own axiological stance and reflect upon how these might influence the interview process.

Axiology is a branch of philosophy concerned with judgments about value. Understanding the role that values play in all stages of the research process is of much importance if the research results are to be considered credible and reliable. For example, Heron (1996) argues that values are the guiding reason for all human action and that researchers demonstrate axiological skill by being able to articulate their values as a basis for making judgments about what research they are conducting and how they go about doing it. A researcher being honest and self-aware of their own values and position will heighten their consciousness of decisions taken during the study and the value-laden or neutral judgments made when interpreting data and drawing conclusions. In particular, pragmatists acknowledge the importance of axiology in research and its implications when concluding studies (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

The main challenge is maintaining objectivity; hence, an insider researcher should reflect upon their own presumptions in a critical way and attempt to develop ways to look at your organisation as an outsider (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008: 56-59). In this study, the researcher is embedded as an insider researcher and observes, experiences everything herself, as an academic. She knows the context intimately and has access, both of which are advantages. Therefore, in order to minimise insider research bias and maximise objectivity, a mixed- and multi-method approach was adopted. First, in the collection of qualitative data at Stages 1 and 3, extensive manual coding was done on large artist boards and highlighter pens. Codes were created for all themes which emerged from both the focus group and in-depth interviews.

Second, to ensure objectivity and reduce researcher bias the quantitative Qualtrics software was used to design and create an online anonymous survey questionnaire stage 2. This was to capture the specific views of a large proportion of the total academic staff population (22% response rate) about their own individual lived experience which might bolster and inform the perspectives captured in depth at stage 3. Staff who self-selected could answer the survey without any concerns about being

identified even to the researcher herself. The aim was that staff would answer truthfully from their experience without fear of redress.

And third, Alvesson (2011: 142) suggests that, when interpreting a sterile transcript, the researcher/interpreter needs to have an awareness of the context. He also warns that it should not be not assumed that the interviewee is a competent and moral truth teller. Hence, researchers must consider what may go on outside of an interviewee's experience and worldview and engage in reflexive pragmatism. This involves exploring more than one set of meanings where it is vital to challenge and revise one's own initial position whilst having strong theoretical support. 'Without a theoretical understanding supporting our critical judgment, any use of interview material risks naivety and leaves interpretive standing on shaky ground' (Alvesson, 2011: 4). Critical reflexivity and self-scrutiny are important before any interpretations are made.

4.6.1 Ethical considerations

In accordance with the university's Ethics Policy, participation in this research was on the basis of informed consent and was entirely voluntary. Participants were made aware from the outset that they could withdraw at any time. All focus group members and interviewees were provided with a Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form (see appendix v) in advance. A small number of participants were known to the researcher prior to the study; the majority, however, were not.

The researcher was fully aware of the potential bias associated with insider research and its possible impact on data collection, analysis and subsequent recommendations. Hence, she was mindful to put all focus group participants and interview respondents at ease by creating a friendly and respectful rapport of collegial trust before, during and at the end of the process. As the researcher is not in a position of power relative to the respondents and non-threatening, participants were more forthcoming in expressing their views. Where and when possible, interviews were mostly conducted in the same room, confirmed in advance, unless the interviewee requested another location. It became evident that participants felt sufficiently confident and secure to be extremely open and vocal.

Participants at all phases of the study were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. Their identities are not revealed in any way. In this vein, discipline and nationality were not included amongst the biographical variables as it was deemed possible that participants could be identified by these. These were also not included in the survey questionnaire. All recorded interviews and transcripts were kept securely on

a password protected computer and immediately anonymised by coding participants, rather than using their names. The key to the codes was kept separately from the interviews. All data was treated in accordance to the Data Protection Act and GDPR compliance principles and university guidelines.

4.7 Data analysis

4.7.1 Data analysis of qualitative data

As detailed above, whilst the initial focus group discussions were transcribed by the researcher, each subsequent interview was transcribed in full by a third party known personally to the researcher. The decision to use a third party was largely based on the time limitations faced by the researcher. Precise instructions were given to the transcriber regarding confidentiality, practice and procedure. To ensure precision, all transcriptions were checked by the researcher for their accuracy and corrected accordingly.

Pragmatist researchers need to be reflexive and careful in designing, analysing, and interpreting mixed methods research (Greene, Benjamin & Goodyear, 2001: 41). In this study, the qualitative data were analysed through content-driven thematic analysis. There are different approaches within thematic analysis, including the semantic, latent and interpretive levels (Braun & Clark, 2006: 87). Semantic analysis is concerned with surface-level meanings whereas the latent approach focuses on assumptions or concepts underpinning the data. In contrast, interpretive analysis involves full immersion in the data to identify common themes and patterns relevant to the research aims and objectives, and is the approach employed in this study for analysis of the qualitative data generated at Stage 1 (focus group) and Stage 3 (interviews). This sits comfortably with the essential nature of this interpretivist research study, the essence of which is to determine the subjective perceptions of academic practitioners, their practices and institutional praxis.

The first stage of analysis is pre-coding, which involves close familiarisation with the data through review and listening repeatedly to the recordings to consider features such as tone, choice of language and terminology (Lacey & Luff, 2007). The second stage is the written transcription from the MP3 audio file (Gibbs, 2007). This is a time-consuming process and, as explained earlier, was undertaken by a third party. The full transcripts are then read and re-read, and initial ideas were noted. The following stage involves the generation of initial codes and the collation of data relevant to each code; coding is an analytical process in which data are categorised to facilitate analysis. Subsequently, a search is undertaken for potential themes and patterns by collating

codes and data relevant to each potential theme and then all themes are reviewed to generate a thematic 'map' of the analysis. Finally, ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of the naming of each theme occurs (Braun & Clark, 2006; Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012; Saldaňa, 2016).

From this single-case study data, six main themes emerged. These were then compared to five 'priori themes' evident in the literature relating to the impact of marketisation on academics and their work in English universities, and some overlap was identified (Taberner, 2018). The main benefit of using a priori themes is that they can help to accelerate the initial coding phase of analysis (King, Bell, Martin & Farrell, 2003). However, the six themes identified in this research are specific to this particular case study setting.

Once themes were established manual colour coding with highlighter pens was used on all transcripts. This facilitated familiarisation with interview transcripts.
The final stage of analysis process was to organise responses to the eight questions by age, gender, role, contract type etc in tables and to compare/contrast with the statistical data collected and to address the research questions.

4.7.2. Quantitative data analysis
The online quantitative survey was designed and conducted using Qualtrics software. One benefit of using this software is that it relatively easy to use for both the researcher (for both survey design and data analysis) and the respondent, particularly when most questions demand only a tick box response. Most of the questions in this study took the form of a Likert Scale. Qualtrics also enables online anonymity for survey participants. For analysis, the software generates easy-to-read descriptive data as well as performing statistical tests as required.

4.7.2.1 Descriptive statistics
This is the term given to the analysis of data that helps describe, show or summarise data in a meaningful way such that, for example, patterns might emerge from the data. Descriptive statistics do not, however, permit conclusions to be drawn beyond the data presented analysed or regarding any hypotheses that might have been made (Field, 2017; Gray & Kinnear, 2012; Sapsford & Jupp, 2006). In short, they are simply a way to describe the data. When using descriptive statistics, it is useful to summarise groups of data using a combination of tabulated description, graphical description and statistical commentary (a discussion of the results). Additionally, for the purposes of this study,

descriptive statistics are useful to underpin qualitative data findings (see Appendix iii for descriptive data results to be discussed in the next chapter).

4.7.2.2 Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics allow generalisations to be made about the population from which the sample was drawn. It is, therefore, important that the sample accurately represents the whole population. Inferential statistics however arise out of the fact that sampling naturally incurs sampling error and, thus, a sample is not expected to perfectly represent the population. The methods of inferential statistics are the estimation of parameter(s), probability plotting and testing of statistical hypotheses (Field, 2017; Gray & Kinnear 2012; Sapsford & Jupp, 2006). In this research, non-parametric tests were deemed appropriate because the data was either nominal or ordinal.

Spearman's rho correlation was used for the testing of the non-parametric bivariate data. Spearman's rho is a non-parametric test used to measure the strength of correlation between two variables, where the value r = 1 means a perfect positive correlation and the value r = -1 means a perfect negative correlation. The Spearman correlation coefficient is based on the ranked values for each variable rather than the raw data. A weak positive correlation indicates that while both variables tend to go up in response to one another, the relationship is not very strong. A strong negative correlation, on the other hand, indicates a strong connection between the two variables, but that one goes up whenever the other one goes down.

These tests give a measure of the likelihood that the observed correlation could be obtained under the 'null hypothesis' that there is no relationship between the two variables. The 'P value' is the probability. The threshold adopted in this study for an association is 0.05, or 5%. So, after testing the hypothesis statistically we can either say that we can accept an association, or we must reject the prediction as incorrect and accept the null hypothesis.

The Mann-Whitney U Test was used for ordinal data to compare the difference between two groups defined by nominal data (for example, male vs. female). This is a non-parametric test of the null hypothesis that it is equally likely that a randomly selected value from one sample will be less than or greater than a randomly selected value from a second sample. The aim of this test is to compare the rank totals in the two conditions based on an overall ranking. If the ranked differences between conditions are random, as stated by the null hypothesis, there should be roughly equal ranks in the two conditions. If there is a large preponderance of low or high ranks in

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one condition in the predicted direction, the differences between the rank totals for the two conditions will justify the rejection of the null hypothesis (Greene & D' Oliveira, 2006).

In this study, some inferential statistical data were used to establish whether individual perspectives on a positive or negative lived experience in the workplace are influenced by demographic/biographical variables (see appendix iv for inferential data results to be discussed in the next chapter). The significance of the correlations between the ordinal variables, namely, age group, length of service, academic role, and their Likert results were established using Spearman's rho correlation test. The significance of differences in nominal data between groups such as, full/part-time, permanent/fixed-term, gender and their Likert results were tested using the Mann-Whitney U Test. Table 4.4 below presents the demographic/biographical variables.

Table 4.4: Biodata as ordinal or nominal variables

Age Range is an ordinal variable. Spearman's rho correlation (r value) was used to calculate correlation coefficient either positive + or negative -and an asterisk* added if the exact P value/sig. (2 tailed-plus or minus) shows less than 0.05 strong, medium or weak value to evaluate whether there is an association.

Length of service is an ordinal variable. Non-parametric bivariate Spearman's rho correlation used to calculate correlation coefficient- strong medium or weak P value/sig. (2 tailed) to evaluate whether there is an association.

Academic role is an ordinal variable. Non-parametric bivariate Spearman's rho correlation was used to calculate correlation coefficient- strong medium or weak P value/sig. (2 tailed) to evaluate whether there is an association.

Gender is a nominal variable with two separate categories. Mann Whitney U Test was used to test differences.

Contract full or part time is a nominal variable with two separate categories. Mann Whitney U Test was used to test differences.

Permanent or non- is a nominal variable with two separate categories. Mann Whitney U Test used to test differences.

4.8 How the qualitative and quantitative data was analysed at each stage

Phase 1 focus group qualitative data were transcribed, analysed, and an interpretative analysis facilitated the identification of themes and patterns relevant to the research aims and objectives. Some of the a priori themes aligned with some of the focus group data findings and so were corroborated but, in addition, specific local themes emerged.

These included: serious understaffing, staff feeling they are surviving rather than thriving, core academic work of teaching and research expanding into other areas, poor work-life balance and subsequent poor health and wellbeing. The university was perceived as prioritising the student experience over that of staff. Other themes to emerge included: poor local work environment owing to standardised institutional systems and processes, a lack of resources for staff, poor space management, an audit culture, centralisation, short termism, constant change, and poor internal communication. In contrast, positive themes included extrinsic and intrinsic motivators, such as helping and seeing students succeed, working with colleagues, and the flexibility of the job. Importantly, no noticeable / significant differences between respondents' biodata and their opinions emerged in the focus group. The analysis of emerging themes informed the quantitative online survey design.

At Phase 2, the Qualtrics survey data were gathered under six sections: 1. What does being an academic mean to you; 2. Your academic environment; 3. Internal communications and work relationships; 4. The enhancement of the academic staff experience; 5. What changes would you suggest might improve the lived experience of academics; 6. You and your academic background. The biodata variables of respondents generated in section six were correlated against questions in order to identify any associations and variations in their lived work experience. The results produced useful descriptive and inferential data which established whether relationships exist between age, gender, length of service, academic role and contract type and certain perceptions of lived experience. As explained earlier, these correlations were calculated using either Spearman's rho for ordinal variables or Mann Whitney U test for nominal variables (see appendices iii and iv). The analysis of these descriptive and inferential data informed the research at Phase 3.

In Phase 3, a wide representative sample of interviewees was sought, with the data analysis at Phase 2 informing the line of questioning. Particular attention was paid to the individual respondent's biography. Once all 30 semi-structured interviews were completed and transcribed, interpretative analysis facilitated the identification of themes and patterns relevant to the research aims and objectives. Collectively, the analysis of data at each phase contributed to the development and identification the study's overall outcomes, particularly commonalities of experience, then the variations in experience according to biodata and how the academic experience could be enhanced at a local level.

In summary, then, the qualitative data are thematically coded, interpretatively analysed and the quantitative survey findings statistically analysed. Once all data are gathered and analysed the key role of the researcher is to be the active interpreter of the lived experience of the post-1992 institution academics. The focus is on explaining and understanding within a context to help reveal features underlying power relations, structures and tensions (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

4.9 Triangulation

According to Yin (2018), when carrying out case study research, three principles of data collection can help deal with the problems of establishing the validity and reliability of the investigation: (i) the use of multiple sources of evidence; (ii) the creation of a case study database; and (iii) the adherence to a chain of sequential evidence. Yin refers to this as triangulation; it is the development of converging lines of enquiry. In other words, triangulation is an attempt to relate different sorts of data in such a way as to counteract threats to the validity of the analysis. Data triangulation is attained through the mixed method data collection techniques from each phase of research (Cameron, 2009: 148). Similarly, Easterby-Smith et al. (2002) recommend methodological triangulation by employing qualitative and quantitative data, collected at different times and from different sources. Methodological triangulation is incorporated through the overall sequential mixed model research design of the study. The result will be more reliable and valid than had the study relied on a single source of evidence.

Triangulation can be demonstrated by the application and combination of mixed and multi method approach to this study, and the employment of multiple lines of enquiry of the same phenomenon. Therefore, the researcher can state with confidence that triangulation will be achieved.

4.10 Limitations

Two limitations are associated with this study. First, a comparative study of two or more 1992 universities would have been insightful. However, issues around access and ethical clearance would no doubt have proved problematic. Future collaborative research might overcome this challenge. And second, the two biodata variables not permitted by the ethics committee for this study, namely nationality and discipline, may have provided some interesting results.

4.11 Summary

To summarise, this chapter explains and justifies the philosophical and methodological position of pragmatism as the most suitable paradigm, combined with a sequential mixed and multi methods approach within the conceptual framework of practice theory to investigate the research study, its aims and objectives, identified and contextualised in the previous chapters. In other words, the justification for the adoption of the philosophical pragmatic paradigm as the best 'fit' for the study topic, within the practice theory tradition, is set out. Then, the rationale for the multi- and mixed-method sequential research strategy and design via a single-case study is assessed and evaluated as the most suitable method for acquiring, analysing and interpreting data of breadth and depth. Data collection, piloting, sampling, data analysis and study limitations are described in detail. Additionally, the minimisation of insider researcher bias and the methodological triangulation are discussed at length to demonstrate 'good scholarship' (Grix, 2002). The overall methodology is summarised below in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Summary of research methodology

Research Paradigm	Pragmatism
Research Method	Mixed and multi-method-qualitative and quantitative
Research Design	Single case study
Sampling	Non-probability sampling (purposive for focus group and interviews and self-selection techniques for online survey)
Data Collection	Stage 1-Focus group of four participants Stage 2-Online anonymous survey response rate of 22%/ 297 out of 1300 academic staff Stage 3- thirty in-depth semi-structured interviews
Data Analysis	Stage 1- thematic interpretative analysis Stage 2- descriptive and inferential statistical analysis Stage 3- thematic interpretative analysis

The next chapter presents and discusses the data findings based upon the thematic and statistical analyses discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Five

Results and discussion

5.0 Introduction

Thus far, this thesis can be summarised as follows. The first, introductory chapter established the context of the study and set out its aims and objectives. Chapter Two then examined and critically appraised the literature from the 'unofficial' insider perspective of academics and their work, conditions and environment (that is, from the perspective of academics themselves). The literature within the field of CUS was evaluated within the conceptual frameworks of proletarianisation through commodification and the de-professionalisation of the academy. The notion of contested academic identities was also introduced before the chapter went on to consider the re-shaping of academic work today. Subsequently, the consequential hidden injuries of the academic workforce were discussed and finally, the literature on staff engagement and organisational internal communication was reviewed as a way forward.

Chapter Three focused on the theoretical underpinnings of the research, making a case for social practice theory, and Chapter Four discussed the research methodology, providing a rationale for the adoption of the paradigm of pragmatism. The study's ontological and epistemological approach and axiological stance were justified before the chapter went on to consider the research design, methodology and methods. As explained, a sequential multi- and mixed-method approach was employed comprising a qualitative, inductive single case study underpinned by a quantitative online survey. The research consisted of three stages:

- A focus group of 4 participants *(see appendix i for transcript)*
- An online anonymous survey *(see appendix ii for survey questions and appendices iii and iv for descriptive and inferential statistical data results)*
- Semi-structured interviews *(see appendix vi for an example of an interview and appendix vii academic interviewee profiles summary)*

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to present and discuss the findings of the research. Specifically, it presents and critically explores the key outcomes arising from the three-phase data collection and analysis process, during which thematic and statistical data were gathered.

As noted above and explained in Chapter 3, the research was guided by the overarching theory of practice, based upon the model (Figure 3.1) adapted from Jarzabkowski et al. (2007: 11). As such, it explores the interplay between three key elements: institutional praxis, academic practitioners and academic work practices. In this chapter, these are discussed in relation to the research outcomes and the extant literature.

The rationale for the grouping and collective reporting of the sequential mixed data being combined into three key areas (see below) is that, in so doing, they relate to and follow each of the three research aims (see 5.1 below). Therefore, thematic, descriptive and inferential data, resulting from analysis, collectively feed into the three headings where relevant. As explained previously in Chapter 4, data were drawn from each separate phase of the research process, with each phase building on the previous one, thereby leading to collective outcomes.

Anonymity and confidentiality were assured so that participants felt comfortable and confident to share their perceptions of their workplace experiences. The quotes used in the narrative below correspond to respondent numbers (see Appendix vii); however, individuals cannot be identified.

The presentation and discussion of the research outcomes are combined throughout this chapter, which is organised under three overarching headings:

- Shared staff perceptions of the self, their work environment and the shared consequences of institutional praxis for academic practitioners and their work practices.
- The variations in lived experience and in how academics respond
- What staff think should be done to enhance their lived experience at work

Under the first heading, Sections 5.2 and 5.3 present the positive findings about being an academic, shared values and shared recognition of today's marketised university before going on to discuss the findings under each of the themes (A-E) as shared consequences of local institutional praxis. Each theme culminates in an interim summary and discussion. This section addresses the first research aim.

Under the second heading, Section 5.4 commences with a summary of the biographical variables and implications, followed by the presentation and discussion of the data findings for each variable. This section addresses the second research aim.

Thirdly, Section 5.5 presents and discusses the findings regarding the actions relating directly to each theme (A-E) that staff consider could be undertaken in order to enhance and transform their shared work experience and environment. This section addresses the third research aim.

Where relevant, the discussion of the key findings is related back to the literature in general and practice theory in particular. As considered in Chapter 3, practice theory demonstrates how a practice approach interrogates who is empowered and disempowered by the particular configuration of practices, facilitating an understanding of what is going on and why and, more generally, addressing the issue of power, the scope for agency and voice and how these are associated within such nexuses and assemblages. One example of this is the manner in which institutional neoliberal practice arguably differentiates between superior and inferior workspaces, where those who are most valued are provided with desirable workspaces and those least valued are provided poorer ones (Davis 2011: 60). As discussed in more detail below, this is divisive and indicates the lack of agency and powerlessness for some in the institution whilst also being a means of asserting the power, influence and privilege of certain groups over others. This is described as 'a form of institutional micro-aggression against faculty' and an example of 'neoliberal assaults on the academy' (Davis, 2011: 49 & 64). Chapter 3 provides an explanation of the relevance of the adapted new model of institutional praxis, academic practitioners and their work practices utilised in this study.

Essentially, this research is qualitative and subjective in nature, exploring as it does academic *perceptions* of their lives in the workplace. However, as argued in Chapter 4, quantitative data were also collected, for the following reasons: (i) to minimise insider researcher bias; (ii) to add breadth to the case study via a survey to capture a wider staff view; and (ii) to facilitate the identification of variations in experience by establishing correlations between and individual's perceptions and their biodata. Indeed, it was found that qualitative and quantitative data were corroborative; data from Phases 1, 2 and 3 aligned so data triangulation has been attained.

Importantly, given the scope and scale of the research, inevitably a significant amount of data was generated of both direct and tangential relevance to the aims of this study.

For clarity and simplicity, therefore, the results of direct relevance to the research aims are presented here thematically rather than following the path of reporting each stage of the research separately, the latter likely to result in repetition and excessively lengthy detail.

5.1 The research aims

1. Critically evaluate the extent to which academics share perceptions of their experience regardless of their demographic/biographical profiles.
2. Explore critically the extent to which the perceived experience of academics within a post-1992 university varies according to age, gender, length of service, role and contract type.
3. Identify how academics believe their experience could be enhanced and, consequently, propose an applied research targeted response at the local level.

5.2 Shared staff perceptions of the self and their work environment

As indicated above, the discussion in this chapter is organised into three broad themes, the first of which are respondents' perceptions of themselves as academics and of their work environment that, as revealed in the research, were common to or shared by all respondents.

5.2.1 Being an academic

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the research revealed that, by and large, the role of the academic is seen to be more than just a job; in the survey, 83% of respondents indicated that being an academic provided them with an identity of which they are proud whilst 70% said that they are who they are at work. That is, their individual personal identity derives from being an academic staff member, an outcome reflected in the literature: 'Our academic identity is not in our contracts but in our blood' (Evans & Bishop, 2018: 8; also, Brady, 2018).

At a more practical level, the survey revealed that 77% of staff view their role principally as a facilitator of student learning and supervising students; moreover, 92% of respondents indicated that they enjoyed being an academic because of working with students whilst, in the interviews, many claimed that seeing students succeed was very important to them. Other positive aspects of the academic role revealed in the survey included the enjoyment of being able to do research (75% of respondents), whilst a similar proportion suggested that working closely with colleagues was an enjoyable aspect of the job. For 90% of respondents, being able to manage their own working

day was a positive factor, as was the flexibility of the job (89%) and the relative freedom and autonomy compared to many other occupations (90%). More generally, 91% reported that their work provided a sense of satisfaction and as one interviewee, a Reader, suggested, 'Being an academic is not coal mining. There are worse jobs', a view perhaps enhanced by the fact that 90% of survey respondents had worked in other sectors prior to commencing employment in higher education.

5.2.2 Shared values

In addition to the common perceptions discussed above, the research revealed that, irrespective of demographic variations (length of service, age, gender, role, contract type), academic staff share a number of values and beliefs. For example, in the interviews, one SL (PO11) observed that: 'Being an academic is about being honest, fair and to have integrity', whilst another SL (PO4) stated:

> I always try to do my best. I have a conscience about my work. I enjoy my academic work (teaching and research) with the exception of more and more non-academic tasks being added to my workload every year. I will not stop until I have done a good job, no matter what it takes. But one thing I will say is that we are certainly not in it for the money.

More specifically, many respondents talked about feeling guilty about letting students down if they have time off, even if because of illness, reflecting a sense of commitment inherent in responses throughout all the interviews.

Interestingly, respondents also believed that, irrespective of the type of university worked at, academic staff all share the values of professional educators; that is, their values transcend the specificity of the academic workplace, a point corroborated by Palfreyman and Temple (2017: 98). Having invested in their own education and training, 'the notions and traditions of being a good learner, critical thinker, teacher and researcher are understood by all and run deep in the academic profession' (Reader).

As alternatively stated by one SL (PO1) interviewee 'being an academic is partly a profession and a vocation where you invest so much of yourself in the job. One gives of oneself.' Arguably, it is a job like no other.

> Being an academic for me is more than merely imparting knowledge to students. It is about cultivating a good relationship with students and giving of yourself. You give of a lot of yourself in this job. You invest time and effort in

your students. We perform in the classroom and regularly exhaust ourselves so that students have a great experience. (L- PO17)

In other words, respondents revealed that they cannot do their work passively; they believe that, to students, they are the embodiment of the university, a representative. The individual academic staff member is personally, emotionally (showing care, kindness and compassion) and intellectually actively involved with students (Docherty, 2015; Morrish, 2019). This commitment was implied by respondents who claimed they would do whatever it takes to do a good job regardless of the toll on their own health and wellbeing; they have a genuine desire not to 'short-change' the students. 'They are at the centre of everything we do at the university' (SL-PO2).

Similar attitudes have been revealed in other studies (Kern, Hawkins, Falconer Al-Hindi & Moss, 2014; Kolsakar, 2007). However, it became clear in this research that staff feel joy about certain aspects of their work they frustrated when not only are the intangible, unquantifiable yet vital aspects of their job, such as the time taken to care and show compassion for students, are not reflected in their workload (see also Morrish, 2019), but also by having little discretion and control over professional work practices which may distract or impede them from doing the best job. More broadly, such frustrations, expressed in the research were evidence of shared recognition of the marketised nature of the contemporary higher education sector, as now discussed.

5.2.3 Shared recognition of today's marketised university

Generally, it was evident that the academics participating in the research accepted that the marketised sector is here to stay: 'The genie is out of the bottle in terms of the marketisation of HE and there is no going back' (Reader-PO20), an observation supported by the literature. Brown and Carasso (2013), for example, state that marketisation has been an inevitable outcome of government policy since 1980. According to one survey respondent, a Professor (PO25):

> There has been a major shift in government policy at the macro level which heralded the massification of HE and introduction of tuition fees as universities are no longer subsidised by the state, which has led to a shift in the way universities are organised and managed: a shift in power at micro level. Hence, the rise of managerialism and a managerial elite in universities.

Similarly, a lecturer (PO3) argued that 'the HE sector has changed enormously. It is now marketised and monetised, universities are run like a business corporation and the

pace of change has accelerated, all of which is chaotic and destabilising for many staff.' Unsurprisingly, this reflects a common theme in the literature; according to Hall (2018), academics and their students are affected by university financialisation and marketization, whilst Bailey and Freedman (2011:110) argue that departments are profit centres, students are units of revenue and academics merely a managed resource. Metric power in terms of the incessant attempt at the measurement and calculation of all aspects of a university's operations (Beer, 2016) manifests itself in institutional praxis. This is regularly articulated by this study's respondents 'the audit culture is omnipresent in all that we do' (SL-PO10).

Interestingly, the survey revealed that, despite this transformation, 41% of respondents agreed that the HE sector remains a good place to work as an academic, though 36% disagreed. Nevertheless, a majority (61%) felt that the HE sector is changing for the worse and just 2% believed it is changing for the better. As one CL(PO29) said in an interview:

> The faculty in which I work has recently been reframed and now incorporates xxxxx, xxxxx and xxxxx. Too much change too quickly. I am not sure how this is going affect us. Is staffing going to be squeezed even more so there is less 'duplication' of certain modules which could be taught across all three schools? We are just waiting to see the impact of the structural change. It's all about cost saving efficiencies from the top.

All study participants lamented that there has been a power shift away from academics to the metric power of administrators and managers' reporting systems and processes. Consequently, as an example of the de-professionalisation of the academy, 'even making a decision about whether a student should be permitted an extension is taken out of the control of an academic staff member and is now the decision of an administrator' (L-PO5). More specifically, the research revealed that all respondents acknowledge the characteristics of the marketised university as widely expressed in the literature, such as neoliberal governance, managerialism, top-down leadership, short termism and a prevalent audit culture (Washburn, 2003). These, respondents indicated, have enhanced the complexity of the academic work environment and work practices, not least in terms of the changing the relationship between student and teacher. As a Reader (PO14) suggested:

> The concept of student as customer is problematic for a university education and then for the student/ teacher nexus. Students cannot truly be a customer as

they are part of the end-product they are 'buying'. Achieving an academic award requires effort on the part of the student.

This notion of universities becoming skills factories, highlighted by Naidoo, Shankar and Veer (2011), counters the values of academics discussed in Section 5.2.2 above and, for many respondents, is reflected in a lowering of standards. For example, 63% of survey respondents believed that the growth in 'good' degree classifications does not reflect higher standards, perhaps evidence of what Hall (2018) describes as the stripping out of intellectual content or, for Murphy (2017), a race to the bottom for staff, students and society. Indeed, 74% of survey respondents agreed that universities have become knowledge and skills factories rather than places of intellectual pursuit, leading them to ask what a university education is all about. Indeed, one SL (PO2) suggested in an interview:

> Why don't universities just cut out the middleman, the academics and the learning process from the equation. Let the students pay for a degree they have not worked for and we can all go home. This seems to be the direction in which we are going. Education is going to have no meaning.

The lowering of standards represents, for some respondents, an ethical dilemma in as much as it competes with their values of upholding pedagogical standards, whilst Havergal (2019) advocates that the sector should have an ethical code of conduct, including the setting admission and quality standards, to address this challenge (also Bailey and Freedman, 2011; Washburn, 2003). Many respondents, however, viewed the lowering of standards as the inevitable outcome of universities 'just wanting more bums on seats to bolster university income and increase the bottom line no matter what this means for academics, their work and for education' (L-PO16).

Beyond this general recognition of the marketisation of the HE sector and its consequences, the research revealed that, in the context of the case study institution, it is rooted in and shaped by institutional praxis, as are its implications on how academics perceive their work environment and role, in a number of ways. That is, with reference to figure 3.1 adapted from Jarzabkowski et al.'s (2007: 11) model, five specific themes emerged from the research with regards to the relationship between institutional praxis, academic practitioners and academic work practices, as follows:

Theme A: Rationalisation of staff and mounting workloads

Theme B: Standardisation, centralisation and monitoring of all work processes and depersonalised internal communication and work relationships

Theme C: Campus space management

Theme D: Communications between senior management and staff

Theme E: Lack of investment in a good academic staff experience

The outcomes of the research into institutional praxis and its shared consequences on academic staff, irrespective of the biographical background, are now considered under each of these themes.

5.3 Shared consequences of institutional praxis for staff

5.3.1 Theme A: Rationalisation of staff and mounting workloads

A dominant theme arising from the research was the perceived rationalisation of staffing levels and consequential increases in workloads. Certainly, 71% of survey respondents believed that academic schools in the institution are inadequately staffed and 92% agreed strongly that this impacts on the student experience. In addition, 52% agreed that there is too much dependence on casual staff. These issues were raised by many interviewees. For example:

> Under-resourcing is a problem. We have too few staff compared with the huge increase in student numbers over recent years. This does not make sense. The university needs to employ more staff and reduce the academic workload. It is a serious health and safety concern. (CL-PO30)

> Rounds of recent redundancies have seen off large numbers of full time and permanent, experienced staff. These posts have not been replaced in many cases and only some of the gaps filled by temporary or fixed term low level casual staff. However, the volume of work remains, and student numbers are still high. Workload is being ratcheted up another notch every year and staff are being squeezed. (PL-PO12)

> We are employing more casual staff who often just teach and do virtually no administration, which then falls on the ever decreasing full-time, permanent staff. By November every year harassed staff are running on empty and start to get ill. What is more there is just no slack in the system to even cover staff illness or absence. (RF-PO6)

One AL(PO23) noted: 'I see my full-time colleagues overworked and stressed. More and more is being expected from academic staff and yet the university has grown in size but staffing has been reduced'. A particular issue also identified was an increase in administrative tasks imposed on academic staff and a commensurate reduction in administrative support:

> Academic staff feel constantly taken away from what we do best: teaching and research by having to do more and more administrative tasks which are best done by dedicated administrators for each programme who personally know all the students on that programme'. (Reader-PO24)

> We are being de-skilled. We are becoming 'a jack of all trades' and a master of none' (L-PO28).

5.3.1.1 The consequences for academic practitioners and their work practices

Demotivation

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, under-staffing and significant workload increases were highlighted by all those interviewed as a major demotivator in the workplace, an outcome supported by the survey in which 81% indicated that their workload is excessive and that they find it difficult to do everything required in the time available. In addition, 76% of respondents reported that they typically work more than their contracted hours, with 35% claiming they work an additional 10 hours per week, 33% up to 20 extra hours per week and 8% reporting they work even longer hours (see (appendix iii Q8 results). For many respondents, this was considered a major concern for personal well-being:

> We cannot be everywhere and do everything…There seems to be no logical correlation between growing student numbers and what you would think would be increasing staff numbers, but there are less and less staff. The workload is being spread among fewer people. This in the short and longer term is not sustainable and certainly not good for staff health and wellbeing and in the end not good for the student experience. (SL-PO11)

Lack of workload transparency

In addition to concerns over increasing workload, the manner in which it is measured was also highlighted by respondents. Specifically, 84% of survey respondents believed

that not all aspects of their work can be measured, with 73% suggesting that the workload model by which they are managed does not represent all the work they do. Moreover, 74% perceive that there are inconsistencies in the implementation of the workload model. More generally, the research revealed a perception that there is a gross underestimation on the part of management with regards to the time it takes to undertake academic work:

> Workload allocations here are often not fair or transparent. Those who shout loudest get a lighter load and their modules are dumped on those less vocal. Also, many time-consuming tasks are not on our workload and, often, unexpected jobs are thrust upon you during the year which are never reflected in the workload. I see more and more of the attitude, that if it is not on my workload then I won't do it, prevailing (L-PO26).

Poor staff work-life balance

The survey revealed that, as a result of excessive workloads, over half of respondents (52%) perceived that they do not have a good work-life balance; in contrast 24% feel they do have a good work-life balance. I addition, 60% stated that their workload regularly overwhelms them, 74% are often stressed at work and 75% reported that they rarely take lunch breaks. 71% of staff believed they are obliged to spend too much time on non-teaching/research related tasks and just 21% of respondents indicated that they believed they are thriving as academics. Notably, 71% strongly disagreed that they have sufficient time and space to engage in research.

These survey outcomes are supported by interview responses. For example:

> The crux of the matter is that the demands on too few academic staff are too high and the hours too long and encroach upon our personal lives way too much. My partner and kids have had enough of me working outside of what most people term as a normal working week. I work a lot more than 37.5 hours I get paid for. A lot more. (RF-PO6)

> I reckon many of us do 50 hours per week minimum – one third more hours per week every week. That's a lot of extra; therefore, maybe we need a third more staff? We earn less than minimum wage if we would break it down. (SL-PO2)

> Lines are blurred, I mean the boundaries between work and home life… family life suffers, and mental and physical health suffers if we are working every

weekend. This is not sustainable. There is always work to do and it's always on your mind. It is like having a monkey constantly on your shoulder. (L-PO7)

Nevertheless, from the research, it is evident that, despite widespread work-life imbalance, academic staff demonstrate resilience and positive adaptability that is broadly manifested in goodwill. As one SL (PO1) interviewee suggested:

> There is so much goodwill (which is not measured in workloads) and so many staff work over and above their remit. If this was withdrawn by academics a lot of extra work being done in the sector would mean universities would grind to a halt.

However, this arguably indicates that academic staff are surviving but not thriving; there exist 'the hidden injuries' (Gill, 2010) of the 'hidden iceberg of academic labour' (Lupton, Mewburn & Thomson, 2018:5). Some respondents suggested that many staff are at breaking point but do not want to admit this: 'It would look bad', stated one SL interviewee (PO16).

Poor staff health and wellbeing

Inevitably, perhaps, some respondents pointed to the problems of ill-health and poor well-being as an outcome of increasing workloads. For instance, one interviewee suggested that 'we have no resilience left as many staff are running on empty, and getting harassed, earlier and earlier in the academic year. Then many of us get ill' (RF-PO6), whilst another observed that 'more and more staff seem to be suffering with stress and going off sick or they battle through and just keep getting illness after illness causing their immune system to be at an almighty low' (SL-PO10). It was acknowledged by some that systems and process are in place to address staff health issues, although for some respondents this was seen as ineffective:

> We do have stress and wellbeing training, but the onus is put on academics themselves. At no point it is acknowledged in the session that the control of workload allocation and or the work environment or line manager/appraiser is often at the root of all problems which is out of the control of the individual staff member. (RF-PO6)

Coping strategies

Interestingly, the research indicates that some academic staff adopt coping strategies in response to the challenges (experienced or perceived) of increasing workloads, one

of which to avoid taking on additional responsibilities. For example, one hourly paid lecturer, when interviewed, said:

> Don't get me wrong. I am grateful for the work but never know from one semester to the next if I am to be given hours. I hate the financial insecurity. However, I see my lecturer colleagues really stressed out and overburdened. So am not sure I want a full- blown lecturer contract. They seem to have no life. (SPH-PO15)

In a similar vein, a Reader (PO14) admitted: 'I don't want to be a professor as the stress to find funding will be even greater'.

For others, the solution lies in positive actions to withdraw to a greater or lesser extent from their work roles:

> To cope and survive some staff self-demote, reduce working hours, go part-time or retire early. As a result of this, the university is losing so many excellent, experienced staff after rounds of redundancies to reduce the number of permanent and full-time staff who are replaced with cheaper, fixed term or temporary casual staff who only cover some of the work lost. (Professor-PO8)

The impoverishment of academic work practices

Finally, the research outcomes suggest that, as a consequence of the institutional praxis of workload rationalisation, the academic work is becoming impoverished and service delivery compromised. In other words, many respondents revealed that, as a result of increased workload pressures, they are less able to do what they believe they should be doing as academics. Specifically, teaching and research, the core of academic work as practice bundles, are becoming impoverished, primarily as a result of job enlargement; there are too many additional tasks such as administration, marketing, enterprise, employability and technical duties being imposed on academics. As one SL(PO4) lamented:

> There is no time for creativity, so we are constantly in survival mode. There is just not enough time to prepare classes properly or overhaul modules. Administrative duties are overtaking and eating into our time which should be focused on teaching and research.

In a similar vein:

> There is less and less time to do quality research with all the other duties we
> are expected to do. There's no admin support. We don't even have a sabbatical
> system here. Who's heard of a university with no sabbatical system? The
> summer vacation period is a time most research active staff depend on to get
> concentrated time but even that is diminishing every year. (RF-PO6)

> I would love to do research but this for me would be a luxury as I have too many
> duties as course and module leader. I am way too busy. (SL-PO1)

5.3.1.2 Interim summary and discussion: Theme A

There exists substantial evidence in the literature that supports the perceived
rationalisation of the academic workforce and its consequences revealed in this
research. According to Ovetz (2015), the rationalisation of staff and other resources is
in general one of capitals' tactical weapons whilst academics are seen by management
as simply employees and another resource to be rationalised (Santiago, 2008).
Specifically, both Courtney (2013) and Jones (2014) observe that, in the drive for
efficiencies, there has been a rationalisation of full-time and permanent staff across the
HE sector and a commensurate increase in the casualisation of the academic
workforce. This can be seen as an outcome of institutional neoliberal performative
practices (Jones et al. 2020) which directly terrorise increasingly disempowered
academic practitioners and negatively impact the nature of their work (Gillies & Lucey,
2007).

Similarly, the consequences of this rationalisation process that emerged from this
research are also reflected in the literature. For example, Fitzgerald, White and Gunter
(2012) explain how neoliberal policy, massification, marketisation and managerialism
have reshaped academic work and the profession and taken their toll on staff
wellbeing, practitioners increasingly enduring work-life imbalance and, consequently,
suffering poor mental and physical health. Work practices are also being impoverished,
with less focus on teaching and research and more on administration and enterprise
(Kaulisch & Enders, 2005; Lam, 2010; Morrish, 2019; Winter, 2009).

Key consequences emerged from both the survey and interviews in this study. First,
academic staff are unable to complete all that needs to be done within contracted
hours; as Levenson (2017) confirms, there is too much to be done in the time available

and administration is burgeoning every year. As a result, many respondents indicated that they regularly work beyond contracted hours (perhaps representing up to 30% pro-bono work), with some reporting that it is even difficult to take annual leave owing to mounting workloads. This is, as widely discussed in the literature, common across the HE sector (Gill, 2010; Kitchin, 2018; Martin, 2016; Morrish, 2019; Pells, 2018; Petrina, Mathison & Ross, 2015).

Second, the research outcomes suggest that academics undertake these longer hours out of goodwill and a pride in their work. From the interviews, many academic staff appear to be committed to their work and their students, are conscientious and hardworking, and have a sense of pride in doing a good job. This finding is again corroborated by the literature; Lupton, Mewburn and Thomson (2018) for example, argue that academics provide 'free' labour if they consider it is for the benefit of students, reflecting the academic values held by many respondents.

Third, however, this was found in the research to be resulting in poor work-life balance and health and well-being issues. Many respondents reported that they suffered a poor work-life balance, whilst others stated that they had observed colleagues suffering from stress and anxiety at work, eventually becoming ill and going on sick leave for the short or long term. This too is evidenced in a substantial literature (Bothwell, 2018; Graham, 2014; Kinman, 2006; Kinman, 2019; Morrish, 2019; Vostal, 2015) and, hence, Langley-Evans (2018) implores staff to seize control of their own work-life balance.

And fourth, many respondents alluded to the impoverishment of their academic work practices as they are increasingly obliged to take on tasks not traditionally considered to be part of an academic role. This, in turn, impacts on their job satisfaction, challenges their professional values and, for some, potentially diminishes the student experience. Along with the other key findings under this theme, these are consequences common not only to the work experience of most, if not all participants in this research but also, as suggested by the literature, common across the HE sector. In other words, the consequences of this element of institutional praxis within the post-1992 institution are evidently shared to a greater or lesser extent by academics at other HE institutions, the implication being that, as others have suggested, meaningful structural changes are required to address and resolve these consequences of the institutional neoliberal practice of economic rationality and the inhumane exploitation of staff manifested in mounting workloads (Bothwell, 2018; Gorczynski, 2018; Morrish, 2019).

5.3.2 Theme B: Standardisation, centralisation and monitoring of all work processes and depersonalised internal communication and work relationships

The second form of institutional praxis identified by respondents that impacts upon their perceptions of their roles and work practices related broadly to processes of standardisation and depersonalisation. As a widely recognised outcome of organisational marketization and metrification, increasing levels of bureaucracy manifested in what many respondents considered to be methods of standardising and monitoring the work of staff and the centralisation of services (perceived to be a means of cost saving and standardisation) was considered to be shaping academic practitioners and their work processes. Specifically, the research pointed to a perception amongst staff that, through this process, they have been de-professionalised and their status has been eroded through the imposition of a performative regime and systems of recording and reporting on practice that pervade all areas of academic work. In addition, respondents revealed their frustration regarding additional bureaucratic tasks that often go unrecorded. More specifically:

The centralisation of services

According to the outcomes of the survey, 72% of respondents disagreed that the centralisation of services, such as course administration, room booking and technical support, creates efficiencies in facilitating teaching and research. Unsurprisingly, only 32% believed centralisation to be cost effective, but with consensus emerging that centralisation is of no advantage to either staff or students. This is further evidenced from the interviews. For example, one professor (PO9) was of the opinion that, at both the national and local level:

> …there is a misguided belief which is part of the wider shift in public sector governance and accountability that cost efficiencies and money are a priority over the effectiveness of the service provided in education, and that managing, justifying everything done will explain what goes wrong or right and that it will improve standards and improve value for money.

Comments from other respondents revealed similar perceptions. For one, 'as a result of the centralisation of administration, staff and students have lost out as a result and managers have saved money*'* (L-PO17) whilst, for another, 'The centralisation of campus services has proven to be a bad idea for staff and students, but it saves money!' (SL-PO11). Certainly, a majority of survey respondents (80%) agreed that

commercial targets and considerations are increasingly superseding pedagogical considerations or, as one SL(PO4) suggested in an interview:

> Senior management just talk about money and the bottom line, the student experience and retention and increasing student numbers. None of them talk about being selective, maintaining standards and the staff experience being a priority.

Too much bureaucracy

Relatedly, in the survey, 84% of respondents indicated their belief that universities have become overly bureaucratic, a key concern that also emerged in the interviews:

> We have too many rules and regulations which stifle creativity and innovation which demotivate otherwise very committed academic staff. Our systems are highly inflexible. It is a case of one size fits all. Senior management need to demonstrate more trust in academic staff as professionals who know what needs to be done and let them get on with it. Let them use their professional judgment and manage them with a light touch. (Professor-PO25)

In a similar vein, it was suggested that 'institution size probably does not help with the amount of bureaucracy. There seems to be no flexibility in our rules, systems and processes' (L-PO5) whilst a common perception amongst respondents was summarised by a PL(PO13): 'Sometimes the bureaucratic process can overtake the actual work we do. It's a case of the tail wagging the dog.'

'This new administrative power is a form of deskilling and the proletarianisation of the academic workforce' says a Reader (PO24).

More generally, 58% of survey respondents agreed that many contemporary universities have become too large and unwieldy for internal communications to work effectively across all parts, whilst 78% reported that they regularly encounter obstacles, both procedural and structural, that inhibit their ability to work effectively. As a consequence, many (62% of respondents) admitted trying to circumvent official systems or processes to get things done. One interview respondent observed that:

> There has been a McDonaldization of Higher Education. It is as if there is a standard for every single process where you tick a box, simplifying it, but that does not reflect the complexity of the task we are being asked to complete.

You find yourself in a situation wanting to deliver a quality service but on the other hand you are told it has to be quick and simple and cost efficient. This is the conflict you have to live with. (L-PO28)

In particular, a number of respondents referred to the limitations of the audit culture. According to one, 'There is a failure due to management's incessant measurement mania, which is a constant attempt by management at the measurement of all academic tasks and processes but so much is missed' (L-PO7) whilst another suggested that

'You don't fatten pigs by weighing them. If you put all your energy into weighing them, they may die of starvation. Workload is a prime example of this and not the right tool to measure academic work. It simply does not do this accurately or effectively. There are so many intangible unquantifiables. The resulting workload model is demoralising for staff'. (RF-PO6)

5.3.2.1 Standardisation of internal communication

A major sub-theme to emerge from the research was the transformation in the nature of communication within the university, including the digitalisation of academic work processes, and the resultant implications for work relationships which many respondents considered to have become fragmented, disconnected and depersonalised. Issues raised in the research included:

Overcomplicated communication

Results from the survey pointed to a broad consensus amongst respondents regarding the implications of the increasing use of Information Technology (IT); 84% believed that, over the last decade, IT has significantly changed the way they work as academics, with 80% claiming that, generally, such changes have been positive. Nevertheless, in some respects it has had a negative influence, not least with regards to the manner in which it has complicated some academic work processes. As one interviewee (CL-PO29) noted, 'IT over the last 15 years has been a big game changer where all academic work is now screen based' but also, as even experienced by younger staff, the use of IT for all communications was considered to be overcomplicating communications. 'Everything is digitalised and for the most part makes work processes more convoluted, a one size fits all system' (L-PO17). Similarly, a Reader (PO20) voiced the more general perception that 'technology, rules and the systems here can overcomplicate things so I regularly circumvent them to get things done'.

In contrast, the survey revealed that 84% of staff believed IT provides them with greater job flexibility although, perhaps inevitably, 55% agreed that use of IT rather than face-to-face communication has had a detrimental effect on internal communications, not least in de-personalising communication, as now discussed.

The de-personalisation of internal communications

One outcome of the increasing pervasiveness of IT in academic work processes and communication identified by many respondents is the manner in which it de-personalises communications and, hence, staff work relationships. This was effectively summarised in an interview as follows:

> De-personalised, often disjointed, internal communications are destroying many personal relationships built up over time between academic staff and key service staff and detrimental to university concept of 'student first'; all university services are now remote and faceless. All services have introduced a barrage of online forms which need to be completed by academic staff... until two or three years ago, personal relationships with key service people flourished and face-to-face or telephone communication was the norm.' (RF-PO6).

A more specific example was provided by one Professor (PO9) who described the de-personalisation of communication with one particular service:

> Communications here are largely online and anonymous especially from services. An example of a barrier to communication is with xxxx. We used to speak to them face to face. Now we are not allowed into the office. You have to do everything online and by appointment only. You can't just drop in. Everything is becoming more de-personalised, which impedes good relationships and internal communication.

Dynamic IT systems

Not only did many respondents express concerns with regards to the de-personalising effect of IT on their work practices and relationships; at a more practical level, many also referred to the challenge of keeping abreast with the introduction of new systems and processes, diverting them from the core academic tasks. As one respondent argued:

> IT and its numerous systems are a constant battle to keep up with. I lack the expertise. As soon as I get to know a system it's updated or a new one replaces

it. We are expected to be experts in so many other things over and above what we have been employed to do and our real area of expertise which is to do research and teach. It's ridiculous! (RF-PO6).

Another lamented that

Not having any dedicated school technical support as we once had, I find extremely frustrating because we are now responsible for all technology… I have been told there are classrooms which will not have a computer, just a TV screen [to connect my laptop to], and I have been sent instructions on which wire to connect where. This is yet another set of skills I have to learn, but do not want to acquire. (L-PO28)

Similarly, changes to the university's website and intranet pages and the rationalisation of web-based internal communication emerged as a frustration amongst some respondents:

Our website and intranet are very difficult to navigate, and we now have online forms to complete for every service if we want to communicate with them. It used to be more straightforward; now it is increasingly more complicated… It is very frustrating when you can't find people, who does what and where to find them unless you already know their name. This all wastes a lot of time and effort. (SL-PO2)

Internal communication and work relationships
The research revealed that, alongside the increasing standardisation of processes and the de-personalisation of communications, communication more generally, particularly between staff and management, has worsened. Whilst it is acknowledged, as noted in one interview, that 'face-to-face communications trump all other forms of communication' (Reader-PO14), in the survey, 52% pointed to a lack of ongoing communication between themselves and their line manager. Similarly, in the interviews, many respondents said that that are not appraised by their line manager [but, rather, by an 'academic lead, such as a PL] and, hence, have few opportunities or communication with their manager. Indeed, a number of respondents suggested that, frequently, no real conversation is held with the individual who has line management responsibility:

Subject team communication is good but not between staff and their Head of School (HOS) as another layer of PL/ appraiser often block real communication. All staff used to be appraised by their line manager or HOS but for the last ten years or so all these are done with PLs. Surely, doing appraisals and getting to know your staff is the most important job of an HOS. Also, staff should have parity in their treatment. Different appraisers have different methods and dependent on their personality staff get an easy or hard time in relation to workload etc… resulting in inconsistency and unfairness. Even worse is that some staff get appraised by their HOS and others don't. (SL-PO10).

Nevertheless, another respondent observed more positively that 'in our subject team there is good communication and a collegial relationship' (L-PO17).

5.3.2.2 The consequences for academic practitioners and their work practices

The consequences of institutional praxis under Theme B (standardisation of processes, monitoring and the depersonalisation of communication through the pervasive use of IT) as identified in the research fall under two headings:

De-professionalisation

There is much evidence of the de-professionalisation of the academy in the literature. Palfreyman and Temple (2017: 99), for example, assert that academics have lost power and status because they have never assembled as a powerful professional group or collective to lobby governments. They are a fragmented community of independents confronted with metric power (Beer, 2016). This is confirmed by the results of this research, with many respondents acknowledging the increase in standardised academic work processes and attempts to quantify which they perceive to be the manifestation of an increasingly pervasive audit/ managerialist culture the sector. In other words, as Beer (2016) argues, the domination of metric power (via commodification and standardisation) is causing anxiety among the workforce.

The result, according to Quigley (2011), is that academic identity lacks precision and is in constant flux, an argument also supported by this research, with 67% of respondents believing that the role of the academic is being de-professionalised. In other words, they perceive that their profession is being eroded; in the online survey, 60% of respondents agreed that the term semi-profession (a term coined by Jarvis, 1983) best describes their occupation as academic whilst just 19% believed their occupation as an academic to be a profession. This is supported by the finding that although some two-thirds of participants believed they have some autonomy and control over their work,

they nevertheless feel constrained by a bureaucratic framework, hence the majority identify themselves as belonging to an academic semi-profession. Surprisingly, perhaps, just 15% believed working as an academic to be a vocation.

The study participants identified many aspects of contemporary academic life that challenge lecturers' professional freedom and autonomy; similarly, Baker (2019) talks of the traditional advantages of the academic profession having been whittled away whilst, as Winter (2009) suggests, academics were previously able to self-regulate their job performance as professionals but under the new marketised regime they have become a managed resource. It can take an outsider's view to see the real situation; as one interview respondent remarked, 'Many new staff arrive and leave quickly and critically question how we do things here if they have come from another university, especially a research intensive one' (SL-PO3).

In addition, Thomas and Hewitt (2011) describe academics as persecuted professional actors defending and having to reshape their work practices in response to imposed managerial pressures. In the online survey, 86% of respondents indicated that they are self-sufficient and 74% felt that they do not need to be managed as they self-manage; also, 69% agreed they do not perform better with regular management and checks. Nevertheless, 99% of respondents agreed that they take personal and professional pride in the quality of their work, and 79% indicated that they achieve much job satisfaction from their work. In other words, despite the perceived de-professionalisation of their work, most respondents also offered an optimistic perspective.

McDonaldization of academic work practices

The evidence from the research suggests that respondents felt that they are increasingly losing technical and ideological control over their professional work practices. A number of them referred to this process as the McDonaldization of the academy and of academic work practice. More broadly, respondents perceived that a variety of systems and processes are being enforced at institutional level via praxis of standardisation, centralisation, bureaucratisation and an audit culture. These are not only shaping what academics do but are seen to be devaluing academic work practices by de-skilling academics themselves. More and more academic work is procedural to the exclusion of academic discretion and judgment. Consequently, academics feel increasingly de-professionalised.

5.3.2.3 Interim summary and discussion: Theme B

The dominant perceptions under this theme is that, as a result of the increasingly pervasive use and implementation of IT systems, internal communications are becoming inhumane, depersonalised and many, if not all, academic processes are becoming standardised. In effect, academic work is becoming commodified, following a similar path of production processes under Taylorism or the rationalisation of fast food production epitomised by McDonalds (Ritzer, 2013; Waring, 2013). As a consequence, staff have been deskilled and proletarianised. Willmott (1984) is critical of Taylorism owing to its neglect of the human factor in favour of maximising productivity and expanding managerial power and control of the labour process whilst, in the academic context, even HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England 1992-2018) criticised the 'metric tide' for quantifying everything in HE (Wilsdon, 2015). Overall, then the specific outcomes of this research are mirrored in the literature, in which it is recognised that economic rationality and managerialism in the HE sector is manifested in bureaucratisation, centralisation, standardisation and instrumentalism in the name of efficiency (Klikauer, 2013a & b; Parkinson, 1955; Tight, 2019; Trowler, 2011; Wen, 2019). Nevertheless, in this study, respondents acknowledged that relations remain collegial, at least amongst academic staff.

At the same time, however, the research reveals that academic staff believe that, as a result of IT-based standardisation, they are being deskilled and de-professionalised. This is also borne out in the literature (Adcroft & Willis, 2006; Butler, 2017; Brandist, 2017; Docherty, 2015), with Gill (2010) alluding to the decimation of the academic profession and Ovetz (2015) to the deskilling of the academy.

More specific trends identified in this study (and validated in the literature) contributing to this de-professionalisation are, first, an increasingly pervasive audit culture as a by-product of standardisation. Burrows (2012), for example, talks of the quantified control of the academy and Muller (2018) of the tyranny of metrics and the audit culture that pervades the HE sector HE. Similarly, Diefenbach (2009) refers to 'measurement mania' whilst others criticise the incessant scrutiny of academics (Martin, 2016; Morrish, 2019; Ovetz, 2015) about which participants in this study were also critical. More generally, Tight (2019) and Lupton et al., (2018) describe dataveillance as a digitised version of monitoring staff.

Second, it has led to poor internal communications. Effective internal communication is the lifeblood of any organisation (Shockley-Zalabak, 2012) and any diminution will have negative consequences on the work experience. According to the results of the focus

group, online survey and the interviews, communication with certain on campus services is often poor whilst more generally, technology perceived to have not only complicated otherwise simple tasks but has also reduced academic staff agency and increased demands on staff. Petrina, Mathison and Ross (2015) describe the damaging effects of constant internet connectivity. Consequently, Kinman (2006) argues for innovative HR strategies in a technology-intensive environment, not least to address the workplace fear, alluded to by respondents in this research, caused by the need to continually learn more technical skills. Chowdhry (2014) and Vostal (2015) corroborate this, discussing the affective dimensions of digitised academia: distress, anxiety and emotional labour.

And third, as a result of the centralisation of services as one aspect of standardisation, not only has much support, according to respondents, for academic staff been lost, but also work relationships between academic and support staff have become more disconnected. Frary (2017) refers to this as the dehumanising of the workplace. As a result of this disconnection, students too face challenges as many centralised administrative staff are unfamiliar with course programmes, and with associated academic staff and students. It is not surprising, therefore, that all respondents, regardless of biography, indicated strongly that the policy of centralisation should be reversed for the benefit of students and academic staff alike. Again, this theme is a manifestation of institutional neoliberal micro-aggressions on the lives of the academy which create an inhumane, toxic and hostile work environment (Gillies & Lucey, 2007; Jones et al., 2020; Morrish, 2019).

5.3.3 Theme C: Campus space management
The third form of institutional praxis identified by respondents that impacts upon their perceptions of their roles and work practices is related broadly to space management. From the evidence of the research, some aspects of space management are perceived positively, particularly the emphasis placed by the institution on the development of space to enhance the student experience, such as the library and social spaces. 'These are great…library resources and space are second to none' enthused one SL(PO1). Another interviewee was also positive about space management: 'There are a couple of research clusters which have recently formed and have a dedicated space is a positive move', whilst another, an SL (PO4), suggested that a particular department provided 'a good service and space'.

More generally, however, the study findings indicate that marketization, commercialisation and imposed government annual reporting systems have resulted in

university managers having to demonstrate efficient use of campus space across the sector, rather than using it effectively to enhance both staff and student experiences. Specifically, in the interviews, many respondents voiced their concern over a lack of campus space and the appropriacy of its use. As one SL(PO10) expressed it:

> We celebrate university student numbers growing but lack of space is a real issue. There's lot of building but no new office space, classrooms, nor social spaces specifically for staff. This mismatch is a demonstration of very poor communication between academics and the decision makers who hold the purse strings.

Another respondent suggested that 'there is a serious lack of physical space fit for academic staff purpose on campus. We have poor office space and many classrooms are without windows. We don't have any staff rooms' (L-PO7), whilst another spoke at length about the issue:

> Our school is still in temporary accommodation for the sixth year. As a result, the school identity is lost for staff and students. Many staff members are not located under the same roof and are split between buildings on an ad hoc but ongoing basis. The administrative staff for this school is based in another building and the PA to the head of school in yet another building. Too many academic staff are squeezed into unsuitable offices. They cannot concentrate to do any meaningful academic work.... It seems we are not a priority for the space management at this institution. This makes you feel not valued' (SL-PO2).

A subtheme emerging from the research related to what respondents perceived to be insufficient car parking space for staff on campus; for many, this was a source of daily frustration and anxiety. In the online survey, 80% of respondents agreed that staff should be provided with sufficient and guaranteed staff car parking especially when paying for it. 'We don't have enough spaces. A solution needs to be found. We need to find a field outside the town and provide free and guaranteed parking for all staff and bus them into the campus' suggested one lecturer (PO26). Alternatively, many others suggested that 'the fairest thing to do is for staff not to pay for parking, so everyone just takes their chances' (PL-PO21). Interviewees repeatedly expressed the view that that paying for parking is simply a money-making exercise and, in effect, a further tax that staff must pay in order to come to work.

Generally, then, the research revealed a belief on the part of staff that a lack of physical space on campus and its perceived poor management is resulting in the impoverishment of academic work practices and staff mental wellbeing which, in turn negatively impacts on the student learning experience. More specific themes related to space emerged in the research are:

Academic office space

In the online survey, 83% of staff indicated their belief that that their ability to perform well in their work is influenced by the availability and quality of classrooms and office space; specifically, 60% of respondents would prefer to share an office with just one colleague and no more:

> Office space for me as professor is great but I feel sorry for other colleagues who are frequently crammed into an office. This is not good for morale nor getting the job done' (Professor-PO25).

> Our shared office space is not conducive to academic work as it is too noisy and busy to do anything when I have to concentrate, like marking, reading or writing a paper. I have complained but all I get is yes there is not enough space here on campus. So, I end up working evenings, weekends at home (L-PO17).

> Our office is like Piccadilly Circus; you cannot hear yourself think when all staff are present and seeing students, telephones going and other staff and students coming into the office. How can you do any reading, marking, or any research. It is impossible! Ideally, we should have single occupancy offices like at other universities with separate meeting rooms, staff rooms and a maximum of double occupancy academic offices. (SL-PO11)

However, in sharp contrast:

> I am an SL in the school of ********* and most of us have our own offices or only share with one other staff member. I know we are lucky, and this is not the case elsewhere. I feel sorry for those with course leadership who are stuffed in with a number of other staff. How do you get to do any work or see students who might want privacy? (PO19)

Hourly paid lecturers pointed out that they have no desk or office space: 'Not having a desk, computer nor book shelving in a base room to call my own is a problem for me. I know there used to be one but not anymore.' (SPH-PO15)

Academic staff social space

In the online survey, 90% of respondents felt that it is important that communal spaces are provided for staff. Currently, around the university there neither staff rooms nor social spaces explicitly for academic staff use: 'There is nowhere for academics to meet. We do not intermingle. There is no place to meet postgrads either. Dedicated staff social spaces are needed' (Professor-PO8).

No space to meet with students to support their learning and wellbeing

Another problem highlighted by an number of respondents was the perceived lack of private spaces for staff to meet with students: 'I know for a fact that some staff have even met with students in stairwells as they couldn't find any private space to talk to them' said one interviewee (PL-PO12), whilst another observed that 'currently there is no quiet space to think and concentrate. There are no private spaces to meet students one-to-one, no breakout areas for meetings, tutorials, no staff communal spaces, staff rooms to relax' (L-PO5).

5.3.3.1 The consequences for academic practitioners and their work practices

The consequence of the lack of appropriate space are, perhaps, unsurprising. In the interviews, some respondents admitted to becoming unnecessarily stressed because of overcrowded and noisy office space which affects their ability to carry out their academic work. As a consequence of these perceived poor working conditions and environment, some are choosing to work more from home. Combined with the lack of a base room for SPHs in particular, this implies that, in terms of overall work practices, academic staff become more remote regarding communication with colleagues whilst, more generally, work relationships are compromised. This, in turn, challenges the potential for maintaining an academic community and team spirit; it shapes academics as isolated independents and impoverishes both internal communication with colleagues and students in particular and the academic work environment more generally.

In addition, many respondents in the interviews pointed to the lack of spaces to meet with vulnerable students, some resorting to meeting in public places such as stairwells mentioned above. For many, this was perceived as not only inappropriate but also a challenge in their ability to engage in correct and professional work practices. In a

similar vein, a further frustration to respondents was what they considered to be a fundamental lack of social or communal space specifically for academic staff. Such space, it was suggested in interviews, would not only enable colleagues to meet and chat informally but also enhance internal communications and increase the potential for collaborative ideas and work. As such, the lack of staff social space was viewed by many as a missed opportunity.

5.3.3.2 Interim summary and discussion: Theme C

To summarise, the perceived lack of suitable, fit-for-purpose space on campus and what some considered to be the mismanagement of existing spaces was revealed in the research to have created poor working conditions for many staff. This was seen by many respondents as a key demotivator and obstacle in the workplace. Unsurprisingly, this outcome of the study, particularly the demotivating consequence of poor staff accommodation, is reflected in the literature (Collier, 2018; Davis, 2011), whilst Fugazzotto (2009) argues that the correlation between an organisation's space and its constituents sends a clear message internally and externally. Davis (2011: 60) argues that while the impacts of neoliberalism continue to multiply, university neoliberal logic is insidiously reflected in spatial articulations. As noted earlier in this chapter, one aspect of institutional neoliberal practice differentiates between superior and inferior workspaces, where those who are most valued are provided with desirable workspaces and those least valued are provided with inferior spaces (Davis 2011: 60). In the research, participants referred to both students and senior management being provided with superior spaces compared to that provided to academic staff. From a practice theory perspective, this points to the lack of agency on the part of some in a university setting and can be considered a means of asserting management power and influence and the privilege of certain groups over others (Davis, 2011).

Certainly, in this research, the implicit – and on occasion explicit – perception of respondents was that their institution's space policies, including those related to academic office and social spaces, teaching spaces and indeed car parking, sent a clear message about how they are valued by management. In other words, this form of institutional praxis was generally perceived negatively by respondents. More specifically, common views that emerged in the research were that respondents did feel not valued enough to be given classrooms located in the same building to their office, or to be provided with suitable office space or social space that would make their work much more enjoyable and alleviate some sources of stress, such as constant interruption. Collier (2018) corroborates this finding, stating that academic staff feel undervalued and underappreciated if the space allocated to them is inappropriate for

academic work and of poor quality; poor space is a negative contributor to their staff morale, health and wellbeing. The implication is that greater consideration needs to be how to provide appropriate spaces to optimise academic staff's ability to fulfil their roles and to enhance both the staff and student experience, a process that academic staff should, in principle, be involved in. Indeed, the 2014 World Green Building Council Report clearly states that space users themselves need to be in control of its design. It also advocates investing time and money in creating good spaces for employees to improve employee health and productivity.

Other specific issues highlighted by respondents regarding the use and management of space are also considered in the wider literature. For example, Pinder et al. (2009) argue that open-plan and non-territorial staff spaces are perceived very negatively by those academic staff allocated such spaces as they challenge the very definition of academia and their identity as professionals. In particular, they found that staff react very strongly and negatively if assigned non-territorial space to work (Pinder et al., (2009). Respondents in this case study were of the belief that that there is a very clear distinction between appropriate or inappropriate workspace for academics which they perceived was not fully recognised by those with the responsibility for the provision and allocation of such spaces. Not only were cramped offices for many academics perceived to be restricting their ability to work effectively, but more specific issues, such as being allocated teaching rooms on multiple sites around the institution was considered to impact negatively on both the staff and student experience. And also unsurprisingly, the criticism in the literature that hot-desking creates a toxic work environment (Pinder et al 2009; Wolff, 2015) was reflected in responses with regards to the lack of dedicated office space for casual / SPH academic staff.

In addition, even though remote working is a feature of contemporary academic work, the provision of suitable staff accommodation is seen by many commentators as vital to maintain effective face-to-face communication and collaboration amongst colleagues and students (Frary, 2017); indeed, Frary (2017) warns that technology can dehumanise the workplace if used as a panacea for all communication. Hence, as many respondents in this study confirmed, the nature of the physical workspace should be such that it enables meaningful academic work to occur, as well pastoral and/or other social interaction. Specifically, many interviewees mentioned that they enjoy the social aspects of interacting with both students and colleagues; it is a key motivator to be physically present in the workplace rather than mainly working from home or remotely.

Finally, the issue of car parking, identified by many respondents, is also discussed in the literature. According to Greatrix (2018), for example, insufficient provision of car parking is a common cause for staff grievance which is manifested itself in stress and anxiety amongst academic staff. It is also, arguably, a particularly contentious example of the manner in which, in the marketised university, the management of space is based on commercial efficiency and university profitability as opposed to the optimisation staff and student experience. This, in turn, represents an aspect of institutional neoliberal praxis that contributes to the de-professionalisation of the academy and what many in this study believe to be the dehumanisation of the work environment.

5.3.4 Theme D: Communication between senior management and staff

In addition to the de-personalising consequences of the digitalisation of communication and associated standardisation of work processes as considered in Section 5.3.2 above, a fourth form of institutional praxis identified by respondents concerned what was perceived to be poor communication between senior management and staff. In the online survey, 56% of respondents indicated their belief that communications between senior management and staff were not good, whilst 63% believed that managers and staff do not speak the same language. As one PL respondent observed:

> Good communication is not just about disseminating information and knowledge but about the willingness of people like senior management to be communicated with and for them to actively listen. (PL-PO21)

The study findings indicate that many respondents believed that the marketization of the sector and imposed national government reporting systems have resulted in a management focus on efficiency drives rather than on enhancing staff experiences, manifested in what one respondent referred to as:

> too many bottom-line conversations. I am fed up of these. Also, we are regularly told that poor retention is down to course leaders. But 90% of the issues causing retention problems are something to do with things completely out of my control. We are made to feel it is our fault when it is not. We need more recognition for all we do, not chastisement! (SL-PO27)

In other words, poor communication between management and staff was perceived by research participants to be a symptom of a number of deeper-rooted issues resulting from increased marketization and managerialism.

Loss of agency due to a lack of trust

A perception amongst many respondents was that they feel a loss of agency as professionals as a direct outcome of marketisation and managerialism, not least in the lack of collegiality and trust shown in them by senior management. As Covey and Merrill (2018) suggest trust is the glue that sticks successful organisations together. In the interviews, staff described how they are unable to shape local operational matters which then negatively impacts on them and their academic work:

> The place seems to be run by people at the top who think academia is a production line and don't seem to understand the intricacies of academic work. (L-PO7)

> Academic staff cannot be 'managed' and 'communicated to' in the same way as workers on a production line in a sausage factory. This is a university not a factory. (Reader-PO24)

> They treat us like students, not as academic colleagues and equals. We are not trusted to do our jobs well without being constantly monitored and micro-managed. Everything needs multi-signing. I feel like I have to fight lots of battles which I find very demotivating and there is no acknowledgement of the value we bring. (RF-PO6)

> We are often the last to know what is happening. We have nowhere to go with ideas and yet, ironically, managers don't realise we are all on the same side and want the same thing, which is for this institution, staff and students to be successful. (PL-PO13)

> Senior managers never seem to get to the real detail of a problem and rarely find out what is really going on at ground level... A different approach is needed if we want to improve our poor internal communication. (Reader-PO20).

Autocracy rather than democracy

A common theme amongst respondents was the sense that the institution was managed autocratically. One SL(PO28), for example, observed that 'there are now too many chiefs and not enough Indians. This university has become too hierarchical, top heavy compared to twenty years ago'. Similarly, a Professor (PO9) argued that the 'institution is too hierarchical and autocratic', going on to suggest:

> Get rid of faculties, they are an unnecessary layer of management which is a barrier to internal communication. The university needs to be more democratic. Decisions are better when taken by those personally affected by them. We need to have a senate where academic staff representatives lead institutional decision making. There are too many levels of management.

Following a similar argument, a Reader (PO14) said: 'Academics need to challenge the status quo. Without good academics, universities would not exist. We need to reclaim our voice and have a proactive role in institutional decision-making'.

Short termism

As noted in the literature (see Chapter Two), the marketised HE sector appears to have created a competitive transient senior management elite who focus on the short term. Respondents in this study not only recognised this phenomenon in the context of their institution but also commented on how they find this very unsettling. This again is symptomatic of the marketised sector. To avoid this 'revolving door syndrome of senior managers coming and going', one lecturer suggested in the focus group, 'senior managers salaries should be reduced so as not to attract the wrong type of person….Then these positions might attract those who are genuinely interested in serving a university for the right reasons and for the long term'.

In the interviews, another respondent observed that:

> No-one stays to see through decisions they have made. They are long gone or if they stay and see a decision that is not good for the staff or student experience, they are not confident enough to admit it was a bad decision and reverse it. I am thinking about centralisation at the university. What a b**** disaster and all this just to save a few quid. We are saving money in the wrong areas if you ask me. (SL-PO16)

More generally, the perceived consequences of the lack of effective communication between management and staff and of short-term decision-making in particular were articulated by one respondent:

> Often far-reaching institution-wide decisions are made, but it's not clear to staff why. No explanations offered. Better decisions could have been made or solutions found, if the right people had been asked in the first place. Frequently,

decisions are made but senior managers do not realise their significant impact at the coal face and how they can hamper the daily lives of staff and their students. We are left picking up the pieces. (RF-PO6)

Top down communication

In a similar vein, many respondents referred to top-down communication processes; in the survey, although 42% agreed that the institutional culture is collegial/ mutually supportive, 60% of respondents indicated that they are not actively involved in school or institutional decision making with just 30% believing that their views are taken into account. As a consequence, a number of respondents admitted to feeling anxious about their work situation amid speculation about any potential changes:

> Too much top down and anonymous communication from senior management: For example, 'It was agreed that….. we…………... 'Who is we? When was what agreed and by whom? This is a way of telling you to do something by senior management. This type of message infers you are not to question but obey orders. We need bottom up and horizontal communication across the university. Maybe we need a new institutional ethos 'in the pursuit of truth. (SL-PO2)

Relatedly, some felt that the perceived autocratic, top-down style of management discouraged staff from voicing their opinion in any way:

> I feel I cannot really say what I truly feel about university policy or strategy in staff meetings or even among some colleagues for fear of repercussions in one way or another. I might be seen as a troublemaker. I know many other colleagues feel the same way. There is definitely an underlying feeling of a fear to speak out against anything at the university. (SL-PO10).

> 'I as many staff fear being labelled a complainer or toxic if I am in some way critical of the university. This should not be. As a result, I don't voice my opinion. I just think it. Ideally, we need an open, honest exchange otherwise how can anything ever be resolved? (L-PO26)

In short, some respondents inferred that they cannot be true to themselves in the workplace. In contrast the literature on staff engagement optimisation is unequivocal; staff feel at their happiest and most motivated when they can express their true self in the workplace, but they cannot if there are barriers to communication (Ménard & Brunet, 2011; Reis, Trullen & Story, 2016). Consequently, some interviewees in the

focus group and interviews displayed affective responses which ranged from calm resignation to frustration, sadness and anger about not being listened to and not having a real voice, nor having the ability to control aspects of their work or environment or influence positive practical change as professionals at their own university. Similarly, in the online survey, 49% of all respondents disagreed that they can influence decision making at their university. One SL (PO4) suggested that 'perhaps we should have an internal communications audit by an outside consultancy, but academic staff need to be involved or it'll end up being a waste of money and nothing will change', whilst another interviewee observed that 'university management needs to harness academic expertise and knowledge as we are all on the same side' (PL-PO13).

Mixed messages around teaching and research

Finally, one specific point to emerge in the context of poor communication was that some respondents believed that, as a consequence, mixed messages were being conveyed: 'The university, as a post-1992, has an identity crisis unlike XXXX or XXXX university who clearly state they are teaching universities which are research informed' (L-PO3).

Or, as a Reader (PO20) stated:

> We are a teaching intensive university with a strong vocational history, we are excellent at teaching, have embedded employability in all our programmes, great providers of student pastoral and academic support. Yet SM appear to want to be a research active and teaching intensive university at the same time, but we do not have the dedicated administrative support, time and space for research for all academic staff.

5.3.4.1 The consequences for academic practitioners and their work practices

A number of clear consequences of this aspect of institutional praxis were either articulated or implied by the research:

First, the research suggests that staff feel undervalued and overlooked as expert professionals in their field who could make a positive contribution to the university decision making process. Specifically, they are currently neither genuinely consulted nor actively involved in key university policy decision making processes and, overall, are not engaged with by senior management. Moreover, some indicated that they feel reluctant to share their ideas or to voice their true opinions for fear of reprisals, pointing to a lack of trust between management and staff.

Second, a number of respondents pointed to the transience of senior managers and their short term, reactive decision-making resulting in what was perceived as too much change for change's sake. However, they also recognised themselves as the long-term constant at the university with a vested interest in its longevity and success. Students and managers come and go but staff remain for the long haul. This is the root for much frustration and unhappiness among staff who care and work hard but do not feel included nor respected as professionals.

Finally, the manner in which way staff are treated affects their morale and attitudes to their work, with the consequence that their engagement with and standard of work might be impoverished.

5.3.4.2 Interim summary and discussion: Theme D

The discussion in this section has focused on the manner in which perceived poor communication between senior management and academic staff is seen by respondents as a manifestation of a lack of trust on the part of management and a consequential loss of agency on the part of academics. More specifically, the outcomes of the research considered above indicate that, in the view of respondents, senior management have control over and shape all institutional praxis, whilst academic practitioners themselves have little genuine input and feel a strong sense of loss of agency and control in their daily lives at work. In other words, the research outcomes imply that there is a mutual mistrust between senior management and academic staff manifested in poor communication which results in the concerns discussed by respondents in the research.

These outcomes are clearly reflected in and supported by the wider literature. According to Trowler (1998), for example, managerialism has altered power relations between academics, manager-academics, institutions and the state, a point emphasised by Bathmaker (1999) who examines the nature of the 'psychological contract' between managers and academics in a post-1992 university. Schein (1965) adds that if this relationship (or contract) is violated and the status of privileges of academic freedom are withheld by a university's arbitrary authority, the faculty will become alienated.

Such an outcome is evidenced by the findings of this study. That is, a relational contract based on trust, fair play, equity, ethics, respect for professional judgement and reciprocity in a context of continuous and predictable employment has been

incrementally replaced by a transactional [business] contract which is de-personalised. Hence, the goodwill of academics participating in this research has been challenged.

In order to address such managerialism, both Trowler (1998) and Bok (2003) advocate management sensitivity and respect when communicating with academic staff and the importance of involving staff in decisions. Similarly, Bryman (2007) promotes a collegial management style with a light touch approach as the best way to deal with the academy. As Mintzberg (1998: 43-146) put it, 'most professional workers require little direct supervision from managers'; what they really need is 'protection and support'. In a similar vein, Raelin (1995:210) proposes that the 'management of autonomy' is central to the management of the academic, for managing academic staff in a university setting is not the same as managing workers elsewhere (Farnham,1999). Bargh, Scott and Smith (1996) also argue that there needs to be a high level of professional autonomy and trust in academics where they are involved in managing the university.

This study, however, indicates that academic staff perceive that senior management demonstrates a lack of respect, collegiality and mistrust in their staff, creating an unnecessary division. Yet, as some interviewees observed, management and staff are 'on the same side'; the corporate and academic do not have to be mutually exclusive (Marginson, 2000: 32). Resource decisions (the domain of managers) and educational decisions (the domain of academics) are always closely implicated. Yet, without a stable collaborative relationship, there will always be tendencies for one group to try to secure control over the other's functions and, according to the literature, the mistrust revealed in this research is prevalent across the HE sector. Indeed, Bryman (2007: 707) asserts that NPM in 'universities has arisen in large part because of a lack of trust and confidence in the professionalism that can act as a substitute for leadership. Indeed, the call for leadership in universities…. can be read as a lack of faith in the underlying principle of the notion of [academic] professionalism.'

A further particular issue emerging in this study was the evident unwillingness or perceived inability on the part of some respondents to speak openly and be critical, to question or challenge any aspect of the university without being thought of as obstructive rather constructive. Interestingly, Docherty (2015), Hill (2013) and Parker (2014) all advocate speaking out against performance indicator managerialism and allude to the illocutionary silencing of academic dissent by the growing dominance of capital's neo-liberal agenda. Hence, the regular MBWA advocated by Peters and Waterman (1982) might enhance informal two-way dialogue.

Also emerging in this research was the perception common across the HE sector and alluded to in the literature that short-term decision making supersedes the longer-term perspective, with respondents referring to numerous restructures, the transience of managers, and institutional and operational change over a very short time span, all of which many staff find destabilising. This undoubtedly occurs more generally across the sector; By, Diefenbach and Klarner (2008) note that frequently, when new managers arrive, there is change for change sake and a focus on short term gains so they can make their mark. Indeed, Baker (2019: 6) found that in UK universities 'few senior managers stay in one location very long' and have a fixation on launching new initiatives but never complete them but use them to advance themselves and move very quickly to another senior post elsewhere.

Broadly, then, the respondents in this study expressed their opinion that senior management appear to have limited understanding of the implications at ground level of what they considered to be poor, ill-informed decision making. Many experienced frustration and a palpable growing resentment at having little to no influence to change anything, not least because they believed management have little interest in what they have to say. In short, as a result they feel they have declining control over their work and, as a result, feel de-professionalised. This theme is a manifestation of institutional neoliberal hierarchical managerial practices on the lives of the academy via the asymmetrical structural power imbalance toward management and away from academics (Gillies & Lucey, 2007).

5.3.5 Theme E: Lack of investment in a good academic staff experience

The fifth and final form of institutional praxis identified by respondents that impacts upon their perceptions of their roles and work practices related broadly to a lack of investment in a good academic staff experience. The study findings indicate that, from the respondents' perspective, the competitive landscape and marketization of the sector has resulted in a senior management focus on maximising profitability and ensuring a positive student experience manifested in high retention rates, but a neglect of investing in a positive staff experience. Certainly, in the online survey, 88% of respondents indicated their belief that a positive staff experience is linked to the enhancement of the student experience, whilst 96% believed that greater focus and investment in the academic staff experience would benefit the university and students. In this respect, 98% of respondents believed that the academic voice must be heard, respected and maintained for the benefit of the institution.

And as one Reader (PO24) pointed out:

> Ironically, if the academic staff experience were to be measured and have to be reported to a government agency like HESA or an Office for Academics, then universities would be scrambling to improve things overnight as it might have league table implications.

In this way, metric power, which is the source of many unintended consequences of marketisation, could work in favour of the academy.

5.3.5.1 The consequences for academics, their work practices and interim summary: Theme E

Given the perceived lack of investment in the staff experience, some respondents suggested that they would welcome their welfare and voice being a priority of the university. In addition, putting the academic staff experience on the strategic and operational agenda could allay and resolve any staff concerns at source. As Morrish (2019: 26) argues 'Meaningful structural changes are needed to address the underlying factors associated with poor academic health and wellbeing' to enhance their lived experience in the workplace. This would inevitably positively shape attitudes, morale and positively impact all areas of work practices and service delivery. The literature around staff engagement and its correlation to increased productivity indicates how these can only benefit all stakeholders. Kerr (2015) evidences in his study that motivated, engaged staff can increase gross profits by 47%.

It is evident from the research that respondents believe that a positive staff experience is directly linked to a positive student experience. To achieve this however, it was observed that staff need to have a voice that is listened to as seriously as that of students. Such an investment would make staff feel they are a priority for the institution and what they think feeds into the strategic and operational plan to benefit everyone:

> The good news is that all staff concerns are reasonable, fixable and relatively inexpensive if the will of management is there to address these. (SL-PO27)

5.4 The variations in lived experience and in how academics respond

The preceding section, addressing the first research aim of this study, presented and discussed the perceptions of their role as academics and of their lived working experience that, as revealed in the research, were shared or common to the great

majority of respondents. In so doing, it verified many of the consequences of the marketisation of universities that are discussed in the wider literature.

As argued in Chapter One, however, the literature adopts a primarily negative stance – that is, the transformation of universities reflecting the neoliberal agenda is generally considered to have had a disruptive, divisive and, indeed, destructive impact on academic staff. Thus, Pearson (2015), for example, concludes that academics in both old and new universities feel that their freedom and agency is constrained, and their practice directed by the performative context. At the same time, however, the literature also assumes that these consequences are experienced universally. That is, it is suggested that all academic staff, irrespective of their background, role or experience, respond to the marketisation of universities in a similar way. Hence, this thesis questions that assumption, specifically seeking to identify if and how staff perceptions vary according to their biodata.

This section now focuses on the outcomes of the research that address that aim. Overall, it reveals that although the academic staff in the case study (post-1992) institution occupy the same work environment and share many of the same concerns with regards to institutional praxis, individual academic biographies determine variations in their daily lived experiences, corroborating Beer's (2016: 210) claim that reactions to 'systems of measurement are often highly individualised and individualising.' More specifically, the research provided evidence that what might be described as 'bio-determinants' result in a range of different academic lived experiences and responses in the workplace. In particular, respondents' perceptions of their work experience were analysed and compared according to six variables in their personal and professional biodata. These are listed below, along with a summary of key findings under each variable. Significantly, many of these findings, which are subsequently discussed in more detail, offer a new and more nuanced understanding of academic staff experiences of and responses to the marketisation of universities than is presently represented in the literature.

5.4.1 Summary of biographical variables and implications

Length of service
Perhaps unsurprisingly, the longer serving staff who have organisational / HE sector memory are more critical of the negative operational impacts of university marketisation on institutional praxis, on themselves as a profession, on their work practices and, ultimately, on the student experience. This group especially is very critical of the

casualisation of the staff in the sector, not only owing to the insecurity of these casual staff themselves but also because their precarity impacts upon secure staff and students. They recognise two opposing responses to increasing workloads, describe academic life in the fast lane and talk of an acceleration in unfavourable terms for staff and their work. They will circumvent processes where possible and place value on cultivating and nurturing good working relationships with service staff to survive.

Age

Older interviewees are more critical of institutional praxis when reflecting length of service and the more senior roles they hold. However, age as an independent variable appears to have no associations in the survey. Young and new staff interviewed who were starting out in academia, often in casual or fixed-term roles, felt that they were given little support or permanent opportunities and not even paid correctly. They reported feeling exploited and not valued. Interestingly, both mid-career academics (45-54 years' old) who revealed they felt 'trapped' in HE for reasons related to their pension and those closer to retirement (55-60 and above) together comprised 67% of all online survey (voluntary) respondents.

Gender

All respondents, irrespective of other biodata, revealed that they find the work environment increasingly hostile and dehumanising. However, it was only female staff who reported that they had self-demoted or had elected to go part time or to retire early, or at least had thought about it. They had elected to do so in order to facilitate a better work-life balance. In this study, male staff members did not report having made such decisions.

Role

The research revealed significant distinctions in perceptions according to respondents' work role / position, most notably a bifurcation between teachers (across grades from SPH to SL) and researchers (from RF to Professor). In particular, an overall perception emerging from the research is that the neoliberal context creates role-specific winners and losers and is leading to a continual unbundling of the academic role. It was claimed that, as a consequence, there are now fewer 'all-round' academics and more 'para-academics'.

Contract type

Unsurprisingly, perceptions amongst respondents varied according to the nature of their employment contract; causal staff were revealed as feeling insecure, though often

not being familiar with all aspects of university operations were less critical of them. Conversely, full-time permanent core staff reported that they felt they were surviving rather than thriving at work and emerged as being more critical of institutional praxis than casual part-time and non-permanent staff.

Previous (non-academic) professional experience

Notably, 90% of those who participated in the online survey had previously worked outside the HE sector. Of these, 89% had worked in the tertiary sector. This outcome might be considered surprising; putting it another way, a higher proportion of 'career academics' progressing directly from study through to academic employment, might have been expected. Hence, no variations in respondents' perceptions could be associated with distinctions in employment history.

Overall, these differences in the lived academic experience of respondents in this research support the argument of others, such Palfreyman and Temple (2017) and Sikes (2006), who suggest that within the HE sector there is little sign of a strong, powerful academic community or profession but, rather, a fragmented and divided collection of individuals. As Beer (2016) suggests the purpose of metric power (in this case of the marketised university) is to individualise experience in the workplace. So, within the contemporary university academic workforce there now exist multifaceted identities that reflect divergence in the nature of academics' roles and activities which, in turn, reflect what has been described as the re-fashioning of HE into a quasi-market (Archer, 2008; Gordon & Whitchurch, 2010). The outcomes of the research now discussed in the following sections serve to not only illustrate but also to deepen knowledge and understanding of this fragmented community based upon the varying perceptions of study respondents' according to their biodata. Specifically, the outcomes of the research related to variations in biodata are now considered under each heading summarised above.

5.4.2 Length of Service

Intuitively, it might be expected that longer-serving members of academic staff would hold stronger and arguably more negative perceptions of the transformations in their role and experiences than those who have entered the profession more recently. From the outcomes of the research, this appears to be the case.

By way of introduction, 60% of survey respondents were longer-serving members of staff who had been academics in HE either between 11 and 20 years or more than 20 years. A further 18% had served for between 5 and 10 years and just over 22% had

worked as academics for less than 5 years. The latter group consisted of those who reported that working as an academic is both competitive if they were research active and challenging as a teacher in terms of workload expectations.

Many of those who had worked as academics for less than five years were on fixed-term, temporary or casual contracts and so, perhaps inevitably, felt insecure in their role. Moreover, many of them perceived that they had few opportunities to become permanent staff members. This casualisation of the workforce was criticised by many longer-term term staff who observed that the precarious position of their colleagues impacts all aspects of service delivery, including the experience of staff and students. It is interesting that, as detailed above, the majority of those who completed the online survey were longer-serving staff. Perhaps one explanation is that, compared with newer academics, they felt more strongly about their current experience in the workplace and the survey offered an opportunity to express their views. Indeed, this was evident in additional observations that respondents were able to include in the survey; one such comment summarised the sentiment of many of those participating in the research:

> No-one has ever asked my opinions about my being an academic, university
> operations, my workspace, conditions, work-life balance or health and
> wellbeing. It is nice to be asked for once. (SL of 16-20 years' service-PO16).

A number of unexpected findings emerged from the research, most notably that, in the results of the survey, length of service as a variable produced correlational coefficients and associations with every one of the sixteen key questions across almost all themes (see appendix iv with correlation coefficients and p values). In short, the survey revealed that longer-serving academic staff tended to work the longest hours over and above their contracted hours, and they were more likely than shorter-serving members of staff to admit that they did not feel supported by the institution to achieve the best they could and that they were less likely to thrive in the workplace. To date, this association between length of service and workplace experience has not been identified in the extant literature.

In the interviews, longer-serving staff were also more vocal about and aware of the macro changes that have occurred in the HE sector in the UK. In addition, they expressed the belief that their subject areas are not adequately staffed, and they were more likely than other length-of-service groups to report that their ability to perform well is influenced by the availability and quality of classrooms and office space. Other

issues and factors more commonly referred to by longer-serving members of staff (and, hence, arguably more strongly perceived) compared to others in the research included the belief that the commercial imperative increasingly supersedes pedagogical considerations and that the role of the academic was becoming de-professionalised. Furthermore, they were more likely to disagree that centralisation makes universities more effective in facilitating teaching and research, and to agree that IT has changed the way they work more negatively than positively. Specifically, longer-serving respondents were more likely to agree that IT has had a detrimental effect on internal communications, and they benefited from long-established work relationships. This group will circumvent processes where possible and place value on cultivating and nurturing good working relationships with service staff to survive.

> Over the years, I have identified key people who used to be in the school offices with whom I have a longstanding relationship. These are always going to come up with the goods if I ask them. If I need anything, I just pick up the phone. Building relationships with admin staff will save your life! However, this is problematic for new staff. They won't know anyone in the centralised hubs. They need a buddy ideally to show them the ropes but unless senior managers say this is a good idea it won't happen. (PL-PO12)

In addition to prioritising the cultivation of good working relationships with key support staff, longer-serving staff also claimed that, whenever they are able to do so, they regularly try to circumvent what they perceive to be unnecessarily convoluted university systems and processes, perhaps benefiting from their knowledge and experience of the institution and its processes not enjoyed by shorter-serving colleagues.

In comparison to other length-of-service groups, longer-serving respondents also more frequently indicated in the survey that do not feel they are actively involved in local or institutional decision making and that communications between academic staff and senior management are not good. They felt strongly that a greater focus on and investment in a good academic staff experience is linked to a good student experience and, hence, would benefit the university and students. Finally, they felt that the academic voice must be heard, respected and maintained for the benefit of students and the institution. These sentiments were reiterated in more depth in the interviews.

With regards to the specific issue of the rationalisation of the workforce, a key consequence of the marketisation of universities considered earlier in this chapter, longer-serving staff in particular perceived that they are being exploited:

> Many staff do feel taken advantage of and goodwill is thinning as we feel it is not acknowledged nor reciprocated. (SL-PO10)

In an interview, another long-serving SL (PO16) asked:

> Why are we being treated this way by management who decide to cut staff, increase workloads and get rid of school admin support and offices without consultation? All we want to do is a good job, to do teaching and research well. Can't they see we are buckling under the workload? This is not good for us, the students nor the university reputation.

One long serving Reader (PO14) summarised the perceptions of longer-serving staff with regards to workforce rationalisation, recognising two contrasting responses to increasing workloads:

> There are two ways to do this job. One is to start counting the hours every week you work yourself and keep a tally. Once you reach 38 hours, stop and make sure you only do what is necessary but no more. Say no to anything above and beyond…This will ensure you have a good work-life balance and maintain a good level of mental and physical wellbeing. The other way is to kill yourself slowly and try to do everything well and go above and beyond the call of duty. But remember, you will receive no recognition for this. Work will eat into all your evenings, weekends and annual leave. In the end you will become ill or worse, you will have no friends or social life to speak of. This lifestyle is not sustainable? I did this myself for a period and virtually had a nervous breakdown. Is this really worth it? I say no.

Undoubtedly, choosing to limit the amount of work undertaken outside contract hours requires confidence on the part of academic staff member, not least in being challenged by management. However, longer serving staff with a good track record are arguably in a better position to defend this.

> You need to make a concerted effort to not take work home. You just do what you can in the time. If not, you can become ill very quickly. (L-PO26)

Overall, it is evident from the research that academic staff consider that they have limited agency but, to some extent, can choose whether to work outside their

contracted hours or not. These perceptions are particularly prevalent amongst longer-serving respondents, who also admitted that they can be complicit, in their own over-work. Indeed, for some, working long hours is seen as a cultural norm within academia but one which, in the longer-term, is not healthy nor sustainable. As one SL suggested:

> If staff want to change things, they need to start recording all the extra hours work and stop doing it; then the university will have to address the lack of staff to do the work. Staff might need to ask for help from their local union representative. (PO4)

The general sentiments of longer-term academic staff members participating in the research was summarised by a long-serving professor, who said:

> Things have changed in HE, and not for the better. The pace of change has been significant over the last five to ten years. The student profile and number has altered what and how we do things. There has been a dumbing down of standards, a focus on quantification of academic work and output across the sector. Efficiency drives of university managers have had a detrimental effect on the services we provide students. There has been an increasing under resourcing at operational level. Subsequently, the staff-student ratio has gone up which only adds to the workload of staff. (PO25)

These arguments are, as discussed in Chapter Two, reflected in the literature (e.g. Berg & Seeber, 2016; Gill, 2010; Morrish, 2019), with Vostal (2015) in particular describing an academic life in the fast lane and defining increasingly unfavourable conditions for staff and their work.

5.4.3 Age

A second variable according to which potential variations in respondents' perceptions was their age, a factor inevitably related to length of service. Interestingly, 67% of respondents in the survey were over the age of 45 years, the majority being between the ages of 45 and 54 years old (42%). This group could be described as comprising mid-career academics and, as with the longer-serving academics considered in the preceding section, it could be argued that they are widely represented in the survey because they harbour perceptions about their current work place context that are more negative than those held by other age groups. Equally, the proportion of respondents in this age group reflects the actual age profile of the institution's academic workforce

more generally. Below is a table provided by the institution HR department in December 2019. Academic staff aged between 41 and above represent 68%.

Table 5.1: Actual percentage count of academic staff by age category

Age category	Actual % count of academic staff
20-30	6.26%
31-40	25.77%
41-50	30.72%
51-60	28.96%
61+	8.28%
Grand Total	**100.00%**

During the interviews, older staff were asked why, given their expressed dissatisfaction, they did not seek alternative employment. Many, particularly those with a longer-service record, admitted that they did enjoy many aspects of the job but nevertheless, felt 'trapped' in the profession. Specifically, they were worried that if they were to leave, they could jeopardise their pensions, whilst many also questioned what other careers they might be qualified to pursue. As with staff categorised by length of service, older interviewees (aged between 40 and 60 and over) were, unsurprisingly, also more critical of institutional praxis and, in particular, work intensification and transformations in internal communications.

Notably, however, in the survey, as opposed to evidence emerging from interviews, age as an independent variable appeared to have no association with any particular view on the lived experience of the academic, albeit with one exception. Specifically, older staff agreed that communicating through the of IT rather than face-to-face has had a detrimental effect on internal communications. Such an outcome might have been predicted given older respondents has experienced workplace communications prior to the pervasive use of IT whereas the academic careers of younger staff coincided with the emergence of the digital age.

Only 4.73% of survey respondents were in the 25 to 34 years' old age group. This low representation is perhaps understandable given not only the length of time required to gain the necessary postgraduate qualifications to enter the profession but also the fact that, as revealed earlier in this chapter, the majority of respondents had enjoyed a

previous career before their employment in HE sector. As there is no evidence in the literature, further research would be necessary to ascertain whether this is particular to the post-1992 sector or a more general phenomenon across all universities. Archer (2008) reports that these younger staff find the competitive and individualistic practices to be challenging and that they have to compromise their idealised values of HE.

The next age-related group in the study comprised respondents in the 35 to 44 years' old bracket. This group constituted just over 22% of survey respondents. The principal finding to emerge, particularly from the interviews, was that younger and new staff who were starting out in academia, often in casual or fixed term roles, felt that they were given little support or permanent opportunities and, regularly, were not even paid correctly. This is reflected in the literature; Murphy (2017: 165), for example, sympathetically warns those starting a career in academia that:

> 'it is an arduous climb, often with uncertain perspective; a career ladder moving in the wind, with few rungs, dangling from a helicopter being piloted by non-academic managers. And from this precarious position, it is expected you offer students the best learning environment.'

In addition, Archer's (2008: 282) study revealed that many younger or newer staff felt that 'neoliberalism infiltrated their bodies and minds and made it difficult for them to speak out about what was happening to them and the injustices and losses they experienced.' Such a perception of just younger/newer staff, however, did not emerge from this research.

In contrast, older staff who have organisational/HE sector memory are more critical of the negative operational impacts of university marketisation on institutional praxis, on themselves as members of a profession, on their work practices and, ultimately, on the student experience. Older staff found comfort in speaking to trusted colleagues and in so doing better able to deal with the daily challenges. In the interviews, many alluded to academic life in the fast lane, incessant work and a continual worsening of conditions that impacts upon staff wellbeing and their work. Indeed, as Calvert, Lewis and Spindler (2011: 37) argue, older…

> …staff possess a strong sense of duty and demonstrate high levels of professionalism in their practice. They are portrayed as hardworking (sometimes excessively). This all takes its toll and has repercussions on their

personal and professional lives and identities. The notion of taking care of oneself, a professional responsibility in its own right, is subordinate'.

In short, the evidence suggests that older, established academics experience dilemmas in their daily work and compromise their health and wellbeing; tensions exist between what they feel they ought to do, what they feel obliged to do and what they feel is possible. This can be interpreted to imply that older staff members perceive that they have become de-professionalised; the changing work environment represents a threat to their professional identity and work practices. Moreover, the generally negative perceptions of their lived work as revealed in this study may reflect a sense of being powerless, of a lack of agency to change anything through a commensurate lack of real voice. Arguably, this may be enhanced by their organisational memory; they have experienced different (and 'better') times and have witnessed transformations in academic work which they consider having been not for the better. Interestingly, however, this is not a factor that, to date, has been specifically identified in the relevant literature.

5.4.4 Gender

In the survey, 60% of respondents were female, representing a greater proportion than the case-study institution's academic staff gender distribution of 52% female and 48% male (data supplied by HR department). From the survey, it emerged that that female staff are more likely to be critical of their lived experience as academics than their male counterparts (this perhaps explains their higher participation in the survey). In addition, several correlations emerged between gender and perceptions of work experience (see appendix iv). Female respondents appeared less likely to feel supported at work and were generally more negative about their work environment and space than male respondents. They also reported that they feel less involved in decision making than men and that they found the work environment increasingly hostile and dehumanising. Female respondents were more likely to agree that that the commercial imperative supersede pedagogical considerations and that the role of academic is becoming increasingly de-professionalised. On the issue of centralisation male staff were slightly less pessimistic than their female counterparts. Similarly, female staff were more likely to agree that IT-based rather than face-to-face communication has had a detrimental impact on internal communication. Finally, female staff members were more likely than male colleagues to agree that a positive academic staff experience is linked to student experience and that greater focus and investment in the academic staff experience would benefit the university and students. This latter point is supported in the literature which, for example indicates that those universities with the best maternity and

childcare packages are likely to be more productive than those which offer less support (Troeger, 2018).

Throughout the interviews many, if not all respondents expressed their anxieties and stress with regards to the pressures of workload and the lack of work-life balance, as well as their concerns about their own health and wellbeing and that of colleagues. Significantly, however, the results of the research show, it is only female staff who respond proactively to these pressures and concerns; specifically, only female respondents revealed that they had taken specific actions to address the situation, such as opting to go part-time, reduce hours or self-demote, or contemplating leaving the profession. Conversely, no male respondents in the interviews alluded to self-demotion, moving to a part-time contract or retiring early.

In other words, being female emerged from the in-depth interviews as a specific variable associated with considering or actually electing to self-demote (one and three respondents respectively), going part time (one respondent) or retiring early (a number of female respondents were contemplating this). Moreover, these decisions were not all related to parental responsibilities. One, for example, indicated she had had self-demoted because she wanted a better work-life balance; another, a Reader, was considering self-demotion to Senior Lecturer level to reduce the stress of imposed targets for grant capture, but had not yet 'taken the plunge':

> My workload is about one and half times what it should be. I have thought about self-demotion rather than promotion to a professor. This is because I am scared about expectations to find even more bid money for research. (PO14)

Three other female respondents who had been on the Lecturer scale had self-demoted to Associate Lecturers. As one explained:

> I am happy now as an AL but was not as a lecturer. Now as AL, I have a better work-life balance. When I was a lecturer, I was quite anxious keeping up with problems related to students. Tuesday was a non-teaching day but other things came up so I could not really get anything done I had planned. It was very frustrating. I have made a concerted effort to pull back and have self-demoted to have some semblance of a family life outside work. (PO18)

Another PO23 justified her decision to self-demote as follows:

I value my free time, health and wellbeing and I like to travel during the holidays. When I was lecturer, I had so many duties and they encroached upon my home life, I thought no this is not how I want to live. I see so many SL and L colleagues running around and getting so stressed because they have so much to do. I don't want to be like that. I remember one of my SL colleagues was in tears within the first two weeks of the start of the academic year already…also the pay difference between AL and L was not enough to make me feel I was losing out financially. I like the flexibility of being an AL.

For the third female respondent PO19 electing to self-demote to AL, the reason was simply: 'I value my family life, so I can work term time only and be with my kids in the school holidays'.

The fourth female respondent who had elected to go part time was a Principal Lecturer PO12. She had made this decision to give herself more time outside work, to have a better work-life balance and as she admitted, 'I have reduced my working hours to maintain my health and wellbeing' whilst the respondent considering early retirement said: 'I don't like the direction in which things are going in HE. I would retire in heartbeat if they made me a decent offer' (female SL-PO1).

The implication of these findings is that female academic staff appear to be more likely to value a good work life balance and improved health and wellbeing, more than male staff, although the reason is unclear (and demands further research). Maybe men do not want to admit defeat and downgrade or 'step down' as it could be a sign of weakness. Perhaps male staff place more importance on status and money. The reasons for men not reacting as the female staff is only speculative and is not established in this research study. One explanation for the reported behaviour and reactions of female staff might be that they have multiple roles outside work, such as being the primary carer for children and/or elderly relatives or having the responsibility for shopping and the many other household chores, so need more free time outside of their contracted working hours. For example, a Reader PO24, (a mother) said 'I couldn't even do my job if it weren't for the support of my parents to help with the children'. Certainly, however, the reasons for such decisions, and the ability to take them, are 'case specific', yet this research reveals a pattern of gender-specific responses to the marketization of universities not identified in previous research.

Whether this can be related to the gender imbalance and consequential pay gap in universities, discussed by Acker, Webber and Smyth (2016), is also unclear. Wider

research indicates that women are significantly less represented in the more senior posts and are more likely to be on low level and insecure contracts (Troeger, 2018). In this study, the perception emerged that women 'are typically in less senior posts and disproportionately burdened with administrative and caring responsibilities, compared with men' (SL-PO10). They are also likely to be marginalised, as Black and Garvis (2018) discuss in their ethnography of the lived experiences of women in academia. More generally, the literature refers to the 'cycle of the marginalisation' of female staff which is evidenced in this study (Havergal 2019: 5):

> The latest gender pay-gap figures paint a discouraging picture of UK universities. On average, women are paid a mean hourly wage that is 15.1 per cent lower than their male colleagues. Last year the figure was 15.8 per cent. The median average gap, which tends to reduce the effect of outliers, was 14.8 per cent for 2018, widening from 14 per cent the previous year. Of the 228 higher education institutions 46 were shown to have widened their gap since the first reporting exercise. (Pells, 2019b)

More broadly, however, the specific and novel finding from this research regarding proactive decisions on the part of female staff suggests that: they prioritise the quality of the working environment and conditions more than men; they value work but equally home and family life; and, they focus on fair and equitable work relationships rather than on achievement, promotion, status and financial reward.

5.4.5 Role

A small number of associations emerged from the survey between the role occupied by academic staff and their perception of their work experience, though not as extensively as with other biographical variables discussed in this chapter. Of no surprise is the finding that the more senior their role (related as it typically is to age and length of service), the more aware and critical academic staff are of transformations in their work environment.

However, academic role emerged as a much more significant variable during the interviews and also in the focus group. Generally, for example, seniority of role, often commensurate with length of service, was manifested in organisational memory which influenced staff perceptions on institutional praxis; for example, the relatively recent centralisation of administration was perceived particularly negatively by respondents holding more senior roles, who are more likely to be resentful of what they considered to be a poor institutional decision for staff and students. In contrast, younger and lower

ranking staff with a shorter length of service were less likely to be so critical. Similarly, those staff holding a more senior role were more likely to be critical of communications between staff and management.

Beyond these more general and arguable predictable outcomes, however, a number of key sub-themes under the heading of 'role' emerged from the focus group discussions and the interviews, as follows:

5.4.5.1 A distinction between teaching and research academic staff

From the interviews, it became apparent that respondents perceived that there are two distinctive academic roles: 'There is a clear demarcation between those who teach and those who research at this institution' (L-PO7). On the one hand, there is the group of academics primarily concerned with research activity / outputs, grant capture and varying supervision commitment. Comprising Professors, Readers, Senior Research Fellows and Research Fellows, members of this group were described by some respondents as 'true academics, especially professors.' (PO7)

On the other hand, there exists the group comprising academics who are preoccupied with teaching, course and / or module leadership and pastoral responsibilities, often (though not always) to the exclusion of any opportunity to undertake research. In this group are Senior Lecturers and Lecturers, as well as Associate Lecturers and Staff Paid Hourly (SPH). PLs do not appear to fit in either of these categories. This is discussed further below. When asked by people outside the university what they do for a living, members of the 'teaching intensive' collective tend to describe themselves as 'teachers'; in the interviews, ALs and SPHs referred to their role as being efficient 'academic robots' who are just told what to teach and do it: 'I just teach what and where I am told to teach' (SPH-PO23).

Significantly, a perception that emerged from the interviews was that transitioning between the groups, specifically from the teaching to the research group was very challenging if not impossible:

> I simply don't have time to research but I would if I could. Academic work
> consists of more or less two halves: teaching and research, and then I guess all
> the admin nonsense that surrounds that. (L-PO17)

One SL-PO11 summarised the situation, emphasising the distinction between an 'academic' and a 'teacher' as follows:

Students are at the centre of everything we do. However, I could do research and/or a PhD if I was given the proper conditions, like realistic time in my workload. I see colleagues around me struggling to do this on top of their full-time work responsibilities and it puts me off doing the same. I am not a true academic as I don't fit the criteria. I don't have a PhD, publish a lot; nor do I aim to be a professor, so am also unlikely to get funding to attend a conference or be awarded a rare sabbatical. In my school there is a clear demarcation between those who research and those who do the bread and butter teaching. Teachers are made to feel like second class citizens but without us the university would have no money. Course/ module leading and teaching large numbers of students is pretty demanding, lots of firefighting, dealing with and chasing up students. There's lots of crisis management and loads of admin.

Hence, SLs inferred that much of what they do is not valued in the same way as those who primarily research. In addition, 'the SL workload is so heavy that any chance of research is largely sacrificed for the research active-labelled staff' (SL-PO4). Interestingly, however, some Associate Lectures, as indeed some Lecturers, both recognise and take pride in their teaching role. For one AL (PO22), 'I am a teacher at a university first and foremost' and 'I love being a teacher'. Another PO19 says, 'I don't currently research, but I read a lot to improve my knowledge and classes and like to keep up to date with current thinking in my subject area. I have pride in my work and like to do my job well and the students benefit to boot.'   Thus, individual perceptions of the value of the teaching role vary, although a general perception is that this division between the two groups results in the marginalisation of teaching staff.

Marginalisation of teaching staff

As noted in the preceding section, respondents talked at length about the clear demarcation that exists between mainly teaching staff and those who are labelled as research active. This confirms what Kinman (2006) refers to as the bifurcation of academic staff. Teachers in particular are marginalised, undertake low status work and cannot easily make the transition to becoming research active which, in turn, can impede career progression. According to Lai (2013), such marginalisation can result in significant staff stress.

In sharp contrast, research active staff are engaged in what is perceived to be higher status work, permitting them to build an academic career and professional reputation. As one lecturer (PO7) said in an interview, 'Research is a way to make your mark while teaching is just a way to earn money.' Nevertheless, commensurate with a researcher role is the increasing pressure to achieve grant capture and research outputs in order to maintain their position: 'Our publication output is mushrooming with every year and we have to cover our salaries with successful research bid money. It is very stressful' (Reader-PO14). This is also evidenced in the literature, as in De Rond and Miller's (2005) discussion of the pressures of having to publish or perish.

According to Sikes (2006) and Hartley (2002), those staff who just teach feel they must defend themselves as only research is considered to have currency and value. Others argue similarly. For example, Ylijoki and Ursin (2013) and Berg, Barry and Chandler (2012) suggest that neo-liberalism creates individual winners and losers, whilst MacFarlene (2018) suggests that the demarcation of teaching and research leads to the growing unbundling of the academic role. Consequently, there are fewer all-round academics and more 'para-academics' or, more simply stated, teachers who do not research, researchers who do not teach and academic managers who do neither.

Different skill sets and challenges
Also related to the distinction between research and teaching roles are perceptions of the required skills for each. Thus, in the online survey, 65% of respondents agreed that good researchers and good teachers have different skill sets although, during the interviews, it became evident that many teaching staff not only would like to do research but also believed they have the necessary skills – they are just unable to do so owing to heavy teaching and administrative workload. In contrast, the interviews also revealed that some research active staff prefer undertaking research more to being in the classroom. Whilst teaching staff explained in interviews that they find their interactive and creative classroom work with sizable cohorts of students very rewarding, research active staff admitted that they find working alone and getting published more attractive.

At the same time, however, respondents with primarily research responsibilities claimed that it can be lonely work which is often full of disappointment with occasional 'highs' when a paper or book is published, or a grant bid is approved. Moreover, many of those research active staff who still have a teaching role report that they find it difficult to combine the two roles, particularly fulfilling the need to keep abreast of the latest literature: 'I depend on the summer break to get any real research done but even

that is eaten into more and more' (RF-PO6). Another challenge is that 'being a researcher is competitive as it pits research active staff against each other due to the REF and funding' (Reader-PO24). Interestingly, however, Bell, Stevenson and Neary (2009: 145) call for a truce in the researcher vs. teacher debate to form new alliances in order to collectively challenge neoliberal injustices.

Research mentoring

Another issue regarding the demarcation of roles to be highlighted from the interviews is the perceived lack of support for transitioning: 'We have no formalised research mentoring; I am an orphaned researcher. If I was managed properly and given time and guidance, I could easily produce an output' (L-PO3). Opportunities for making the transition from teaching intensive work to becoming research active were perceived by respondents to be very limited, whilst trying to do both under the current workload was reported to be almost impossible. In addition, many non-research active staff admitted to experiencing a lack of confidence and even fear of becoming research active, yet the evidence indicates that many would benefit from being mentored.

A university with two conflicting identities

Finally, the distinction between research and teaching roles was considered by some to be creating a university with two conflicting identities. As one L(PO17) suggested:

> At traditional research-intensive universities, teaching is seen as a secondary activity, something that most staff try to get rid of in favour of doing their own research. Here, we have two conflicting identities. We are not a research-intensive university but we are trying to bolster our research profile. Probably because there is funding available for that and it looks good. Yet we attract increasing numbers of students who need a lot of academic and pastoral support and we focus on offering many vocational courses, and prioritise employability, teaching and the student experience which incidentally we are great at. By contrast, xxxx and xxxx know who they are and simply say they are a teaching university which is research informed. At the end of the day we can't successfully be all things to all people.

Similarly, a Reader-PO20, acknowledging that the institution's primary source of funding is from teaching, asked 'why don't we focus on what we do best and be a teaching university that is research-informed and make it one of our USPs?'

5.4.5.2 The 'best' and 'worst' academic roles

SL and L: the most difficult roles

From the interviews, clear perceptions emerged from respondents with regards to what they considered to be the 'best' and 'worst' academic roles. One Reader (PO24) stated emphatically that 'being an academic gives me a lot of freedom especially when compared to being an SL or course leader. I know this is a particularly tough role' whilst a professor PO25 expressed significant concerns about the challenges and pressures facing Ls and SLs in particular:

> Worryingly, more junior colleagues have been grossly exploited. I see the professional lives of SLs and Ls becoming hugely intense, greater workloads and the wider bureaucracy and admin around that. More take work home… I see greater absenteeism from work to maintain their sanity… No one who is research active staff comes off worst. It is those who course lead and teach very large cohorts of undergraduate students who feel justifiably overworked. They are. If staff teach on both undergraduate and postgraduate courses, then for these staff academic calendars meet in the middle. They can't easily book annual leave. This is not good. Everyone needs down time to recuperate.

In short, the most difficult or 'worst' role, as perceived by themselves and colleagues in other roles, is that of Ls and SLs. The majority of all survey respondents (70%) comprised a combination of SLs, representing 46% of total, and Ls, representing 24%. At the time of writing, SLs accounted for 33.8% of all academic staff at the case study institution, 53.85% female and 46.15% male. Ls account for 30% of all academic staff with, similarly, 52% being female and 47% male.

Seven SLs (4 female and 3 male) were interviewed out of a total of 30 interviewees (23%). Their age ranged between 40 and 60 years old, and length of service from 9 to 20 years. They all reported being under immense pressure as course and module leaders, confirming the observations of others interviewed, including professors, readers, lecturers, ALs and SPH staff. In addition, six Ls were interviewed (2 female and 4 male), representing 20% of all interviewees. Their age ranged between is 41 and 54 years and length of service from 3 to 10 years. Most observed that being an L brings responsibilities through module leadership, though some did not aspire to promotion to SL. From the interviews it was evident that few SLs and Ls enjoy a good work-life balance, most take work home over and above their contracted hours on a regular basis, and many were of the opinion that they receive poor pay given their qualifications and experience and are not given any recognition for their hard work and

effort. Some, however, were benefiting from financial support to study for my doctorate whilst positively, they observed that the job is never boring.

Curiously, perhaps, it was only PLs who did not identify SLs and Ls as the staff most under pressure (perhaps reflecting their own role as workload allocators) although they did acknowledge that the academic workload overall does need reducing. In the interviews, both SLs and Ls lamented that they enjoy limited control over their work practice bundles of extensive administration with little or no support and a high number of teaching hours. They also acknowledged that they saw little opportunity to become research active, even if they wished to do so.

In particular, being a course/ module leader was discussed by many respondents as being highly demanding, especially when dealing with both large cohorts of students and sometimes large cadres of hourly paid or fixed term staff. Course leadership also involves a great deal of administration, in addition to the teaching and other duties, such as marketing, undertaken by SLs. Unsurprisingly, then, SLs stated that they have excessive workloads to which administrative tasks are constantly added. Hence, both SLs and Ls, when interviewed, indicated that because they all feel a moral sense of duty to not short-change the students, they consistently work evenings, weekends and during annual leave. This represents the pro bono work that is referred to in the literature (Kolsakar, 2006; Pells, 2018).

Although there were some exceptions, most SLs and Ls revealed that they are obliged to share offices with multiple staff, which serves to enhance the levels of stress experienced on a daily basis. In this regard, many lamented a lack of a university-wide academic staff office space policy.

To summarise then, both SLs and Ls, as a specific group of academics participating in the research, expressed similar concerns and frustrations with regards to the forms and implications of institutional praxis under the five themes considered in the first part of this chapter. All these directly shaped what, when, where and how their daily work practices are operationalised. More specifically, several SLs reported feeling frustrated with regards to the difficulty, if not impossibility, of making the transition from teaching to research. Also, a number mentioned that internal progression / promotion was consequently, not least because they perceived that it more likely that, when vacancies occur, external candidates with doctorates and publications are preferred over internal candidates. This, many said, was demoralising.

The most precarious role: the 'robot' teacher

In the study, 3% of interviewees and 3% of survey respondents were ALs, representative of overall staffing levels at the institution (3.7%, of whom 38.1% are female and 61.9 % male). Similarly, 3% of those interviewed and 3% of survey respondents were SPH staff, compared with an institution proportion of 6.2% (61.11% female and 38.89% male).

Three of the four ALs interviewed were female; as discussed previously, these three female ALs had all self-demoted from being an L. They had found their previous role too stressful, involving too many administrative tasks, including module leadership and pastoral responsibility for students, in addition to teaching duties. They all reported that as Ls they had a poor work-life balance but now they enjoyed just teaching and having no other responsibilities. All were on fixed-term permanent contracts and this suited them, noting that the difference in pay was marginal but the responsibility difference significant. The male AL was semi-retired, stating that it suited him to just teach and have no further responsibility. He was also on a fixed term permanent contract.

When interviewed, ALs and SPH staff acknowledged similar concerns as other respondents with regards to the implications of institutional praxis. However, they admitted that, on a day-to-day basis, they were less affected than staff in other roles given that their responsibilities do not involve them in many internal matters other than teaching. In terms of space, however, the lack of a base room with their own shelving, desk and computer negatively impacts their lived experience.

Inevitably, perhaps, SPH staff perceived themselves to be the most insecure of all staff. In addition, their sense of precarity was enhanced by frequent mistakes in their pay; all those interviewed reported that their payslips were often incorrect, resulting in anxiety and, sometimes, sleepless nights. They also admitted to being preoccupied with securing permanent fixed term contracts to give more stability to their lives. Indeed, in contrast to other groups of respondents with excessive workloads and consequently a poor work-life balance, ALs and SPH staff acknowledged that, being free of many responsibilities, they enjoy a relatively good work-life balance and flexibility. However, ALs often on temporary or fixed-term contracts and SPH staff in particular are in the most precarious roles as they often do not know from one semester to the next whether they will have teaching hours to undertake:

> I am a teacher, not an academic yet. An academic does both teaching and
> research. My contracts are insecure, I don't know from one semester to another

if I am to get work and how many hours and I have two jobs, one here for the time being and one at another institution. It's bitty contracts here and there. How am I supposed to live? Also, payroll here rarely get my pay correct. It can be stressful. I don't even have a desk or shelf to call my own to leave stuff on. I see myself as an 'academic robot' who just follows orders. Colleagues are great though and very supportive and I know I am needed for the time being as teaching staff are stretched. (SPH-PO15)

One L PO7 highlighted the fact that 'we are so dependent on casual staff without whom this course couldn't run…but this is not good for them nor the students.' This is reflected in the literature (Brown & Carasso, 2013; Crimmins, 2016; May, Strachan & Peetz, 2013; Percy & Beaumont, 2008; Pembroke 2019; Taberner, 2018; UCU Report, 2019). Grove (2018) refers to this group as the growing 'academic precariat'.

The 'best' academic role(s)?
(a)   Professors
Intuitively it might be assumed that within the hierarchy of academic roles, the 'best' (within the context of a marketised university) is that of professor. Certainly, in this study, this assumption is supported by the perceptions of other academic staff who in the interviews suggested that a professor is the 'true academic'; professors are considered to be at the pinnacle of their academic career and, for many academics particularly those interested in research, becoming a professor is the end goal. This is reflected in the literature (Teichler & Hoehle, 2013). More specifically, the perception amongst respondents was that that the roles of professor (and reader – see below) offer a relatively better working environment (including enjoying their own single office space) and that these roles offer the most jurisdiction and relative control over their work practices. As noted shortly, the research fellow role is perceived as offering similar benefits, though to a lesser extent although it remains 'a research active role where you can carve out your work as you see fit without the pressures of course leadership and a high teaching load.' (SL-PO2)

For this study, 10% of interviewees and 3% of survey respondents were professors (the institutional proportion is 5%, 35.53% female and 64.47% male). Results from the survey revealed that professors are older and long serving, and still enjoy many comparative freedoms and a degree of autonomy which other categories of academic staff do not benefit from to the same extent. Some indicated they enjoyed celebrity in their field and the international networks that their research brought them. Older professors (those with less than 5 years to retirement) reported that they do not have a

formal workload nor the same pressure to publish as perhaps their younger/ mid-career equals. In the context of institutional praxis, many expressed their frustration about not being able to influence institutional decision to any great extent and, without exception, shared the same concerns and frustrations around institutional praxis as respondents in other academic positions.

Unfortunately, no female professors were interviewed; hence no conclusions could be drawn with regards to potential gender-based differences in their lived working experience. All those interviewed were long serving, between 15 and 25 years, and were between 56 and 63 years of age. All were full time and permanent members of staff. All three professors talked about the freedom they enjoyed pursuing what really interests them and that they believed they are privileged. Indeed, they recognised the privileges they enjoy: as one (PO25) observed, 'I know I am lucky, I have my own office, but I do feel sorry for other unhappy staff who are stuffed into multiple occupancy offices'. They were also more optimistic about their own work environment than other staff, particularly their degree of autonomy: 'I know am complicit in my own overwork, so I don't need someone to tell me what needs to be done' (PO25). Consequently, although they admitted that the boundaries between work and home are blurred, they accept this, noting that however much work they were expected to do, it was never going to be as difficult for them as for their course leader colleagues with teaching intensive workloads.

(b) Readers

In the research, 10% of interviewees and 4% of survey respondents were Readers (within the institution, 3% of academic staff are Readers, 48.8% female and 51.92% male). Those interviewed were between 36 and 45 years of age and have between 11 and 20 years of service. One stark finding that emerged during interview was that both female readers revealed that they were seriously considering self-demotion back to SL owing to the pressure of grant capture and having a poor work-life balance. Moreover, both indicated that they would not even consider becoming a professor in future, believing the pressure would be even greater. One also said she preferred to do her research but not be in the public eye so much. Another female reader who is also a mother said she could not do her job without the support of her parents. Interestingly, the male reader did not allude to any of these concerns.

All the Readers identified the privilege they felt to be able to focus on what interests them in a work scenario and were also optimistic about the potential for collaborative research and networks beyond the confines of their university and the opportunities to

travel. They all lamented, as indeed did the professors and research fellows, that increasing bureaucracy was manifested in an excessive number of approval panels and processes to negotiate when conducting their own research and, in particular, when supervising postgraduate research students. Also similar to Professors, Readers acknowledged that their workloads would never be as excessive as excessive as those colleagues in other academic roles, particularly SLs and Ls. Readers either had single or double occupancy offices but found all the same concerns and frustrations around institutional praxis themes as all other respondents.

(c) Research Fellows

3% of those interviewed and 5% of survey respondents were Research Fellows (compared with 5.8% institutionally, 86.33% being female and 16.67% male. Only one older female member of staff with 11-20 years' experience who worked part-time was interviewed. As a result, no gender, age, length of service or contractual difference related to biodata could be established. However, as with Professors and Readers, the main priority for this category of staff was research, how to get funding and how to get ethical approval as quickly as possible. Unlike Professors, the Research Fellow had to share a multiple occupancy office which she did not find conducive to her work and found all the same concerns and frustrations around institutional praxis themes considered earlier in this chapter.

PLs

The role of the Principal Lecturer (PL), typically found only within post-1992 institutions, is different to all other academic staff roles which are either research or teaching oriented. The PLs' main task is to allocate workloads, appraise staff and carry out any other school management tasks delegated to them, although some also have relatively small teaching commitments. Hence, the PL role is perceived by other staff categories as doing little teaching, little if any research and no line management. Rather, respondents commented that PLs are academic leads but not a line manager: 'They dish out workloads and appraise staff. They do very little teaching nor research. They are neither manager nor academic' (SL- PO11). Some described PLs as 'career academics'; others viewed them as an 'academic manager' as opposed to a 'managed academic', using the terms coined by Winter (2009). One interviewee was more critical:

> PLs merely masquerade as academic staff. Many of them do not teach, nor do many have PhDs nor a research record. What do they do apart from appraise staff, where most of the appraisees are better qualified than them, and gather data for the Head of School?' (L-PO17)

For this study, 10% of interviewees and 7% of survey respondents were PLs, compared witan institutional proportion of 7.8% of academic staff, 50.86% being female and 49.14% male. In the survey, the age range was between 46 and 60 years of age and all were long serving staff and had more than 20 years' service; one even had over 30 years of service. Two females and one male PL were interviewed. One younger female PL with school-aged children reported that she had a very poor work-life balance which has impacted on her health and wellbeing; she had contemplated self-demotion but is planning to go part time. The other two are full-time staff. The older female staff member and the male PL did not acknowledge facing similar challenges. Other than gender, biodata variables appeared not to be significant in this role category.

The main perception reported by PLs was that increasingly they found they were having to give more work to fewer staff, something they found a challenge, particularly at a time when many experienced staff were leaving teaching roles to be filled with fewer staff. Nevertheless, they considered that they enjoyed a relative ability to shape their day-to-day work practices although, again, they shared all the same concerns and frustrations around institutional praxis as reported by other participants in the research.

5.4.5.3 The practitioner or accidental academic

A distinctive group of academics involved in this research comprised the 'practitioner academic' and 'clinical academic', or individuals who still work in practice as a solicitor, dentist, consultant, nurse or General Practitioner but also work as an academic in the case study institution, bridging the educational gap between theoretical knowledge and professional practice. Those who come from vocation- and practice-based fields, such as nursing, social work, performing arts or law, often are part teacher and part practitioner; they continue to work in their field to maintain and update their skills and knowledge which then informs their classroom teaching. Many of these would not identify themselves as academics but as 'accidental academics' or university lecturers or teachers.

Notably, clinical lecturers (CLs) are on a different pay spine to all other academic staff and are paid significantly more, often in line with a doctor's, dentist's and/or NHS consultant's salary. Unlike all other academic staff, these CL staff have dedicated administrators and enjoy a staff common room.

In this study, 6.6% of interviewees and 3% of survey respondents were CLs, the corresponding institutional proportion being 4.4% of academic staff of which 40.85% are female and 59.15 % male. Only two male clinical staff were interviewed, so no gender difference could be established. One was 45-54 age group and the other 55-64. Both had worked at the case study institution for less than five years, but both viewed working at the university as a more positive experience than working for the NHS. One worked full-time as a clinical academic although he worked in practice two days per month as a Locum GP and had previously worked for the NHS. The other was a retired NHS consultant and worked part time helping students benefit from his years of practice experience. Differences in their lived experience here related to age, length of service, and were difficult to determine. However, the full-time CL talked of the workload increasing in intensity, with student numbers rising every year (he is a course leader) but the staffing numbers not increasing proportionately to the same extent.

Unlike any other staff, CL staff have dedicated administrative support, their own school office and a staff common room and, as noted, enjoy significantly higher pay scales than regular academic staff. They are, thus, to a great extent shielded from some of the outcomes of marketization: 'We have dedicated admin staff in our school which is great. I have no knowledge of what goes on in other parts of the university' (CL-PO29). Nevertheless, they are aware of the concerns and frustrations surrounding contemporary institutional praxis.

5.4.5.4 Summary of roles

This section has revealed that there are very different lived experiences amongst academic staff dependent upon on specific roles. This, in turn, points to a fragmented academy in a post-1992 university in terms of:

- either teaching/ administration role or research role determining low or high-status work practices
- differences in perceived roles being desirable or not
- differences in career progression opportunities dependent on role
- differences in workload
- differences in daily work environment and conditions, office space
- differences in administrative support
- differences in precarity
- differences in salary (some significant)

Significantly, many of these outcomes are not alluded to explicitly in the extant literature and hence, can be considered an original contribution to knowledge.

5.4.6 Contract type (full or part-time/ permanent or not)

The great majority (93%) of interviewees and focus group members were on full-time permanent contracts. Similarly, 91% of survey respondents were permanent and 84% were full-time, represent the majority of those participating in the study. This is not representative of wider employment in HE; according to Crimmins (2016: 346), roughly 50% of all HE teaching staff are on causal contracts and most are female.

Evidence from the literature suggests that casual staff feel insecure; moreover, this work precarity is a stressor for this group (Pembroke, 2019). Many staff on such contracts feel threatened and insecure, especially those on fixed-term or hourly paid casual contracts (Farnham, 2009). These casual staff often do not have intricate familiarity with all aspects of university operations further enhancing their sense of precarity. As noted earlier in this chapter, respondents in roles defined by non-permanent or casual contracts (e.g. SPHs) share similar concerns.

In contrast, 53% (plus 27% undecided) of respondents on full and permanent contracts have different concerns, with many reporting that they are surviving rather than thriving at work, a point substantiated by Morrish (2019). Some other correlations emerged from the survey; notably, permanent and full-time staff are more critical of institutional praxis than casual part-time and non-permanent staff (see appendix iv).

In the online survey, staff with full and permanent contracts also indicated that they work much longer hours and do more work at home than their part time/ non-permanent counterparts. Conversely, part-time staff feel more supported than do their full-time colleagues. Many of these are supported by their full-time colleagues. More specifically, full-time and permanent staff are more critical of heavy workloads, of having a poor work-life balance, of receiving little to no support from the institution and of insufficient staffing levels. They are also more likely than part-time / casual staff to express the view that that quality office/ classroom space and its availability is important to enable them function well at work. Reflecting the discussion in preceding sections, it was also full-time and permanent staff who overwhelmingly agreed in the survey that the commercial imperative increasingly supersedes pedagogical decisions, who are more likely to feel de-professionalised and more likely to disagree that the policy of centralisation makes the university more effective in facilitating teaching and research. They are more likely to support the argument that that the use of IT-based

communication has had a detrimental effect. They believe that a positive academic staff experience is linked to the student experience and that greater focus and investment in the academic staff experience would benefit universities and their students. Finally, permanent staff are more likely to agree that the academic voice must be heard, respected and maintained for the benefit of the institution.

Generally, full-time and permanent staff are the core staff responsible for all teaching, course and module leadership, administrative and research matters so they are familiar and dealing with everything at operational level on a daily basis and what is really going on. They intimately understand the context of institutional praxis and its implications on work practices and respond more critically than their part-time, non-permanent colleagues. These are more peripheral staff who are to some extent on the outside of the operational intricacies who do not have the familiarity to critique anything beyond their teaching environment.

5.4.7 Previous professional experience outside academia

One unexpected outcome of the research was that that 90% of those participating in the online survey had previous careers prior to joining the HE sector, 89% of whom had worked in the tertiary sector. It was also assumed that previous 'external' professional experience would influence perceptions of the contemporary HE work experience. This, however, did not prove to be the case in this study, in itself an interesting and novel outcome in terms of staff perceptions of and responses of the marketisation of universities. It may be conjectured, however, that previous work experience in a commercial environment diminishes the potential for negative perception of and responses to the marketisation of HE; further research in this context might be illuminating.

Noteworthy is that nationality and discipline were, for ethical reasons, not included as variables in the online survey as it might lead to academic staff identification. These two variables may have been interesting in terms of adding further nuanced perspectives on the lived experience of academic staff at a post-1992 institution and, similarly, could be the focus of further research.

5.5 What staff consider could be done to enhance their lived experience at work

In addition to seeking to identify and critically assess how staff view themselves as academics and their lived work experience within a post-1992 university, this research has a third aim: to identify how academics believe their experience could be enhanced

as a basis for offering a novel contribution to practice (a requirement of professional doctoral research). In other words, the study seeks to propose a targeted response (at the level of the case study institution) to the issues and challenges identified and discussed in this research. The purpose of this section, therefore, is to present respondents' ideas or opinions as to how their concerns surrounding institutional practice might be addressed, thereby improving their work environment and conditions and, potentially, enhancing the experience of all academic staff. That is, the actions proposed by respondents might contribute to the reversal of the de-professionalisation, loss of agency and impoverishment of academic practices perceived by many respondents in this research.

The actions proposed by respondents are presented below under the five theme headings utilised in the first part of this chapter. It should be noted that no critique of these proposed actions is offered here, but that the following, concluding chapter draws them together with conclusions from the research as a whole to offer recommendations for practice.

Interestingly, some participants in the research observed that this was the first time that they had been asked specifically about their experience of being an academic at a post-1992 institution, about what, how and why they feel both as an academic and the nature of their work. Moreover, some were taken aback that they should be asked what they suggest might improve the academic staff experience at their institution. Many said they found the overall process cathartic.

5.5.1 Actions: Theme A (rationalisation and mounting workloads)
Under theme A, respondents' suggestions inevitably focus on enhancing the staff experience through more realistic workloads and effective support:

According to one professor PO25:

> We need to listen to existing staff pleas to employ more staff and be honest about how much work we do. Don't get rid of staff and then work the remainder to death. Have sufficient staff to do a quality job. We have the money. The fault and responsibility lie with managers first and foremost. They allocate and implement the workload. They can hire more permanent, full time not casual staff and we do urgently need more staff. Ground level staffing (academic and support) has been cut to the bone. The university has a legal duty of care to staff not to be

overworked and have no work-life balance, which then impacts their health and wellbeing. Maybe the government needs to start measuring this? This would shake things up a bit.

Other suggestions included:

The university must prioritise their people not exploit them. (L-PO5)

Hire a dedicated Pro VC who is responsible for all aspects of academic staff engagement, health, wellbeing and work-life balance. This needs to be a central focus of the university. The university needs to support staff to support students. (Reader-PO20)

Academic staff need to be supported by dedicated administrative staff per course, who know the programme and students well. These need to be located in the same building to enable all academics to concentrate on and develop their areas of expertise in teaching and in research. (SL-PO2)

5.5.2 Actions: Theme B (standardisation, commodification, centralisation and monitoring of all work processes and depersonalised internal communication and work relationships)

As discussed in the first part of this chapter, the standardisation of all work processes and the depersonalisation of communications, both underpinned by the pervasive use of IT, was a major source of concern for all respondents. Inevitably, then, many proposed actions focused on this theme:

The university needs to commission an academic staff-led comprehensive internal communications audit. Re-personalise rather than de-humanise all internal communications. Find ways to reconnect staff from across all parts of the university. Find ways to build and cultivate working relationships in all areas. Maybe encourage less remote working and more face to face. (Reader-PO24)

We should have staff open days so staff can get to know their own university better and improve networks across campus. (SL-PO11)

In spite of the digitalisation of work, we need to adopt different internal communications processes which encourage a new ethos of face-to -face or by phone communications preferred over all online to build relationships and good

internal comms. No more generic service email addresses. All academic staff to know who is responsible for what and their contact details across all services. Reduce online forms and convoluted bureaucratic processes. (L-PO28)

Consult with academic users of all new IT before launching it to check it is fit for purpose. (SL-PO16)

Campus services, like HR, payroll, marketing, international office, travel and so on, must reach out to academic staff, not the other way round, and see how they can support them face to face and not be a self-serving bureaucratic service which happens to be located in a university. (Reader-PO14)

The website, intranet need to be improved to be user friendly. An up-to-date organisational map to be made available. All entrances to campus buildings to have a display of those staff in that building: recent photos, responsibilities, office locations and contact details. This will inform students, colleagues from another building and external visitors. (SL-PO10)

We need to decentralise at least administrative services back to schools to support academic staff to support students better. Reduce bureaucracy. Allow flexibility rather than a one size fits all approach. (Professor-PO8)

All university systems, administrative processes, resources must support academic staff to be the best they can be in their work and not to be obstacles. Remove barriers to university communication and a cookie cutter, overly bureaucratic approach which impedes getting the job done. We need to create a more flexible, dynamic, responsive, agile, flatter people friendly organisation. (Reader-PO20)

Abandon the audit culture in the form of monitoring and surveillance and this obsessive management concern with measuring everything. Scrap the workload model as it is not fit for purpose and which has not been nationally approved. It does not measure accurately all work to be done and only infuriates staff when they see the lack of transparency and fairness. It is the whim of appraisers to manipulate and assign work. (SL-PO1)

Most of all staff need to be trusted as professionals to do the job well. Stop the standardisation of work processes and the attempt to micro-manage staff which is

de-skilling our academic profession. Staff and managers need to work together to find solutions. (RF-PO6)

Staff need to have a voice in decision making on local issues; democratise. (L-PO17)

5.5.3 Actions: Theme C (poor campus space management)

The research revealed perceptions of poor space management that impinges on staff and student experiences. Suggestions to address this included:

Conduct a workspace audit where academic staff are to be genuinely consulted about their workstation design, office and location. Create an environment where staff can do their best work. (L-PO28)

University to have a policy of staff offices to be a maximum of double occupancy. This would also solve being able to meet with students 1:1 and not in stairwells. Every school to have a base room for SPH staff with computers and shelving or lockers to be able to leave books and materials here. (SL-PO2)

All classrooms must have a window, ventilation, computer, overhead projector, white board and suitable chairs and tables easy to move around for different classes. All classrooms in every school building to belong to staff from that building/school. To avoid them (and their students) being sent all over the campus in one day. Also, we could have dedicated classrooms then. (L-PO7)

Every school to have a staff common room with soft seating and kitchen area so staff can mix and relax. (L-PO3)

Some cafes and canteens to remain open throughout summer and vacation period. (AL-PO18)

Free car parking for all staff. It is paying for it and there being no guaranteed space that staff find distasteful. If staff must continue to pay then an imaginative, realistic solution needs to be found. Alternatively, have a park and ride system. University to buy a field outside of Preston town centre used for parking then staff bussed in to campus every 10 minutes. (PL-PO12)

5.5.4 Actions: Theme D (poor communication between senior management and staff)

A common theme within the literature is the perception of a distance and values incongruence between university management and staff. Unsurprisingly, this emerged as dominant theme in this research, and elicited a number of proposed actions:

We need a confident and open senior management who actively listen to the academic voice who focus on the institutional long-term rather than the short-term personal gain. We need to have Management By Walking About. (Reader-PO20)

There needs to be time invested in creating a shared culture and vision, a clearer organisational strategy in which there is less top down communication and more participation in decision making by expert academic staff. (CL-PO29)

We need to democratise and have a senate. (Professor-PO9)

We need upward appraisals of line managers and senior managers. This feedback should be done by a third party so it can't be swept under the carpet. (L-PO28)

Senior managers and VCs who leave the university in less than five years should been penalised financially and their current salaries drastically reduced. The VC should not earn more than the PM here or anywhere. We, as an institution, could lead the way on this. (Reader-PO24)

Vital for Senior Management to consider themselves as colleagues and on the same side. They need to listen and be guided by their biggest asset the academic staff. All decision making must consider the impact on academic work which is our core business. (Reader-PO20)

Senior management need to find ways to repair their poor relationship with their staff and only then will communications, trust and respect between us improve. (SL-PO1)

Maybe we should have rotating management, so no-one gets above themselves or too comfortable and keeps the staff and student experience central to all thinking and decision making. (SL-PO2)

We need a sabbatical system for <u>all</u> staff if we are to be a more research active institution and to develop, empower talent within the organisation. (RF-PO6)

It makes all the difference when you have a Head of School or an appraiser (who in my opinion should be the same person as was always the case in the past). They need to be supportive and fair, not attempt to micro-manage staff, someone who treats staff like adults and just trusts people to get on with their job. (Reader-PO14).

5.5.5 Actions: Theme E (lack of investment in a good academic staff experience)

A number of suggestions were made that focus more broadly on ways to enhance the staff experience:

The university priority and budget focus on 'the student experience' but none on staff experience. That can't be right. Surely, they are inextricably linked. (RF-PO6)

A 'Staff First' Project would ensure improved quality of life for academics which would then improve the student experience. Things like increased time brought about by increased administrative and technical support to enable positive experiences for all concerned. (Reader-PO20)

New university ethos: Happy staff happy students. Support staff to support our students, it's not rocket science. (L-PO17)

Academic staff experience (ASE) would boost morale and should be a priority as that of students as both are related. ASE should be part of university narrative. (SL-PO10)

A positive staff experience could end up being our USP where academic staff feel valued, trusted and involved. The university needs to build a national reputation for looking after its staff which is recognised for being a great place to work. This in itself would have a positive impact on the student experience. It would be a by-product of this. (Professor-PO8)

Edge Hill University has been ranked Best University Workplace 2015, Best UK Employer 2016 and Workplace of the Year 2017. There is no reason why we can't win such awards too in future if we invest more in the staff? (L-PO3)

5.6 Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to present and consider the outcomes of the sequential mixed, multi-phase empirical research undertaken at the case study post-1992 HE institution. What this research reveals, is that, overall, the lived workplace experiences of academic staff share a number of common features but, at the same time, also demonstrate differences that are dependent on or reflect variables in staff demographic/biographical profiles.

To summarise, the findings in this chapter have been presented and critically analysed under three broad headings:

- **Shared perceptions of the self and academic work environment**

A key finding is that staff perceptions of their working conditions and environment are determined by their own values, beliefs and responses to institutional praxis in their place of work, but that they share common concerns, discussed here under five distinct themes, regarding forms of institutional praxis that they consider to be neoliberal, performative manifestations borne out of the marketised HE sector. These have resulted in what all staff perceive to be important consequences for their role and practices as academics: the de-professionalisation and the impoverishment and dilution of core work practices. Davis (2011) and Jones et al. (2020) would define these as institutional performative, neoliberal practices of rationality against faculty owing to:

Theme A: Rationalisation of staff and mounting workloads

Theme B: Standardisation, centralisation and monitoring of all work processes and depersonalised internal communication and work relationships

Theme C: Campus space management

Theme D: Communications between senior management and staff

Theme E: Lack of investment in a good academic staff experience.

These all accrue to assert an institutional neoliberal performative regime of metric power and the logic of efficiency in the name of profitability over effectiveness and quality, managerial autocracy over academic democracy, and imposed performativity and surveillance over the academy and their work practices. The study reveals that hidden neoliberal forces, perhaps hidden beneath the surface of seemingly benign concrete practices, serve management domination over the academy. This exposes the subtle, complex and darker side of university life for post-1992 academics today. From the evidence emerging from this case study, academics lack agency, feel exploited and are powerless to effect real local change to their own work environment;

the research highlights the imposed audit culture and the commodification of all work tasks which divests academics of control over many aspects of their daily work practices. Hence, a dichotomy for academics exists between what they actually do at work and what they think they ought to be doing as professionals. In response they do what is needed to navigate their context, survive and cope with their day-to-day situation.

- **Variations in academics' lived experiences and responses**

The research reveals that although staff occupy the same work environment and share similar academic values and many of the same concerns with regards to institutional praxis, there are also a number of differences in their lived experience and responses that reflect demographic/biographical variables. Specifically, the results indicate that different perceptions may be associated with variations in length of service (indirectly age related), gender, role and contract type, each of which influences or frames the lived experience either positively or negatively. Furthermore, responses to their work environment vary according to such biographical variables, revealing varying degrees of agency in terms of individual academic discretionary effort and choice to participate fully, partially or withdraw fully or partially from the workplace. Evidently, however, some of the negatively experienced variations for certain staff can be addressed through enhanced communication and cooperation between management and academic staff.

- **What staff think should be done to enhance their lived experience at work**

Finally, in order to better align institutional praxis with academic agents and their work practices, the suggestions of respondents revealed in this research with regards to addressing their shared and distinctive concerns can be summarised as a collective belief that prioritising the academic staff experience would be beneficial to students, the university and society at large. Moreover, the outcomes of the research suggest that this should occur at a local institutional level, regardless of the neoliberal logic pervading the wider HE environment. Respondents indicated that particular micro-interventions to address local issues could be activated to transform organisational life, thereby rendering the academic workplace more humane and democratic. This, in turn would facilitate a shift in power back towards the academy, creating a more emancipated, equal, pragmatic, fair distribution of power, control and influence within the institution.

The following final chapter summarises the thesis, draws conclusions from the research and proposes ways in which practice may be enhanced.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

As established in Chapters One and Two of this thesis, the endemic effects of the corporatisation of the UK HE sector over recent decades have, in the view of many commentators, reshaped the work of academic staff and taken their toll on their well-being as well as on the academy as a profession more generally (Fitzgerald, White & Gunter, 2012; Hall, 2018; Tomlinson, 2017). In this context, the initial inspiration for this study was stimulated by previous research (Taberner, 2018) which had indicated that the greatest impact of marketisation on staff was within the post-1992 ('new') university sector. This interest was further heightened by the burgeoning Critical University Studies (CUS) literature which focuses, as discussed in Chapter Two, on what are predominantly considered to be the negative consequences of changes within the sector on university academics who are described by some to be 'at breaking point' (Mayo, 2019: 9).

To summarise, the key tenets of the CUS field, in which this study is located, include:

- It is a reaction to institutional forms of domination (academic capitalism, corporatisation of universities and managerialisation) from the point of view of variously situated agents.
- It promotes a critical understanding of highly contested changes in power relations away from the academy to management and administration in universities.
- It aims to unmask power relations around which social and organisational life are woven.
- It calls into question the darker aspects of organisations. It explains, is practical and normative.
- It reveals human exploitation and suffering at the hands of management control.
- It aims to mobilise and transform human lives for the better via pragmatic micro-emancipations and interventions by promoting equality and humane and democratic norms.

This study is also significant in that it was evident that assumption within the literature that these negative consequences are experienced universally. That is, within the extant literature, little if any attention has been paid to the potential for academic staff to perceive, experience and respond to the impacts of the marketisation of the sector in

different ways., was the evident assumption within the literature that these consequences are experienced universally. That is, within the extant literature, little if any attention has been paid to the potential for academic staff to perceive, experience and respond to the impacts of the marketisation of the sector in different ways.

The purpose of this research, then, has been to challenge this assumption, in so doing addressing a notable gap in the relevant CUS literature and offering a more nuanced understanding of the contemporary academic staff experience. More specifically, it has sought to identify and understand how academics in a post-1992 institution perceive themselves and their work role and how they make sense of their work environment, exploring the extent to which their perceptions of experience are shared or differ according to demographic/biographical variables such as age, gender, role/position and length of service. At the same time, as one element of a professional doctorate (DBA) programme, this study also seeks to offer a novel contribution to practice based upon the outcomes of the empirical research.

Hence, this final chapter now evaluates the extent to which the research aims, and objectives have been met, drawing conclusions from the research and highlighting its contribution to both knowledge and practice. It comprises six sections, as follows:

- Thesis summary
- A review of the research aims and objectives
- Contribution to knowledge
- Contribution to practice
- Limitations and suggestions for future research
- Final reflections

6.1 Thesis summary

Chapter One introduced the researcher's axiological stance and provided the conceptual and real-world context of the study. Specifically, successive neoliberal policies, new public management (NPM), managerialism and the marketisation of the HE sector's contemporary macro landscape in the UK were discussed together with the 'official' policymakers' perspective. In addition, Chapter One established the research aims and objectives.

Chapter Two examined and critically appraised the literature that, contrasting with the 'official' policy perspective, provides that of the insider – that is, the perspective of academics themselves, their work, conditions and environment. The literature was reviewed within the conceptual frameworks of proletarianisation through

commodification and the de-professionalisation of the academy. The notion of contested academic identities was then introduced before the chapter went on to consider the re-shaping of academic work in the contemporary, HE sector. Subsequently, the consequential hidden injuries of the academic workforce were discussed and finally, the literature on staff engagement and organisational internal communication was considered.

Chapter Three discussed the theoretical underpinnings of the research and made a case for the application of practice theory. In so doing, the literature related to practice theory was examined and the use of practice theory as a unique conceptual lens through which to view this study was justified.

Chapter Four explained the methodological approach adopted for this study and the specific methods employed. Having provided a rationale for the use of the paradigm of pragmatism, the study's ontological, epistemological and axiological stance was justified. The chapter then went on to consider the research design, methodology and methods; both a quantitative and a qualitative methodology were employed within a sequential mixed and multi-method approach. Data collection and analysis processes were described in detail. This essentially qualitative, inductive single case study, which was underpinned by a quantitative online survey to add weight to the findings, consisted of three stages:

- Focus group
- An online anonymous survey using Qualtrics
- Semi-structured interviews

Ethical issues surrounding the role of the researcher as an insider researcher were discussed, as were the issues of bias, respondent confidentiality, anonymity and triangulation.

Chapter Five presented and discussed the findings of the empirical research. It critically explored and analysed the significance and meaning of the results of the three-phase data collection process in which thematic, descriptive and inferential statistical data were gathered. Key themes emerged through coding and analysis of focus group and interview transcriptions. Descriptive and inferential statistical data emerged through the analysis of the online Qualtrics-based staff survey.

Chapter Six now concludes the study, evaluating both its position relative to the extant literature and its contribution to knowledge and practice. The limitations and suggestions for further research are discussed and, finally, the researcher reflects on her doctoral research journey.

6.2 A review of the research aims and objectives

HE in the UK in general has, over the last two decades, witnessed significant transformations which reflect what can be broadly described as the marketisation of the sector. Manifested primarily in the adoption of New Public Management (NPM) – see Section 1.2 in Chapter One – this transformation has had profound implications for the academic staff experience across the sector, though they have arguably been most keenly felt in the new, post-1992 universities. Moreover, as revealed in the burgeoning literature (see Chapter Two), the consequences of this marketisation / managerialism for academic staff are generally considered to be negative.

Significantly, however, the literature typically views academic staff as a homogeneous group; that is, the marketisation of HE is assumed to be impacting universally on all academic staff. This research has sought to challenge this assumption and to develop a more nuanced understanding of the experience of academic staff within a post-1992 university. Specifically, the aims of this study were to:

1. Critically evaluate the extent to which academics share perceptions of their experience regardless of their demographic/biographical profiles.
2. Explore critically the extent to which the perceived experience of academics within a post-1992 university varies according to age, gender, length of service, role and contract type.
3. Identify how academics believe their experience could be enhanced and, consequently, propose an applied research targeted response at the local level.

In order to meet these aims, the research had the following objectives. The extent to which these have been met is now evaluated.

1. To undertake a comprehensive, critical literature review to explore whether common themes of perceived experience in the workplace might vary according to age, gender, length of service, role, contract type.

As the literature reviewed in Chapters One and Two reveals, there is evidence of a common experience of New Public Management and, therefore, of the academy across

the UK HE sector, particularly in terms of an increasingly pervasive performative regime necessitating a metric and audit culture. This, in turn, is primarily manifested in the commodification and degradation of academic work processes resulting in academic proletarianisation and de-professionalisation.

However, the review also reveals that there is little or no in-depth discussion in the literature of distinctions in the manner in which different academic staff in a post-1992 setting may or may not experience the contemporary work environment in the HE sector, particularly regarding their individual daily lived experience and responses to their work situation. Hence, this thesis has achieved its first objective, revealing a lack of attention paid in the literature to important variations in experience as a result of different biographical profiles and, in so doing, justifying the focus of the overall aim of this thesis.

2. To evaluate the extent of academic de-professionalisation and proletarianisation and its consequences through the lens of practice theory.

In Chapter 3, an adapted new model of practice theory was developed and presented to facilitate an in-depth and nuanced understanding of the interplay of power relations between academic practitioners and their daily work practices within the institutional praxis of a specific post-1992 university. This was to be employed to explain and reveal how organisational structures and mechanisms can either facilitate or obstruct the flow of activities of academic agents and their practices, as well as pointing to tension or alignment between the three elements.

In this way, objective two was achieved. The use of this adapted new model of practice theory (Figure 3.1) has aided the evaluation of the extent of academic de-professionalisation and proletarianisation and their consequences. Consequently, Chapter 5 revealed that standardised and bureaucratised processes and a management focus on efficiency practices in the name of rationalisation of all resources to maximise profitability, metric power and control are clearly in conflict and tension with academic agents, resulting in their loss and degradation of control as professionals and the dilution of their core teaching and research work. In addition, this study demonstrates how academics perceive their work practices to be impoverished as a result of institutional praxis.

3. To employ the pragmatism paradigm within the theoretical framework of practice theory to explore the perceived work experience of academic practitioners, their reflexivity, and their agency.

The adoption of the philosophical and methodological position of pragmatism as the best fit for the study was explained in detail in Chapter 4. This enabled a flexible, pragmatic approach to the investigation whereby the research questions led the data collection. Here social facts are seen as problematic situations from the point of view of variously situated agents to be solved. Pragmatism asserts that the value of an idea is inextricably linked to its practical consequences and that knowledge is context specific and only has meaning when coupled with action. In this way, objective three has been achieved.

As revealed in Chapter 5, this case study is indeed context specific. Furthermore, the knowledge generated by the research has meaning as it is coupled with proposed actions to enhance the lived experience of academic staff by academic practitioners themselves.

4. To apply a sequential mixed-methods approach (focus group, quantitative survey, qualitative interviews) to meet the aims of the study.

Chapter 4 also provided the rationale for the multi-and mixed method sequential three phase approach via a single case study to optimise the research aims. Mixed methods and multiple lines of enquiry using a pragmatic approach were employed. This has enabled the triangulation of evidence to develop converging lines of enquiry. It was found that each stage of the study added depth which informed the next. In this way, objective four of the study has been met.

Although the study is essentially qualitative in nature, the quantitative data collected was essential to support the study aims in terms of the reach and spread of academic participants from across all parts of the university and to minimise researcher bias. The descriptive and inferential statistical data were important to establish whether there were biographical variations in experience and responses to the workplace.

5. Based on the outcomes of the research, to recommend potential actions at the local level to enhance the work experience of academics.

In Chapter 5, rich data collected from the cross-section of key witnesses and participants were reported and the meaning and significance of the results were discussed.

The empirical data revealed the de-professionalisation of the academy, the impoverishment of core work practices, common concerns about the shared work environment and important biographical variations in lived experience as key outcomes of the research, as well as highlighting the manner in which respondents believed their concerns regarding local institutional praxis might be addressed to enhance the workplace for academic staff. In this way, objective five has been met by the study. These provide the basis for proposed actions relevant to the case study institution presented below under the heading of Contribution to Practice (Section 6.4).

6.3 Contribution to knowledge

As previously discussed in this thesis, for the most part the CUS literature portrays a negative picture of the consequences of marketisation / managerialism for all academic staff as a homogeneous collective. What it does not offer, as demonstrated in the review in Chapters One and Two, is a more nuanced perspective, in particular the extent to which personal biographical variables may influence or result in differences in the perceptions, behaviours and practices of academic staff working in the HE sector. Hence, it is with this knowledge gap that this study has been primarily concerned and, though its empirical research amongst staff at a post-1992 institution (the group of universities in the UK considered to have been most susceptible to marketisation) it makes a contribution to the extant literature in a number of ways.

First, this study has provided detailed empirical evidence that supports the arguments in the literature, that metricised, standardised, depersonalised and dehumanising forms of institutional praxis are impacting negatively on academics working in what the participants in this research perceive to be an increasingly inhumane, hostile environment. Pressures and problems discussed in the literature have been revealed to be systemic and structurally entrenched within a post-1992 marketised university. The aforementioned shape the shared problematic, oppressive work environment, with repercussions for academic agents as professionals.

Second, the research has revealed that academic staff within a post-1992 institution not only hold clear perceptions of themselves as academics but also share a belief system with regards to their role as academic professionals and what is possible to

achieve within the current boundaries of institutional praxis. Supporting the wider literature, this study confirms that academics' pedagogic values of the effectiveness and quality of 'service delivery' run counter to the values of those in authority whose perceived neoliberal focus is believed to be motivated by the desire for efficiency, minimising operational costs whilst maximising income generation and bottom-line profitability.

Third, the perceived consequences of institutional praxis within a post-1992 institution have been found to be the alienation, disempowerment and deskilling of staff, leading to their perceived de-professionalisation and what is seen as the impoverishment and dilution of core teaching and research work practices.

Fourth and, arguably, most notably, this research has revealed that although academic staff in a post-1992 institution occupy the same work environment and share similar academic values and the same concerns regarding institutional praxis, there are key variations in lived experience and responses to their situation associated with biographical differences. In particular, length of service, age, gender, role and contract type are those variables which set academics apart and fragment the academy. Briefly, the key themes are that: longer serving staff have organisational memory and are more critical of the consequences of the marketisation of the sector and often find ways to circumvent procedures where possible and cultivate working relationships with campus service staff to survive; younger staff starting out in academia feel exploited, given little support and have few opportunities to become permanent; mid-career staff talk about feeling 'trapped' in HE for reasons around their pension, even if they want to leave they cannot; all staff find the work environment increasingly hostile but as a consequence only female staff report self-demoting, going part time, or retiring early to gain some semblance of a work-life balance; in terms of role as a biographical variable, there are perceptions of the worst and best academic roles to have; unsurprisingly, causal staff feel most insecure, permanent staff report they are merely surviving and not thriving and are most critical of institutional praxis. Collectively, these contribute to a new and more nuanced insight beyond the hitherto assumption that staff who work in a post-1992 institution are a homogenous collective in terms of their perceptions and experience and response to the contemporary HE environment. This represents a novel, original and important contribution to knowledge.

Fifth, this study contributes significantly to debates surrounding the experience of academic staff in universities, in particular through offering positive and constructive micro-interventions about how academics themselves believe their lived experience at

work could be transformed. This adds to extant knowledge and the literature and is an important addition to current field of Critical University Studies (CUS). It may also inform further research as discussed further below.

Sixth, this study is novel in terms of the approach adopted; that is, through the application of an adapted model of practice theory (Figure 3.1). This offers a new conceptual lens into the dynamic workings of a post-1992 university, revealing inherent power relations, management/ administration controls and influence, and the lack of agency amongst academic constituents and their work practices. Not only does this model facilitate the identification of commonalities in the academic lived experience related to structural institutional praxis, but also illuminates the variations in experience according to length of service, age, gender, role and contract type. The model itself represents a contribution to knowledge as a novel means of navigating and investigating this topic.

Finally, the methodological paradigm of pragmatism together with a multi-phase, mixed-method approach also represents a contribution in as much as 'insider' research has, to date, been largely inductive employing a mono-method approach. One notable exception to this are psychological studies into academic stress, health and wellbeing which employ deductive methods located in a positivist paradigm.

In summary, the study's contribution to the field of CUS knowledge is significant as it provides a detailed and more nuanced critical understanding of highly contested social and organisational changes in power relations away from the academy to the neoliberal practices of management and administration in universities. Certainly, the research demonstrates the institutional forms of domination (academic capitalism, corporatisation of universities and managerialisation) that are highlighted in the CUS literature. At the same time however, it also reveals not only variations in experience of and responses to this domination according to individual circumstances but also an underlying positive commitment to the profession amongst most if not all academics. Hence, the study challenges to some extent the dominant negative position of CUS, but also contributes to its central tenet of promoting change by offering potential practical actions to address the darker aspects of the university work environment and to transform academic lives for the better.

6.4 Contribution to practice

In addition to making contributions to knowledge, this research also makes a potential novel contribution to practice. Specifically, it offers a positive, constructive departure

from the negative narrative which dominates much of the current literature, suggesting practical actions, interventions and solutions which, from the perspectives of academics, might respond to the challenges highlighted in this thesis. In other words, based upon the outcomes of the empirical research and their analysis in relation to the extant literature, it is possible to draw a number of conclusions as to ways in which the perceived poor work environment, the de-professionalisation of academics and the impoverishment and dilution of their work practices might be addressed locally. Collectively, these form a series of local targeted micro-interventions which might represent a basis for discussion between senior management and academics that focus on a means of enhancing the work environment for all academics and their individual lived staff experience, thereby according equal significance to the academic staff experience as to the student experience.

The following proposed transformative, constructive and practical micro-interventions are based upon the research at the case study institution. Similar research at other post-1992 institutions might or might not produce similar outcomes yet, arguably, some or all of these proposals are likely to be of relevance to the academic staff experience in most institutions in the post-1992 group.

6.4.1 Enhancing the academic experience: proposals for micro-interventions

The conclusion that can be drawn from this research is that academic respondents participating in the study clearly desire that attention should be paid to those aspects of institutional praxis which impede academic staff and hamper their daily work. This would begin to provide a basis for positive actions to enhance their work environment. For a targeted response to succeed in any institution, the starting point is, inevitably, the need for open, frank discussions between management and staff as a positive way forward. However, the problem arguably lies in how to initiate these. It is suggested that the solution could lie initially in establishing 'bottom-up' conversations, from meetings at subject group levels upwards to stimulate an upward flow of information to faculty level and above – though this would rely on the willingness and ability of lower to middle management to direct the conversation in that trajectory. Nevertheless, it would avoid the typical confrontational, 'us-and them' approach and perhaps encourage the necessary sense of trust. A positive action for institutions is to proactively cultivate and demonstrate trust in their staff. As Covey and Merrill (2018) suggest, trust is the glue that sticks successful organisations together.

The areas for conversation to raise awareness and dialogue with regards to improving the academic staff experience, their health and wellbeing through the enhancement of

their work environment (Themes A-E) and addressing any negative variations in the experiences of certain groups of academics, are as identified in this research. Many of these are implicitly concerned with reducing and refocusing workloads on academic activities, and could include:

(i)   a more considered introduction and use of technology based on a more comprehensive cost/benefit analysis;

(ii)   reducing excessive audit procedures;

(iii)   refocusing academic work on teaching away from administrative tasks;

(iv)   transforming academic office/ classroom/social spaces to better meet the needs of all staff and students;

(v)   creating a strong local academic community by understanding, supporting and mentoring all academic colleagues: new, younger, mid-career, older, female, staff paid hourly, teaching and course leaders, research-active, practitioner and clinical lecturers.

(vi)   prioritising the staff experience locally;

(vii)   empowering academic staff as professionals and involving them in local decision-making processes that concern pedagogical issues;

(viii) naming and negotiating institutional structures and praxis which impede and constrain internal operations and practices;

(ix)   re-personalising internal communications and work relationships across the university;

(x)   sharing constructive ideas about how the university could win the Best University Workplace 2021/22 and beyond.

The practical benefits of this research include:

- This research will build upon some practical issues highlighted in this thesis
- The outputs will enhance the staff and student experience at the case study institution by facilitating higher levels of staff engagement within the institution.
- The outputs can identify improved methods of communication by management with academic staff, thus improving staff morale.
- The outputs could provide guidelines for reducing staff stress within the University, thus cutting back staff absence due to workplace stress.
- Most importantly, the outputs could positively transform working lives of academic staff within the institution, which will benefit the University, academic staff and the student experience.

Another practical though indirect intervention could be achieved by publishing the results of this research in academic journals and presenting at relevant conferences.

More generally, and importantly, this study shows that academic staff have a vested long-term interest in an institution's success. A highly intelligent workforce with a wide range of expertise and knowledge is a vital resource for management and, hence, a necessary action is for an institution is to have clear communication channels for all staff to participate in all local decision making. Moreover, as the literature highlights, prioritising staff engagement makes good business sense; therefore, promoting a genuine positive work experience would address any local negative, demotivating staff perceptions. Staff need to feel supported and protected by local management to positively support students.

Another clear practical outcome of the research is that staff would benefit from an explicit understanding or acknowledgement of the identity of their institution in order to frame their perceptions, activities and ambitions. Hence, a logical action is for institutions to clarify institutional identity as either a research informed teaching university or an unequivocal statement of intent to become a research-intensive institution.

Based upon the results of this research, it is also evident that institutions need to focus on enhancing the academic lived experience of those staff who are perceived or recognised as have the most difficult or challenging roles and to seek strategies to address these at the local level. In addition, all facets of the health, wellbeing and work-life balance for all staff could be prioritised by institutions and, as some respondents suggested, the appointment of a senior manager with this remit (and an appropriate budget) would be a constructive way forward.

At the local level, managers are unable to change the macro, institutional and wider environment of neoliberalism and the marketisation of the sector; however, a practical and positive step to address the challenges identified in this research would be for managers to emphasise and promote the importance of collegiality in all internal relations and communications. This would address Chomsky's (1999) lament that misguided corporations put profit over people. Putting its people first and foremost over profit for any institution is good for staff morale and makes good business sense. As the literature indicates, profitability will follow if staff are fully engaged. For a service organisation such as a university, it can only be as good as its people. It is these internal customers and front-line academic staff on whose performance everyone and

everything depends (Bedarker and Pandita, 2014; Berry and Parasuraman,1991; Drucker, 1955; Rao, 2017).

One interviewee captures and summarises the staff sentiment aptly: 'The good news is that all staff concerns are reasonable, fixable and relatively inexpensive if the will of management is there to address these.'

A softer, more collegial, respectful management approach may help to move forward and enhance relations and communication amicably with staff. Such an approach would allow for any issues arising to be pragmatically resolved, permitting the university to focus on being a great place for students to study and a great place for academic staff to thrive. The key is staff and managers finding better solutions together, thus ensuring a university's survival and success in the face of fierce competition.

6.5 Limitations and suggestions for further research

Whilst this research has successfully met the overall aims and objectives and made a contribution to both knowledge and practice, it nevertheless has some limitations. First, by its very nature, the study provides a comprehensive yet 'snapshot' piece of ethnographic research. Thus, the findings are case-specific and, therefore, are not generalisable, not least because it is difficult to determine whether the post-1992 institution in this study is 'typical' in terms of its size, in terms of student roll and staff numbers. Consequently, further research, perhaps in the form of a comparative study, might elicit findings of wider applicability across all post-1992 institutions. Indeed, the question of whether a correlation exists between issues around institutional praxis and the size of an institution would benefit from investigation, as would any possible correlation between the size of institution and its impact on individual academics' sense of well-being and, indeed, collegiality. Despite this lack of generalisability, the case study findings are nevertheless reliable, valid, authentic, trustworthy and relatable. Second, a further limitation of this study was the role of the researcher as an insider and the consequential challenge of maintaining objectivity and minimising bias wherever possible. And third, one key perspective missing from this study and so constituting a further limitation is that of university managers. This would have provided a fascinating additional dimension to the case study and a more comprehensive insight into the perceptions for key players within the organisation. Indeed, future research might usefully address the management perspective whilst, more specifically, the extent to which the variables of nationality and discipline could add further depth to the results of this study.

6.6 Final reflections

Once I decided to matriculate on the DBA program in January 2014, the following maxim guided me through the process:

> 'Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty…' (President Theodore Roosevelt, n.d.)

I now recognise that anyone completing a doctoral journey must be dedicated, single-minded, focused, determined and courageous, regardless of what life throws at you. My respect for fellow doctoral candidates has grown immensely.

If I am honest, since completing my MBA in 2000 I have always wanted to undertake a professional doctorate, but the opportunity had not previously presented itself. I was a member of the first cohort to enrol on this particular DBA program when it was launched, and my student experience has been wonderful. The DBA teaching staff and their guidance, fellow DBA students and curriculum content have been magnificent. I would recommend the program to anyone interested.

From the outset I knew that embarking on a DBA was going to be a challenge but, nevertheless, I underestimated the magnitude of undertaking this part-time study whilst working full-time. Although the journey has been long and arduous, it has also been very rewarding. This experience has positively shaped me professionally and personally.

Completing the taught element at stage one was very important for my comprehensive development as a researcher. It required me to become familiar with both qualitative and quantitative methods, tools and analysis in equal measure, to critically evaluate contemporary research themes and current theoretical debates in management and organisations, and to understand my area of study in great depth. Indeed, the enforced modular regime with its tight interim deadlines has given me more confidence in teaching postgraduate students and in my own ability as a researcher. This culminated in my giving conference papers at several venues and in my first publication of a journal article in March 2018. This set the scene for my doctoral focus and primary research study.

During the DBA, I interrupted study for eighteen months (July 2016-January 2018) owing to my mother's illness and subsequent death and my own shattering grief. Then, shortly after resuming study, a beloved uncle, my mentor in life, suddenly passed away. I am eternally grateful for all those colleagues, family and friends who encouraged me in the dark times. Additionally, I have sacrificed a great deal in terms of time spent with family and friends. Since 2018 I have either been working or studying, sometimes seven days a week, and taking very little time out. However, one lesson I have learned after getting very run down is that taking a little time out is essential for one's health and wellbeing as a doctoral student. I was determined to see the project through to the end. It has certainly been a test of my endurance and psychological strength. I now have a full appreciation of what it takes to complete doctoral study. I have a newfound respect for those who have undergone this process, especially through the part-time route. It has truly been a rite of passage. Completing this is a landmark academic achievement for me.

As I explained in my personal context and axiological stance in Chapter 1, I am both passionate and concerned about the wellbeing of my academic colleagues. I see their plight every day. My previous research indicated that those in a post-1992 setting feel the impact of marketisation most. In the current study, I set out to understand whether the experiences of fellow academics in a post-1992 institution were indeed the same or different according to their demographic profiles and was surprised and reassured by their honest, candid insights. Many study respondents found the whole process cathartic, as I did and do. We share values; we are 'all in the same boat'. However, it is clear that primarily owing to my now having a better and nuanced understanding of the realities of the lived experience of academics, not as a homogeneous collective but as a fragmented various grouping of individuals, the study findings have given me renewed hope. Evidently, there are positive, worthwhile ways forward to enhance the work environment locally and so the lived experiences of all academic staff in a more informed, targeted manner. After all, 'it is how many of us spend the majority of our waking hours, so it makes sense to have a job you love and a workplace that brings joy to your heart each morning' (Anon, 2019).

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Appendices

Appendix i -
Focus Group Transcription

FOCUS GROUP of 4 participants plus researcher interviewee – 21 July 2018

A male Senior Lecturer age 44 LOS 4 yrs in HE- worked outside HE
B male Lecturer age 33 LOS 8 yrs in HE -never worked outside HE
C female Lecturer was Associate Lecturer until recently age 40 LOS 9 yrs in HE- worked outside HE
D female Research Fellow age 67 LOS 16 yrs in HE-worked outside HE

From a range of disciplines (humanities and business) and nationalities mixed (specific details cannot be assigned to individual participants to protect their identity according to the Ethics Committee)

Thank you for coming and let's see what you have to say about the academic experiences at this University.

QUESTION 1

What things do you really enjoy about being an academic?

D Female - the students, being able to talk and think about things and meeting colleagues from all sorts of different worlds

C Female – yes that is a good point what I have learned being here just from meeting other colleagues over the years and how that shaped me as a teacher

B Male – I agree, when I started I had the opportunity to work with different schools, fraction here and a fraction there, so I was able to get a really good perspective of the University and that really helped me in my initial career

C Female – just drawing on the different interests, experiences and ideas that staff have got. There are some interesting people

D Female – I enjoy exploring ideas, which probably in other walks of life would not be as easy as at a University

A Male – there is more of a forum or expectation or space for you to talk about that here whereas in other places I have worked you might get a snippet of time in the staff room, a moment there, but it does feel like you are exploring the ideas a bit more or there is space for that

QUESTION 2

What do you think are the benefits of being an academic as opposed to doing any other type of job?

C Female – part of what I love doing is lesson planning, I think that is one of the best things about the job that creativity lends to the idea of teaching and developing materials. Flexibility, there is a lot of flexibility in terms of working here compared to other places I have worked.

A Male – yes you can work your own hours around meetings and lessons and stuff but that is quite nice, certainly in our department, in our School. I grumble when I have to do dissertation supervision meetings with my students, but actually I really enjoy them, talking through ideas with the students and helping them set up a little research project and seeing them develop

C Female – seeing students develop is very rewarding

B Male – yes seeing students develop is very rewarding

D Female – yes I think the practical thing is about being time flexible but when I am doing research it is a kind of feeling that I am on the cutting edge, feeling and getting to be an expert on this topic and that topic and I have got a chance to read, to read Great Thinkers.

A Male – do you get a lot of time to read Great Thinkers, I don't get a lot of time

D Female – I find when I have got the time, I have not got the mental energy, but I do read a lot of papers

A Male – I only wish I had more time to read, but there is not enough hours in a day

D Female – it feels like you are cheating when you are reading. It feels like you are not being productive.

B Male – yes that is very true

A Male – Yes, I don't know, I am doing my PhD and I go up to another Russell Group University for the supervision, and stuff, and I just sense a slightly different set of priorities in terms of the amount of time they have got for the reading and doing research…, and the thinking of nice ideas and the amount of time they are given to teach. I think maybe it is one of the reasons why they churn out more research than we do.

C Female - but the other side to that, I went to a University part of the Russell Group, and as a student I observed that they are at the cutting edge of research but it was not always the best teaching, so that is the flip side of that. A lot of what they bring into the classroom was their own research pitched too high and not always relevant to the syllabus or the content of what we are actually supposed to do.

A Male – I don't know if you have noticed but I have in the last six months or so in our School there seems to be a, or it seems to have come from on high that there is a push to push us up the University rankings somewhat by a shifting from teaching to a little more towards research and there seems to be a few teething problems along the way with that, either by hiring people purely based on their research output without teaching experience and I think that move from a nice middle table good teaching University that we are to a, what they want is people who are great teachers but also great researchers. It is very difficult to get that.

D Female – and they don't have the time, because I am actually part time researcher, part time lecturer and I cannot do it all well even if I were brilliant and a wonderful teacher, I just could not manage it all. You are always doing jobs half well which I find really frustrating.

QUESTION 3

What do you feel are the key priorities, values and beliefs of academics at this University?

All - What we believe you mean?

A Male – What I think being a good lecturer is?

B Male – I think the teaching aspect seems to be important for, certainly the people that stay here for any length of time and I think that we really value that and take pride in that

B Male – I think it is coming under the characteristics of to be a good teacher I think it is important to be a good people person and have those skills to convey your message and be approachable

A Male – whenever you hear students grumbling about a certain lecturer it is not really about their teaching skills that they are complaining about it is because they are not a very nice person. I think it is, it is about being a good people person

C Female – then there is all sorts of, they are trying to put a whole lot of intermediaries between us and the students which seems to cause frustration on both sides

All - general agreement in the group

Can you elaborate?

C Female – well things like Starfish, like new reporting procedures when you are ill, like new procedures if you have forgotten your card, just a whole lot of go and see someone else

D Female – the staff are now expected to monitor themselves as well

B Male – it has taken away from what we do very well, teach, takes up a lot of time

A Male – providing that academic support and mentoring and doing all of that stuff that… There are admin teams who can do the stuff that we are being asked to do well, if not better than we can. There are things that we can do better than they can. It seems that they are cutting out the time for what we do well

C Female – and maybe I think before we had good skilled people in the offices as well who had a good student interface

What do you mean by before?

C Female – before the Hubs, (general agreement), and now they have lost a lot of job satisfaction because they are just seen as a big unit and they are supposed to be interchangeable, so if they build up specialist knowledge on one thing it does not count for anything.

A Male – and again at the Russell Group University I study at they have got a couple of admin people for your team and they are on the same corridor as the other academics and you can go and see them, and they know who you are and they know about your subject and your students and it just works a lot better.

B Male – that's how we used to use the admin team and I don't see the logic.

C Female – merging the different teams is actually detrimental for the student experience. The team that we had were very skilled at working with the students and staff of the School. They have expressed that they have missed that, they miss that contact with the academic staff, and as a result they have lost that, they are just lost in a huge room. They don't really have an identity anymore.

Do you feel that the key priorities, values and beliefs that academics believe are important, are the same for managers or different and why?

D Female - I think managers spend their time looking at the flows and the money and how can we get more students in and how can we retain more students and so on. I think we are thinking the same in that we have got to deliver quality and have a bit more idea of the student as a person, not just a number.

A Male - and thinking about the Hubs, that was almost certainly done just to save money, but it has cut the stated goal of the University to bring the student experience to, 'student first', and I think that with a lot of these they are cutting into our research and teaching time and putting extra burdens on us is a detriment to the 'student first' idea.

Do you mean detrimental to the academics, because the whole point/focus of this research is about the academic experience at work?

C Female - I think the quality of the academic recruited is about what we have to do. They are always talking about the teaching excellence or where is the quality of the teaching excellence framework. Going back again, you can't do both, you can't be a good teacher and be a good administrator at the same time.

B Male - I think there is an expectation that you have to become a 'jack of all trades' or you don't have a job anymore and that is affecting the teaching in the classroom and affecting our research, everything that we do in our current job.

Does it affect you as a person?

A and B Male in unison - absolutely, yes

How?

C Female - for example I was on the email at midnight last night because I physically did not have enough time in the day to get through the workload. So that life/work balance is a huge issue.

Can you elaborate?

B Male - I have never had one weekend this academic year when I could switch off from everything and take a weekend off, never. I could not afford to do it, because I know that if I were to do that I would have sleepless nights Monday to Friday and I could not afford to do that.   I have literally not had a weekend off this academic year.

Would you say that is what you observe is typical of academic workload?

A and B in unison Male - yes it is

C Female - in the last few years where they have merged departments, more staff are sharing departments - big rooms. It was one in an office, two in an office and now there are four in an office. Sometimes you go to other Schools there are five/six all sat in the same room trying to work and trying to write papers. That is a huge issue for me where I cannot do any work

A Male - and on their own these might not be big issues on their own but together they chip away, taking your room space, pushing up your teaching hours and your extra lecturer duties. All these things just build up and build up until you are, these last few months I have felt absolutely swamped and just about keeping my head above water and that is as good as I can get.

Would you say you are feeling that personally, as I said earlier. Would you say that is typical of what you observe with other colleagues at this institution?

B Male - possibly, I mean personally part of the reason I do is that I took on an extra responsibility that I was not forced to take but I thought it would be good for the department, good for the students, good for the School and so I am doing that, and we are encouraged to do that, and it is good to do that and I want to do that, but it builds everything else up.

C Female - I find that balance about how you are going to enrich your working day, how much you want to do to develop and how much of other things is being asked of you and what is realistic. For example I know, and I actually think it is because we have had all these merges of different departments. In the last two years I have seen three that have actually left the institution due to workload and leaving through ill health. I have been here nine years now. Most of our days now are on email.

D Female - it is 12 o'clock before I go to Word, or Powerpoint or Excel

C Female - I can't do it at the University and so that is, is the reality at the moment and I think that has got worse in the last two years

B Male - just one other thing that the management top down approach to the student experience, but really what it is the grade inflation that they are forcing on us

C Female - there is a whole lot of things like that, such as the grade bands, which are ridiculous

A Male - it is almost impossible to fail as a student now. They can not do any of the assignments they get another chance, they still don't do it, and then now lets give them another chance and yes we want to support our managers, but if it is getting to the point where we are passing everyone through and those that do a modicum of work are getting firsts, that detracts, I think, from our job satisfaction

D Female - I think from the trajectory you see this getting worse, like you were saying about the lack of time it is getting worse and so that makes people depressed. If you could see it getting better, even if not to a good standard, then you would still feel a bit happier.

C Female - I think that with everything, particularly student well being, retention, retention, retention moving away from progressing students through the levels and getting rid of them. There are some students who have problems, not all but there are some students who should not be here for different reasons. And we are not doing them any favours keeping them here while being effective and it is making it impossible to be honest like that with them. But getting them to think realistically about what they can do, seems impossible in this climate.

B Male - I have found many members of staff complain about the same issues that I am having. It is shared by many, many.

Can you be more specific?

A Male - I don't think we have enough time. We want to do more for the benefit of our students, to improve ourselves, to develop and get more skills but at the same time our current workload is not accommodating that, the developmental opportunities, you can do this but on top of what you are already doing and on top of that and it just all adds up and at the end of the day we don't have time to do anything besides this and work/life balance is hugely affected.

What would you suggest as a solution to this as an institution?

B Male - get more members of staff and that is the reason we are all having to do this, we are all exhausted, we are doing two or three people's work

D Female - there were mass redundancies having a clear out, why, to save money.   But, we are the ones who pay that price

A Male - and I would say that well set the Chancellors first salary at £200,000 would be a start, get rid of those five Pro Vice Chancellors that would save another £500,000

C Female - I have no idea, a lot of our work is international, but do we have four or five international people now and I am not even sure or clear on what and how they do things

A Male - you ask do the management have a point. I think the management are focussed on money and I think they are around for themselves and to line their own pockets

D Female - previously there was a massive changeover, I think they all changed and a lot of them had little legacies or big legacy projects which they were hoping was a stepping stone for them being Vice Chancellors somewhere else. I think it has settled down a bit now but we don't know the people and the staff are the ones who keep the stability going because you have managers who go and then students going through. Top management going through and without the staff the university would not endure

A Male - management don't seem to understand that really

C Female – there is a lack of active listening by managers

How could that be improved? How do you think that internal communication at this University could dramatically be improved?

A Male - I know they do these things don't they, like come and talk to the Vice Chancellor sessions, they say we are listening, we will do a walkabout and we are doing a survey, and get your ideas before we implement things, like tables in the classroom. And it is all surface level and then they do what they wanted to do anyway. I think it needs a culture change. I don't know how you force them to do this and to actually take the staff, consider the academics as being a vital part of the process

C Female – they, the academics are the experts, the teaching and the research

A Male - places like Cambridge, don't they have a senate, where the academics are a part of the decision making process. Something along those lines might be, but I despair really, it is not getting better any time soon

D Female - you get the feeling that the middle management have got it even worse really, they have got the pressure from on top and everybody else complaining but it definitely feels like the messages are coming down, not going up

A Male - and if you are lucky enough to have a good middle manager like our School Director, I think we all believe we have a pretty good one, they kind of shield the worst excesses from top level but when you have one that is not so good and trying to rise through the ranks as quickly as possible then you get all sorts going on

C Female - I think academics need to be brought into the decision making process at all levels. Something as simple as recruiting new staff, senior lecturers and PLs who have been here a long time and never been on an interview panel and that creates a whole list of issues that we are all picking up now within the latest inappropriate and unsuitable recruitment. That communication needs to be at all levels not just talking to VC. That has to be an on-going process as well

B Male - but that comes down to recognition, recognising your staff and then putting them on the recruitment panel but they don't want to recognise their staff. We are not trusted to do our jobs well without being constantly monitored. There is no recognition of all the value we bring to the university.

C Female - recognising that value. I don't understand why our current SLs, course leaders develop the programme worldwide and are not on an interview panel. To me that is just madness. That should happen but just does not happen and even if they appointed the best person you get resentment. I think for me that is just a failing in communication. They interview a person for the programme who just has no idea of the programme. I just don't understand it and on the interview panel it might be someone from a different School who has been brought in to be independent but not the best solution.

D Female - but usually you have someone from a different School

A Male - we have not had that in the past

B Male - what is it like in your School?

D Female - which one, the one we were in three years ago or...

A Male - I mean, do you find the same mis-use, the same lack of communication or do you find that you get listened to, your input is valued

D Female - no I think we are very small fish in quite a big sea. We have been in two different Schools in between times.

A Male - and I think this is one of the issues isn't it, this short-termism. And it is some middle/high manager, I want to make a name for myself, I will tell you what we will do, we will change it from a College to a Faculty

C Female - we will go full circle

D Female - you have these centrifugal forces don't you

A Male - start something else, different types of computer programmes we should be using and it is clearly someone trying to make a name for themselves, trying to get to that next level up

C Female - I think they are really doing it in good faith to start using a new system which they think will work, but without looking at what it means to staff , yet another new system. I mentioned Starfish but I do think it is really quite good, the issue with Starfish which I report back all the time is showing staff in a school meeting for five minutes is not going to give a good enough introduction to Starfish. So again it is communication. Showing staff at the beginning of term, where you have got welcome weeks and all kinds of activities and oh by the way now you have to use Starfish as well as everything else. Timing and not being aware of the commitment, often they don't teach on these programmes - time needed in the Schools to do this.

D Female - like Relay - you have to do it. Just when you are setting up a lecture and all that logging on and then you have do that and then oh not only in the beginning do you need to do that, it is that order of things. Then someone says actually you don't have to do it, but nobody in charge actually says you don't need to do it. But if you really do it properly you will listen to your lecture afterwards. A colleague of mine found the microphones were picking up what the students were saying, discussing their exploits over the weekend for all to listen to. Maybe we could pilot it. If you really do it properly you are committed to double your teaching time, this is not realistic.

C Female - we all want to do it properly but we now know it is going to take four hours rather than two working till late at night rather than completing in the afternoon

B Male - do you find that actually demoralises you

D Female - yes - I can see people doing their best, but basically saying I will do what I can to survive I will show people I can do well and try and hide what I am not sure about and when you don't have that people get very defensive and won't share things

C Female - I think there is that main feeling of survival, treading water or keeping your head above the water so in that sense it does demoralise and it stops you from being creative and wanting to do other things and it stops you from doing research because you have got so much, you cannot compartmentalise everything.

A Male - can we talk about the language you use there - survive, head above water, just about coping, not using words like thriving, doing really well, motivated

Do you think this is a way to get the best out of your staff?

All - No

So what is the way to get the best out of your staff then?

B Male - get more staff and listen to them

C Female - I think our Head does try and listen. Big thing on our programme is student/staff ratio and everyone has the same workload whether you have 200 one year whether you have 4 in one year and we do have some with 4 and some with 200 who have the same workload so that needs to be looked at

B Male - I have also noticed that some of my colleagues have different workloads than me- there's a lack of transparency and fair treatment of staff.

A Male - at the same grade?

All - yes

B Male - and that is not fair

C Female - I don't really understand the workload, I have never really got my head into it that much. Designed to not really show the number of hours but to make sure it is equal. But there are so many things that don't fit into it anyway.

C Female - last week a colleague said to me 'what is the workload? I don't think we have a workload'. That was someone in the same School but not in the same area. She had never heard of the workload model.

What is that dependent on then? That in some areas the workload is driven down a certain way and other people seem to be shielded from it and it is not discussed. Metrics in one area and in others, academics are treated as an individual where things are negotiated. What is the detrimental effect of that?

C Female - in this particular area the team discusses the workload at the beginning of the year, whereas in our area it is where one person tells you what you are doing as per their excel spreadsheet.

And who is that person, the appraiser, the line manager?

All - the appraiser, not the line manager of the School

B Male - it is down to individuals in authority who either think like an academic and think like a team member and think like somebody who wants to make this fair and then others who work to the letter of the law in terms of shaving 2% profit here and there.

C Female - it is unfortunate if you work in that area though isn't it

QUESTION 4

Would you say that in your experience of talking with other people in different Schools across this institution that there does not seem to be a workload for everybody that is treated in the same way and exercised in the same way. So how would you if you were the Vice Chancellor, what would you do about this is if it came to your attention and thought oh I am not happy about this.

C Female - it is communication isn't it cos I know of someone in another School who has never seen or heard of a workload model so I don't know, I think maybe it is communication.

Maybe a matter of interpretation and different types of managers?

C Female - and how a manager interprets the workload model

D Female - it does seem from outside that it is never well received, I mean how can you measure my work. It feels like kind of a modernist cage and I am very happy that it does not normally apply to me.

Taking from what you have just said can everything that academics do be measured?

All - no

What things cannot be measured?

D Female - time spent with a difficult student and I do a lot of paper reviewing, it could be measured but no-one ever knows how properly. You don't fatten pigs by weighing them. If you put all your energy into weighing them, they may die of starvation.

C Female - time spent with students, we spend a lot of time with students, increasingly so many need lots of support and guidance

What other things cannot be measured?

C Female - marking. I don't know what our marking workload number is but it is nothing compared to the numbers, at busy times you can spend all your time at work, evenings, weekends just marking. We get a certain amount of marking time allocation but it is not sufficient, not sure what it is.

QUESTION 5

What extras do you think academics do? What extras have you done that are not really calculated or measured in your workload?

C Female - organising travel, excursions abroad, trips, mentoring colleagues and students and do a lot of things with interns. Reviewing papers and collegiate things. Liaising with partners around the world, franchising, we have to support them and supply them with materials - that is not on our workload.

B Male - I find myself sometimes developing materials for modules because it is too old or because it isn't even there because previous staff have not shared that information

A Male - with the AL and SPH staff you have to mentor them and there is an expectation that you are doing the duties of the next one up an SL or PL but only paid as an L

C Female - in order to be promoted you have to prove that you are doing that job beforehand which seems just crazy

D Female - answering emails can take half a day and that is not accounted for

B Male - I know my work tonight is going to be responding to emails as they need attention but that is never accounted for in the workload

C Female - writing student references – is not on our workload

D Female - then there is all these training courses that you have to do on line, divisional meetings

A Male - you go to a meeting and there is how many people in the room, there is maybe 100 people and they go on for an hour and a half, three quarters of the information can be sent out in an email so wasted many man hours sat in meetings. The same with PCR format is changed very slightly cos someone thinks this will be a nice thing to do, but if you think how long it takes to change that for each module - 20 or 30 minutes per module

C Female - I know of a colleague who is still being asked to change font size, format incorrect - this is sent in an email instead of just being changed.

May I just ask you is the PCR an example of something that academic staff have to do every five years, is that on workload?

All - no

What about PhDs, time allowed to do doctoral study and communications?

A Male - I get, one day a week I spend on my PhD. It is not really factored into my workload as I have got many extra duties and extra teaching on top of that and I try and squeeze those in Monday to Thursday so then I can get some study done on a Friday. Technically they have not given me the time but no-one complains if I am not in on a Friday

C Female - is that something you negotiated within the team though?

A Male - yes

C Female - it is not official then

A Male - teaching schedules have been created so that there is no teaching on Friday so that I can study and I really appreciate that because trying to get half an hour here or an hour there does not work

B Male - do you feel they have reduced your teaching hours or any of your other duties to accommodate that Friday?

A Male - no I think there are colleagues on a similar grade who are not doing a PhD who have the same workload as me or less. When you think about how they have had trouble in recent months and years bringing people in from outside for various roles in our School anyway and because they want the great teachers and the great researchers these people won't come here - they will go somewhere where they pay more or are treated better.

C Female - and where they get better promotion opportunities

A Male - they will either get someone good at research or good at teaching. The people who could be good at research and good at teaching are the people here already. We are good teachers, we have got that and we want to be good researchers but if you are not giving us the space and the time and the support to do this then we are not going to be. I was told just recently that to become an SL you need to have your PhD completed and published, and this is new within the last few months. A number of colleagues got to that position without that. The person who told me this is an SL did not have a PhD and has had nothing published and this makes me feel like I might have to look somewhere else for the next step up which would be a shame. It also feels like there are people pulling up the ladder behind them a little bit.

C Female – we have been forced to hit the glass ceiling really. I am at the L grade now, and to go to an SL. A PhD seems almost secondary now you need to have a strong publication record behind you as well. PhD does not seem important anymore, it seems to become an SL/Course Leader you need to have a strong publication record behind you. I have been here nine years trying to get there and it seems like we have all hit the glass ceiling and that is demotivating.

A Male – it seems to me that that would be the ideal situation or the ideal solution for helping the University rise up through the ranks. You are always taking a gamble when you are hiring someone from outside. If you have got good staff, good academics, good teachers, good staff who you can trust and who you know do a good job and who you know care about your students and are trying to get to that point where they can publish more and do all of that-look after them and nurture them-help them be who they want to be.

What could be done then at institutional level to facilitate staff who want to do research? What could be put in place to improve the lived experience of academic staff?

C Female – I think there is too much focus on the RAE. So all resources, all funding seems to be in full concentration on this in terms of management. People in charge only care about people who are already on that RAE scale. I think focus on support, resources, developmental pathways have to be placed for people at the start of their academic research career. People at the RAE are going to go, the higher they go they won't stay at UCLan.

D Female – we had a research assistant who ploughed on and he got his PhD, he had several publications and they would not promote him even to Research Fellow. He has gone to another University and he is flying, Senior Researcher now and that is in just two years. They missed all that talent. Good people will go, I have seen good people go and in the mean time he got very resentful. A sabbatical system for all academic staff would help.

Didn't we used to have one?

B Male – Yes but you cannot afford to even ask about that now, I am scared to ask

D Female – a colleague of mine last year got one but they said will you still have 10 hours teaching, and he said his publications would need to be scaled down

C Female – it does not even exist in our School

D Female – not sure that it exists in UCLan, but then they suddenly get petrified about the REF and suddenly too late they will say take a semester off and we will get in temporary staff to teach and then it won't be in time to publish, in time for the RAE anyway. Everything is reactive rather than proactive.

A Male – we are all early career researchers, you have had a number of publications – how did you do it?

D Female – because I was basically a researcher, not a lecturer. But they made us half and half for the RAE when they weren't allowed to put in people that were employed by our type of University purely as researchers. So they made us lecturers as well. And I was doing a lot of research projects as well and would write those up

A Male – in some other Schools my field is something you need to have had come in from a professional teacher training and so I think they value the people that come in from that and will support them to a lesser extent on their research. In other Schools it seems that it is the researchers first and then they give them a bit of teaching, is that how it works?

D Female – no, no people are recruited directly into teaching and then expected to do the research around the edges and I am just amazed that we do have quite a lot of publications in our division.

A Male – do they get time to do that?

D Female – no, many do it in their own time: give up weekends, holidays etc

Do you think most people, most academics just work 37.5 hours for which they are actually paid to do or what is a more realistic figure?

C Female –We earn less than minimum wage if we break it down

D Female –I reckon many of us do 50 hrs per week minimum -one third more hours per week every week-that's a lot of extra therefore maybe we need a third more staff?

So are you saying then that in order to be research active, whether that means churning out publications or doing a Doctorate, or both plus teaching means that you end up doing a lot more than you are actually contracted to do?

All – yes always

So would you say that in that vain academia is a vocation rather like a calling a bit like the priesthood or being a nun. In that sense you are not in it for the money but you are in it for something else or would you say that that is not true. What do you think about that? Is being an academic part of a profession where you have power and control over what you do and how you do it, in the sort of traditional sense of the profession, or is it a semi-profession where you are told what to do but not so much how to do it and/or is it vocation?

C Female – I think it is blurred. I think it is hard to define it now.

D Female – I think there is a lot of good things about it which is what keeps us in because if they weren't there would be a mass exodus. I think there is quite an exodus, particularly people with young families.

Have you witnessed that in your experience, people leaving because of what reason?

D Female – yes, overwork and they cannot actually mix this with having a family…. someone is actually thinking of going back to AL because she has not been able to go home, not been able to pick her children up from school. She is particularly worried about one of her children. She cannot find that work/life balance.

I mean it is not just children as we have all witnessed, people with elderly parents or sick members of the family

D Female – it is just life isn't it. Some academic recently said I just want to clean my house. I am myself lucky that my partner does not work. I can't participate in the home making at all, I simply don't have the time

How does that make you feel?

D Female – half a partner. I just have to say, because there is so much, even at the weekends if I do do something other than work at weekends I have got the monkey sitting on my shoulder saying but you have not done that paper or that marking.

C Female – family life suffers definitely and health suffers if we are working every weekend. Where is the student experience, where is the staff experience, student well-being/staff well-being. If we are working every weekend where is the student experience, where is the staff experience?

B Male – it is always there in the back of your head

What does this University do to your knowledge in terms of, we spend a lot of money, and rightly so, on the student experience but what does this institution do in order to focus its attention on the academic experience, to enhance the academic experience, health and well-being? What are the best ways to get the best out of academic staff?

C Female – there are staff well-being workshops

B Male – but do we have the time to go for training

D Female – no but there are counsellors and if you wanted to, when I first came in I did a lot of training courses and enjoyed doing them, but gradually you feel if you do that training then that means working another evening

B Male – I would love to do training but I cannot afford to go now because I do not have the time

A Male – things like stats training, not personal development sessions – things I will need for my research training. There was one a couple of weeks ago I wanted to go to, couldn't because of teaching

C Female – they put them on at times, like Mondays when there is teaching instead of Wednesday afternoons or Friday afternoons. Often these workshops are allocated to times where it is busy teaching periods

When would you think it would be a good time for the organisation to organise certain training?

A Male – possibly Wednesday afternoons

C Female – but obviously we have to take holiday as well. Things like Starfish, which we had to do at the beginning of the year, we were only told about this at the beginning of the year. This should have happened over the Summer. Maybe May, June when people will still be around for different Boards and things but we are quiet because there is no teaching. We need to have an admin calendar in sync with academic priorities not the other way round.

How do you feel about the academic calendar, are you all happy with the way in which that is organised and structured. Does that make sense to you as an academic?

C Female – I actually think it is better this year. I think 12 weeks is better. Would like a more realistic time between Christmas and New Year. Reflection week is equally important to staff as it is to students but why have they put this at the end of the semester? At week 13?

D Female – I think students need this as well Reflection/Reading week, some live away from home, go home and they need time to do their research.

C Female – so that is interesting why are there different reflection weeks?

B Male - reflection week is universal across the whole of the University

So obviously there are different interpretations of the academic calendar. It does appear that there seems to be a variance in interpreting workloads, in taking time out, a variance in lots of areas.

D Female – is that bad in itself though because if one School starts a new thing and it actually works then others can adopt it

But do they?

C Female – they have done

B Male – it is if they are allowed to

D Female – in our School we used to pilot things and then they said no that does not work

But at least they did say it did not work and then move on

C Female – At what stage is that communication getting lost then? because I thought the academic calendar was across the University so if we don't have a reading week because it is important for the students as well as us at the end of April – communication is getting lost

D Female – with Tourism we tend to use this time to go on trips etc

Can I just ask you one question about the Capita staff survey, is this in your opinion a device for change to improve communication, to improve the academic experience, the student experience. Have you seen this used as a vehicle for change, for positive change at the University so far?

A Male – not in the slightest, I think it is used to tick a box and to validate the upper managements' positions. To give you an example from this year's you are talking about the different things that you like and dislike about your School there was I strongly agree, I strongly disagree etc but when it went to the VCs page they added a I don't know box. Clearly an attempt to spread out some of the I don't like column and it was only on there. It is all carefully choreographed to validate management.

D Female – I do think when they see really bad like the previous one, 24% people said they were unduly stressed at work and we had a meeting in our School about it and as the Dean then said it is a health and safety matter and I think that sent alarm bells. I don't the survey leads us to improve things and it tries to hide the really bad. NOTHING REALLY CHANGES.

C Female – it is almost like we are working on autopilot where we have accepted that this is the way it is. And when you said that about the health and safety issue, I had not even considered that.

D Female – but if you think that somebody could top themselves because of the workload that if they went back to that staff survey and said well look

C Female – I do not believe it is 24% I believe it to be higher than that

D Female – it seems it is much less this year

A Male – people are not accepting the results of this survey as you said

D Female – there has also been change of personnel in HR

Or is it a problem with the questioning?

A Male – just going back to the questionnaire survey if one of my under graduate students had worded some of those questions, I would say I am sorry but this is completely a leading question for the respondent which is not good nor objective

D Female – a lot of those are supposed to be compatible with those they do it in other higher education institutions cos they give you the mark

C Female – that figure just does not seem to reflect the amount of times people say negative things not just in our School but in other Schools

D Female – well certainly there is a quite a high response. I have got a good work/life balance now some of those will be for people with nine to five jobs like the support staff but it did not ring true to me from what I hear around the academic colleges/faculties

I wondered whether or not they should have a Capita academic survey

D Female - it is broken down by academics/service staff but we would need to go back to that spreadsheet but some of the figures don't ring true. Some of the results were even contradictory.

D Female - you actually think well it is not such a bad place according to the survey results and why should I feel disgruntled all the time oh that is because they did not ask me what I want

C Female - it seems we are all saying the same thing and that survey just does not reflect the reality

QUESTION 8

The University has introduced this staff experience forum which some people seem to have thought was actually a device to enhance the staff experience which it could be but perhaps you could tell us your perceptions of what has been discussed in that environment to date. What other methods are used institutionally to understand the staff experience?

D Female - well I went along because I thought it would be a way of listening but it still feels like the top down direction is paramount and that a lot of the time, I had not realised they

have a management group for staff experience group so they sit round and discuss what we are going to do before we do it and it is a lot about how can we feel better about being at UCLan, what can we say. And at one point they said we should mention that we get certain staff discounts. A lot of people said just a moment that is not what it is about but it seems to be more and more people saying yes it is a great place

C Female – They are treating us like students not academic colleagues

D Female - but we are not like students because when student reps come in they listen to what they are saying about the course and it gets passed on and I thought it would be that you could represent the people in your School/Division and you could bring along anonymously what people were saying and then they would listen. In groups we are not asked objectively what we think. What makes you proud of working here? So that is directed…… it is an exercise in feel good-a choreographed exercise by senior HR management.

A Male - it is just a disconnect between the academics and the upper management for example I don't think I could pick out the person above my School Head. I would not be able to pick them out of a line-up. You would have thought they would come around and speak to people and say how are things going

C Female - I do feel they occupy their own world and it does not liaise with us on the ground

How can you make it better, if you were to have the power to really try and change what's going on in order to improve stuff- what could be done?

A Male - well I go back to cutting the VC salary. I think that by having that incredible salary at the top and having a number of levels below that it has become a career option, career path for the greedier and the ambitious. I think that if it was the difference between a reader, upper management and a senior lecturer salary it is now so big that one you are getting the type of person that wants to go that way, in all state schools you get the same, those that enjoy teaching and stay in the classroom as long as possible and those that don't enjoy teaching get out of the classroom. It seems to be producing a managerial class that they could be in any industry or any field it just so happens that they are working within education.

There are still some universities where senior management actually still teach, there are VCs that still teach, maybe that would be a good way for them to keep in touch and maybe a rotating VC so people could actually see what you are doing

A Male - the University I study at for my PhD, not at that level but at School level they have rotating management

D Female - from what I have seen at another very close University people hate it, I think they usually do two or three years and it takes them away from their research, it takes them away from their teaching, it is just a burden.

A Male –But focus would still remain on their teaching and their research, rather than I am the boss, now I can tell you all what to do

D Female - I was quite happy when we had a good Dean who had been appointed and he did do some teaching actually but he did enjoy all those things that most senior people hate

A Male - how do you ensure then that at School level and at Faculty level you have got people who are academics who just happen to be in management positions rather than managers who just happen to work at a University in the hiring process what do you do?

D Female - well maybe your idea about senates being responsible to a body of academics would work

Are there are practical ways as an institution other than hiring lots of new staff which in an ideal world you would, to address some of the issues which have been discussed today? Are there any other ways in which staff who do a lot more than their contracted hours they are paid to do are doing? Should academic staff say actually we are only going to do what we can in 37.5 hours a week and if it does not get done then it is not part of my job? Do you think we have to take responsibility?

C Female - trouble is we do take responsibility to keep things running don't we? Where it was the managers responsibility to make sure then we could shift it

A Male - trouble is if you don't do it you feel guilty and that you might be letting your students down and we should not be feeling guilty. It should be in our workload from above. This is what unions are for and this is what maybe our unions should be doing, working a little harder to reduce our workload

C Female - we have often said that we need to start saying no because then maybe someone will start listening

But it needs everybody you cannot have one individual doing that, but it is very difficult to get everyone within a team to all say the same.

D Female - we did have two members of the team who changed their attitude and just did the minimum and everybody hated them because it meant more work for other people. They have become team members now but actually you do begin to think they are right, why should they take it, why should they have to

Would you all agree from what you seem to be saying that the average academic staff does way beyond what they are contracted to do?

All - absolutely

B Male - reducing our workload, it has to coincide with more staff being recruited. If teaching hours are reduced someone has to pick up those teaching hours but there is so much money sloshing around this place, with the new buildings

C Female - it is interesting to talk to other members of staff in Schools because I heard there as an SL in another School teaching 18 hours as well as course leadership and she was one who had never heard of the workload model and supposed to do research as well - that is not consistent

That is where it is a health and safety issue. The University as an employer actually have a duty of care to all of us and that needs to be taken seriously

D Female - I am sure they will have statistics about who is off with stress. I have heard unofficially from someone in HR, not this year but in previous years, that the number is going up

Thank you very much for what you have said today, it has been a very useful insight

Appendix ii -
Copy of Online Qualtrics Survey

Lived experience of academic staff and the nature of their work

Q1 *Dear colleague,   I am currently doing my doctoral research and thank you for taking the time (approximately 10 - 15 minutes) to complete this short survey, which seeks to explore <u>the lived experience of academic</u> <u>staff and their work</u>. Responses are anonymous, will be treated confidentially and used for the purposes of academic publications. No individual data will be made available to third parties. The scope of this research targets only those with academic, not management roles. This therefore excludes Deputy Heads of School or above. These may be the focus of further research. Andrea Taberner (SL in the School of Languages and International Studies) E-Mail* amtaberner@uclan.ac.uk

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Q2 I am an academic staff member at this institution and hereby agree for my anonymised data to be included in this study and to be used in academic publications

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Skip To: Q42 If I am an academic staff member at this institution and hereby agree for my anonymised data to be i... = No

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Q3 **Section 1. What does being an academic mean to you?**

Q4 a. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree / agree with the following statements At work, I consider that:	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I am principally a facilitator of student learning (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I am a multitasker (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I have to be an expert in everything I do (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I need to be self-sufficient (4)	○	○	○	○	○
I regularly receive recognition and encouragement to do a better job by my line manager (5)	○	○	○	○	○
I see clear academic career progression with opportunities for promotion (6)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel valued and trusted by my appraiser at work (7)	○	○	○	○	○
Administrative staff have more influence than academics. (8)	○	○	○	○	○
I perform better with regular management checks and audits (9)	○	○	○	○	○
I am a decision maker (10)	○	○	○	○	○
I am an understanding and supportive colleague (11)	○	○	○	○	○
I spend too much time on non-teaching or non-research related tasks (12)	○	○	○	○	○

I rarely take lunch breaks (13)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I do not need to be 'managed' as I self-manage (14)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Managers/appraisers should have at least the same or better qualifications than those they lead / appraise (15)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Senior management should be seen to engage in lecturing and /or research (16)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I find it difficult to do everything I am required to do in the time available (17)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I am often stressed at work (18)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I regularly encounter obstacles (human /procedural or structural) at work (19)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I try to circumvent official systems or processes to get things done (20)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have personal and professional pride in the quality of my work (21)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I prefer being in the classroom than conducting research (22)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Good researchers and good teachers have different skill sets (23)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I share the same priorities and beliefs as my line manager /appraiser (24)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

I would welcome the introduction of an automatic sabbatical related to length of service (25)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel supported by the institution to be the best I can be in my work (26)	○	○	○	○	○
I embrace change at work (27)	○	○	○	○	○
I am who I am at work (28)	○	○	○	○	○
My work regularly makes me feel isolated and alone (29)	○	○	○	○	○
My work regularly makes me feel part of the academic community (30)	○	○	○	○	○
My job sometimes bores me (31)	○	○	○	○	○
My workload regularly overwhelms me (32)	○	○	○	○	○
My job is secure (33)	○	○	○	○	○
I am regularly absent from work just to get a break (34)	○	○	○	○	○
I get a great deal of job satisfaction from my work (35)	○	○	○	○	○

Q5 b. In your opinion, which of these best describes your occupation as an academic

○ A profession (status and privilege, total discretion, autonomy to carry out work) (1)

○ A semi-profession (some autonomy and control yet constrained by bureaucratic framework) (2)

○ A vocation (a life's work requiring dedication and not about the salary) (3)

○ Just a job (4)

○ None of these (5)

Q6 If none of these, what best describes your occupation in your own words

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Q7 c. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree / agree with the following statements.   What I like about being an academic is…

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
It provides me with an identity of which I am proud (1)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My work gives me a sense of satisfaction (2)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Being able to manage my own working day (3)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The flexibility of the job (4)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Being able to influence decision making at my university (5)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The relative freedom and autonomy compared to many other occupations (6)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The pay, holidays and occupational pension (7)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Working with students (8)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The ability to do research (9)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Being able to work closely with colleagues (10)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The opportunities to travel with my work (11)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q8 d. Which of these statements best reflect your average working time per week

○ Less than 37.5 hrs per week (less than 7.5 hrs per day mon-fri-no work at weekends) (1)

○ More or less 37.5 hrs pw (approx.. 7.5 hrs p d mon-fri-no work at weekends) (2)

○ Between 37.5-47.5 hrs pw (approx. 7.5-9.5 hrs p d mon-fri- no work at weekends) (3)

○ Between 47.5-57.5 hrs pw (approx..9.5-11.5 hrs p d mon-fri only or 8 hrs 7 days a week) (4)

○ over 57.5 hrs pw (11.5 hrs p d mon-fri or more than 8 hrs 7 days a week) (5)

Q9 e. Work-life balance

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I feel I have a good work-life balance (1)	○	○	○	○	○

Q10 f. Workload model

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I think the workload model used here for academic staff is representative of work I do (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I think the workload model is consistently implemented across all academic staff (2)	○	○	○	○	○

Q11 g. Work measurement

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
All aspects of my work can be measured (1)	○	○	○	○	○

Q12 h. Love of work

	strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I would continue in my job even if I won the lottery (1)	○	○	○	○	○

Q13 i. Are you surviving or thriving as an academic?

○ I am surviving (1)

○ I am thriving (2)

○ Not sure (3)

Q14 **Section 2. Your academic work environment**

Q15 a. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree / agree with the following statements :	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Academic depts./schools are adequately staffed (1)	○	○	○	○	○
There is too much dependence on casual academic staff (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I prefer to share office space with just one colleague (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I am able to find sufficient time and space to research (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Universities have become bureaucratic (5)	○	○	○	○	○
My ability to perform well in my work is influenced by the availability / quality of classrooms and office space (6)	○	○	○	○	○
It is important that communal spaces/staff rooms are provided for staff (7)	○	○	○	○	○
Sufficient car parking should be provided for all academic staff (8)	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly Dis agree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Universities have become knowledge and skills factories rather than for intellectual pursuit (9)	○	○	○	○	○
The growth in 'good' degree classifications reflects higher standards (10)	○	○	○	○	○
Commercial targets / considerations increasingly supersede pedagogical considerations (11)	○	○	○	○	○
The role of academic staff is becoming de-professionalised. (12)	○	○	○	○	○
Less academic staff has consequences for the student experience (13)	○	○	○	○	○

Q16 b. The HE sector

	Strongly Dis agree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
The HE sector today is a good place to work as an academic (1)	○	○	○	○	○

Q17 c.   The HE sector is changing

○ For the better (1)

○ For the worse (2)

○ Not sure (3)

Q18 d. The centralisation of university services (administration, room booking, technical services)

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
makes universities more cost-efficient (1)	○	○	○	○	○
makes universities more effective in facilitating teaching and research (2)	○	○	○	○	○

Q19 e. Information Technology

	Significantly (1)	Very little (2)	Not at all (3)
Over the last 5-10 years IT has changed the way in which I work (1)	○	○	○

Q20 f. Information Technology has changed the way in which I work

    ○ Mainly positively (1)

    ○ Mainly negatively (2)

Q21 Section 3. Internal Communications and work relationships

----

Q22 Communications at work- How well do these statements reflect your views (* collegial= mutually supportive)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
my relationship with fellow academics is collegial* (1)	○	○	○	○	○
my relationship with administrators is collegial* (2)	○	○	○	○	○
my relationship with my line manager is collegial* (3)	○	○	○	○	○
my relationship with my appraiser is collegial* (4)	○	○	○	○	○
my institutional culture is collegial* (5)	○	○	○	○	○
I am regularly actively involved in school/college/institutional decision making (6)	○	○	○	○	○
my views in meetings are taken on board (7)	○	○	○	○	○
universities today have become too large, impersonal and unwieldy in size (ever increasing student body) for internal communications to work effectively across all parts (8)	○	○	○	○	○
the use of IT rather than face to face communications has had a detrimental effect on internal communications (9)	○	○	○	○	○
communications with HR/payroll are good (10)	○	○	○	○	○
communications with marketing are good (11)	○	○	○	○	○
communications with the international office are good (12)	○	○	○	○	○

communications with admissions are good (13)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
communications with IT support are good (14)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
communications with travel office are good (15)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
hub administrators roles communicated clearly to academic staff (16)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
academics are supported by administrators (17)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
communications with senior management are good (18)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
staff and managers speak the same language (19)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q23 **Section 4. The enhancement of the academic staff experience**

300

Q24 Academic Experience-how well do these statements reflect your views

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
a positive staff experience is linked with the enhancement of the student experience (1)	○	○	○	○	○
greater focus and investment in the academic staff experience would benefit the university and students (2)	○	○	○	○	○
the academic voice must be heard, respected and maintained for the benefit of the institution (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q25 **Section 5. What changes would you suggest might improve the lived experience of academics**

Q26 What changes might improve the lived experience of academics here?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q27 Is there anything else you would like to add here?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q28 **Section 6. You and your academic background**

Q29 Age Range

○ 25-34 (1)

○ 35-44 (2)

○ 45-54 (3)

○ 55-64 (4)

○ over 65 (5)

○ prefer not to say (6)

Q30 Gender

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

○ prefer not to say (3)

Q31 Length of service in years as an academic (not necessarily at this institution)

○ less than 5 years (1)

○ 5-10 years (2)

○ 11-15 years (3)

○ 16-20 (4)

○ over 20 years (5)

Q32 Job Title/Role

○ Professor (1)

○ Reader (2)

○ Senior Research Fellow (3)

○ Research Fellow (4)

○ Principal Lecturer (5)

○ Clinical (e.g. Medicine/Dentistry) (10)

○ Senior Lecturer (6)

○ Lecturer (7)

○ Associate Lecturer (8)

○ Other (9)

Q33 If you answered 'other' in the previous question please state your role

_____

Q34 Contracted hours per week

   ◯ Full time (37.5 hrs) (1)

   ◯ Part time (2)

Q35 If part time how many days/ hours per week is your contract?

_____

Q36 Permanent contract?

   ◯ yes (1)

   ◯ No (2)

Q37 Have you ever worked outside of higher/further education?

   ◯ Yes (1)

   ◯ No (2)

Display This Question:

If Have you ever worked outside of higher/further education? = Yes

Q38 If yes in what sector did you previously work? (if this applies you may want to tick more than one of these categories)

○ Tertiary e.g. services, finance, banking, retail, health care, police, local government (1)

○ Secondary e.g. manufacturing industry (2)

○ Primary e.g. agriculture, fishing, mining (3)

Q39
  Thank you for your time in completing the survey questionnaire. Your participation is appreciated. I am also conducting interviews to supplement the survey data. If you would be prepared to be interviewed, please give your email address. This will be a confidential and anonymous interview, and you can at any time withdraw your participation. If you are willing, please select 'Yes' and enter your email address.

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Q40 Your email address

_____

Q41 When you click submit a summary of all responses will be displayed with the option to download PDF for your reference. You might find this useful if you have volunteered to be interviewed.

Q42 A collegial thank you.

**Appendix iii -
Online Survey Results
Descriptive Data**

Q4 Please indicate to the extent to which you disagree/agree with the following statements. At work I consider that:

q4

Categories (top to bottom):
- I get a great deal of job satisfaction from my work
- My job is secure
- My job sometimes bores me
- My work regularly makes me feel isolated and alone
- I embrace change at work
- I would welcome the introduction of an automatic sabbatical related to length of service
- Good researchers and good teachers have different skill sets
- I have personal and professional pride in the quality of my work
- I regularly encounter obstacles (human /procedural or structural) at work
- I find it difficult to do everything I am required to do in the time available
- Managers/appraisers should have at least the same or better qualifications than those they…
- I rarely take lunch breaks
- I am an understanding and supportive colleague
- I perform better with regular management checks and audits
- I feel valued and trusted by my appraiser at work
- I regularly receive recognition and encouragement to do a better job by my line manager
- I have to be an expert in everything I do
- I am principally a facilitator of student learning

Legend: ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Q5 In your opinion, which of these bests describes your occupation as an academic?

Q7c Please indicate the extent to which you disagree/agree to the following statements. What I like about being an academic is:

Q7c

Statement	
The opportunities to travel with my work	
Being able to work closely with colleagues	
The ability to do research	
Working with students	
The pay, holidays and occupational pension	
The relative freedom and autonomy compared to many other occupations	
Being able to influence decision making at my university	
The flexibility of the job	
Being able to manage my own working day	
My work gives me a sense of satisfaction	
It provides me with an identity of which I am proud	

Legend: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

Q8 Which of these statements best reflect your average working time per week

Q8

40.00%				
35.00%				
30.00%				
25.00%				
20.00%				
15.00%				
10.00%				
5.00%				
0.00%				

Less than 37.5 hrs per week (less than 7.5 hrs per day mon-fri-no work at weekends)   More or less 37.5 hrs pw (approx.. 7.5 hrs p d mon-fri-no work at weekends)   Between 37.5-47.5 hrs pw (approx. 7.5-9.5 hrs p d mon-fri-no work at weekends)   Between 47.5-57.5 hrs pw (approx..9.5-11.5 hrs p d mon-fri only or 8 hrs 7 days a week)   over 57.5 hrs pw (11.5 hrs p d mon-fri or more than 8 hrs 7 days a week)

Q9 Work life balance

Q9 - e. Work-life balance

28% Strongly Disagree	24% Disagree	19% Neither agree nor disagree	24% Agree	

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Q10 What do you think about the workload model?

q10

Legend:
- I think the workload model used here for academic staff is representative of work I do
- I think the workload model is consistently implemented across all academic staff

Q11 All aspects of my work can be measured agree/disagree?

Q11 - g. Work measurement

Q12 How much do you love your work – Would you continue to work if you won the lottery?

Q12 - h. Love of work

32% strongly Disagree	14% Disagree	18% Neither agree nor disagree	28% Agree	

■ strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree
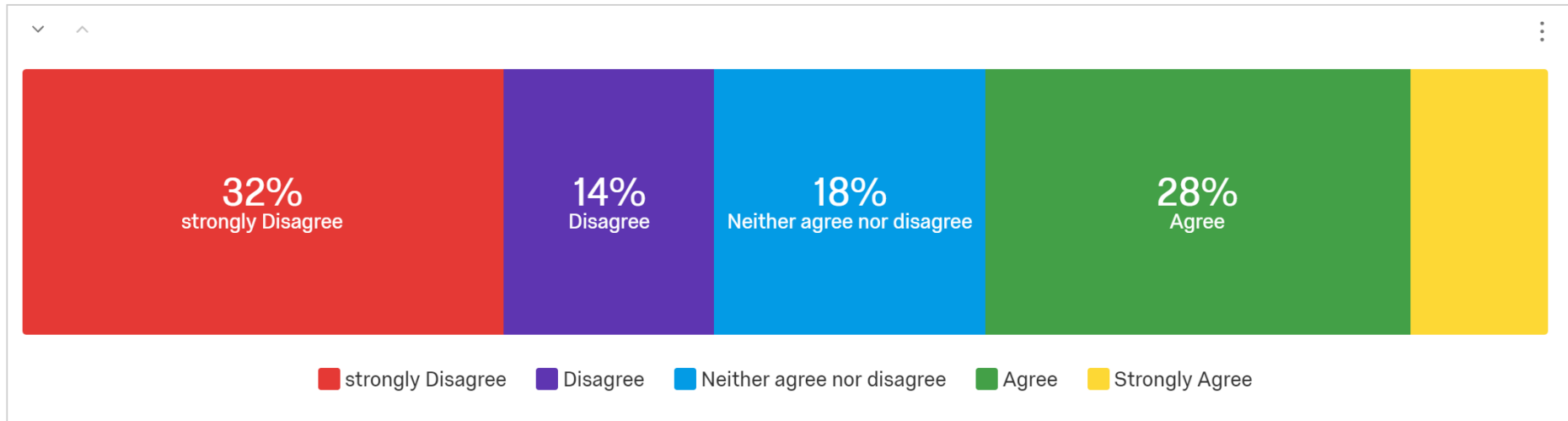
Q13 Are you surviving or thriving as an academic?

Q13 - i. Are you surviving or thriving as an academic?

53% I am surviving	**21%** I am thriving	**27%** Not sure

■ I am surviving   ■ I am thriving   ■ Not sure

Q15 Please indicate the extent to which you disagree/agree with the following statements:

q15

Categories (top to bottom):
- Less academic staff has consequences for the student experience
- The role of academic staff is becoming de-professionalised.
- Commercial targets / considerations increasingly supersede pedagogical considerations
- The growth in â€˜goodâ€™ degree classifications reflects higher standards
- Universities have become knowledge and skills factories rather than for intellectual pursuit
- Sufficient car parking should be provided for all academic staff
- It is important that communal spaces/staff rooms are provided for staff
- My ability to perform well in my work is influenced by the availability / quality of classrooms and office space
- Universities have become bureaucratic
- I am able to find sufficient time and space to research
- I prefer to share office space with just one colleague
- There is too much dependence on casual academic staff
- Academic depts./schools are adequately staffed

Legend: Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree

X-axis: 0.00%, 20.00%, 40.00%, 60.00%, 80.00%, 100.00%, 120.00%

Q16 The HE sector today is a good place to work as an academic, agree or disagree?

Q16 - b. The HE sector

| 17% Strongly Dis agree | 17% Disagree | 23% Neither agree nor disagree | 41% Agree | |

Legend: ■ Strongly Dis agree ■ Disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree
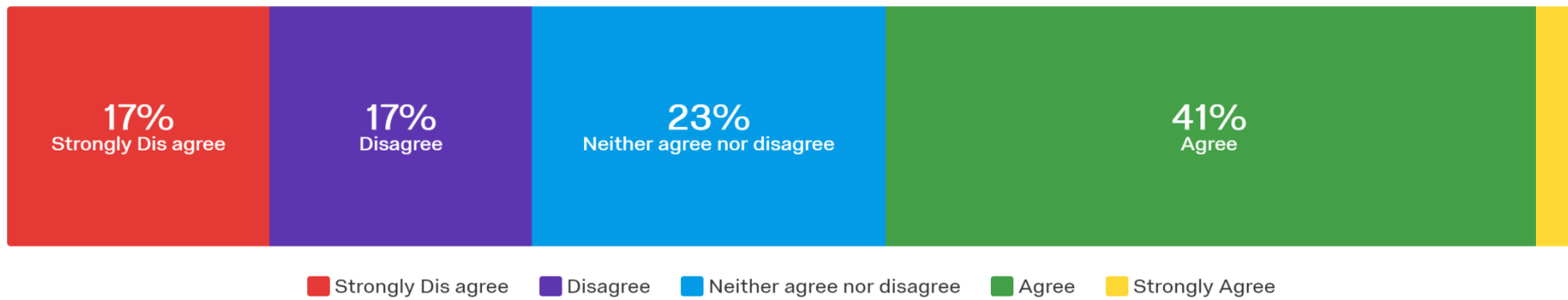
Q17 Is the HE sector changing for the better or the worse?

Q17 - c. The HE sector is changing

61%
For the worse

36%
Not sure

61%   For the worse
168 responses

...ter   ■ For the worse   ■ Not sure
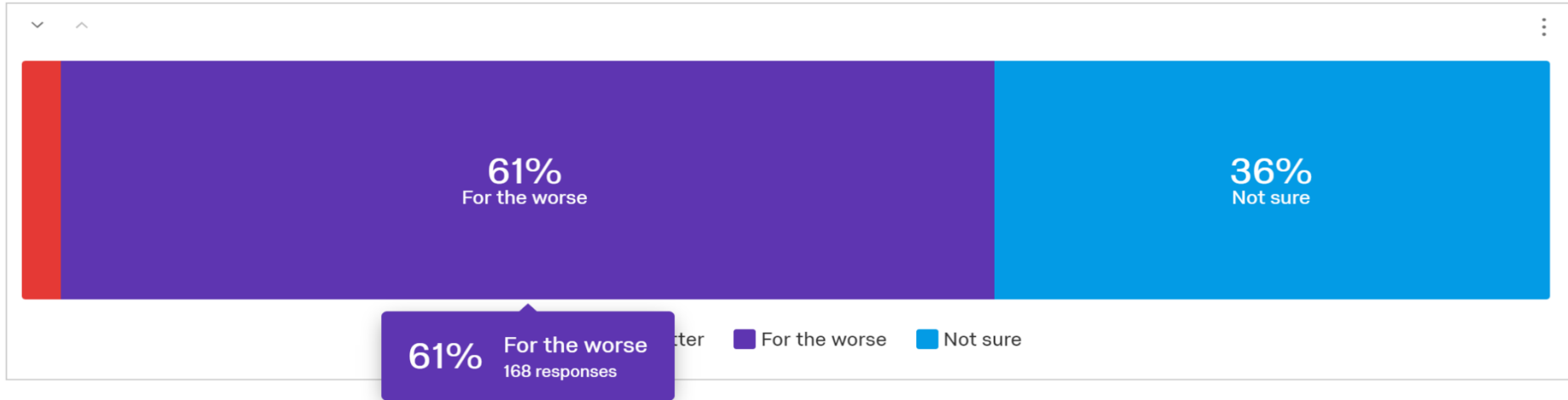
Q18 The centralisation of university services for the better?

Q18

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Legend:
- ■ makes universities more cost-efficient
- ■ makes universities more effective in facilitating teaching and research
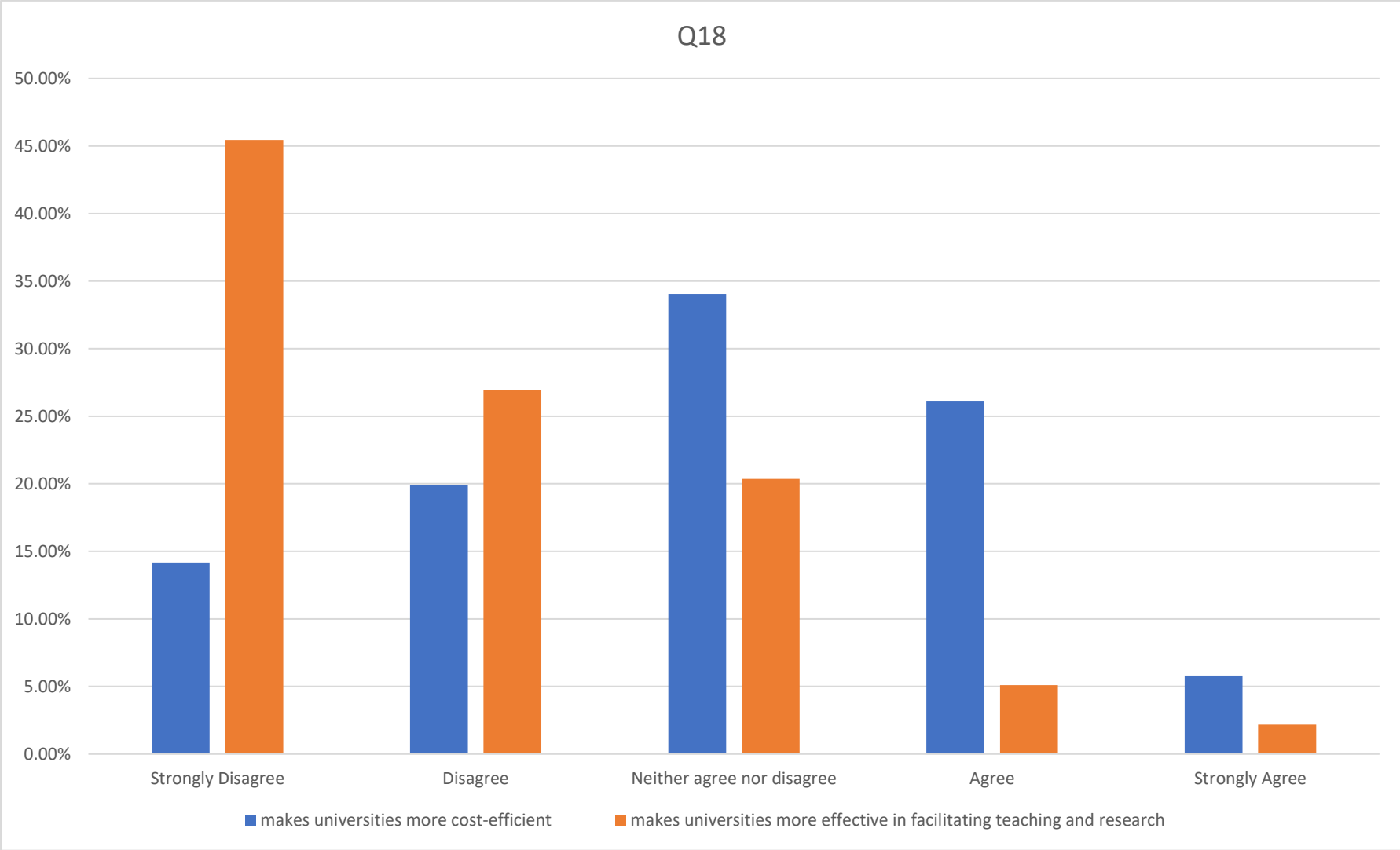
Q19 Has information technology changed the way in which you work?

Q19 - e. Information Technology

Page Options ∨

| 84%
Significantly | 15%
Very little | |
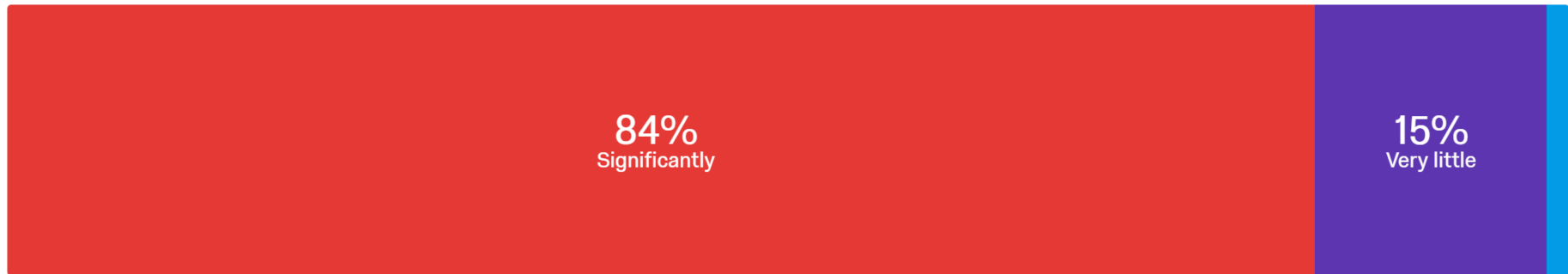
■ Significantly ■ Very little ■ Not at all

Q20 Has IT changed the way you work?

Q20 – f. Information Technology has changed the way in which I work

80% **Mainly positively**	**20%** **Mainly negatively**
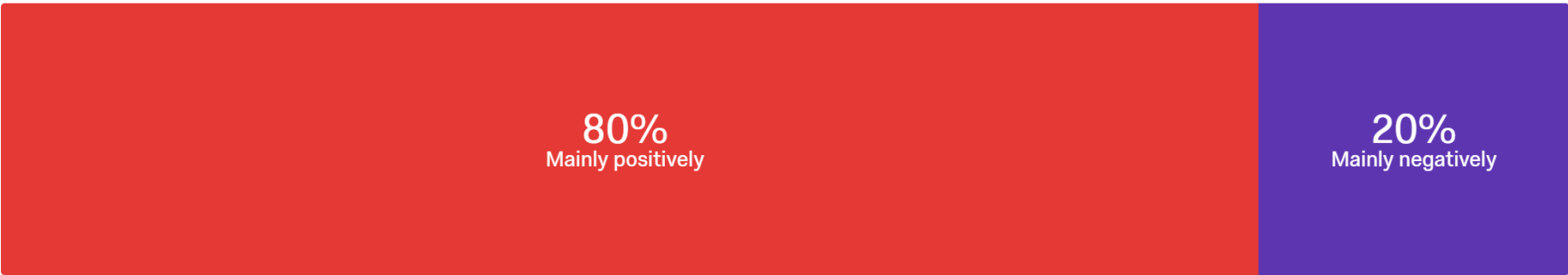
🟥 Mainly positively 🟪 Mainly negatively

Q22 How well do these statements reflect your views about communication and relationships at work?

Legend: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

Statements:
- staff and managers speak the same language
- communications with senior management are good
- academics are supported by administrators
- hub administrators roles communicated clearly to academic staff
- communications with travel office are good
- communications with IT support are good
- communications with admissions are good
- communications with the international office are good
- communications with marketing are good
- communications with HR/payroll are good
- the use of IT rather than face to face communications has had a…
- universities today have become too large, impersonal and…
- my views in meetings are taken on board
- I am regularly actively involved in school/college/institutional…
- my institutional culture is collegial*
- my relationship with my appraiser is collegial*
- my relationship with my line manager is collegial*
- my relationship with administrators is collegial*
- my relationship with fellow academics is collegial*

Q24 How well do these statements reflect your views about the academic experience at work?

Legend: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

Categories:
- the academic voice must be heard, respected and maintained for the benefit of the institution
- greater focus and investment in the academic staff experience would benefit the university and students
- a positive staff experience is linked with the enhancement of the student experience

Q29 Which age range category do you fit into?

Q29 - Age Range
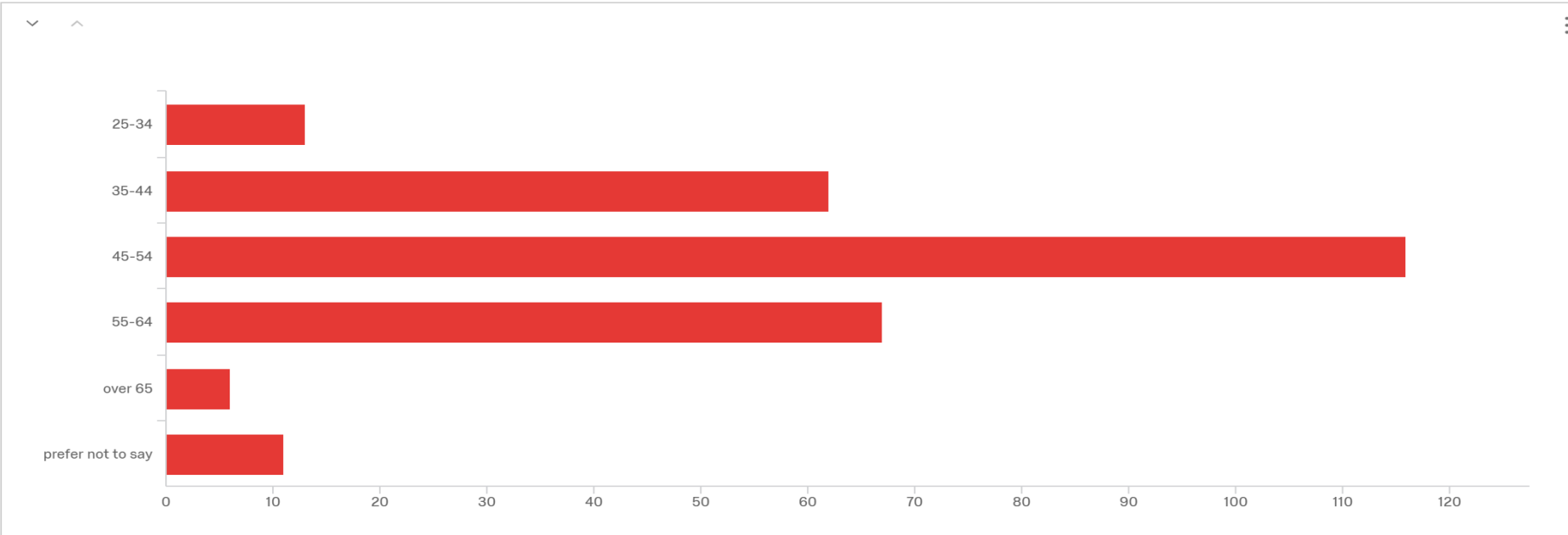
Q30 What is your gender?

Q30 - Gender

Horizontal bar chart showing gender distribution:
- Male: ~96
- Female: ~163
- prefer not to say: ~15
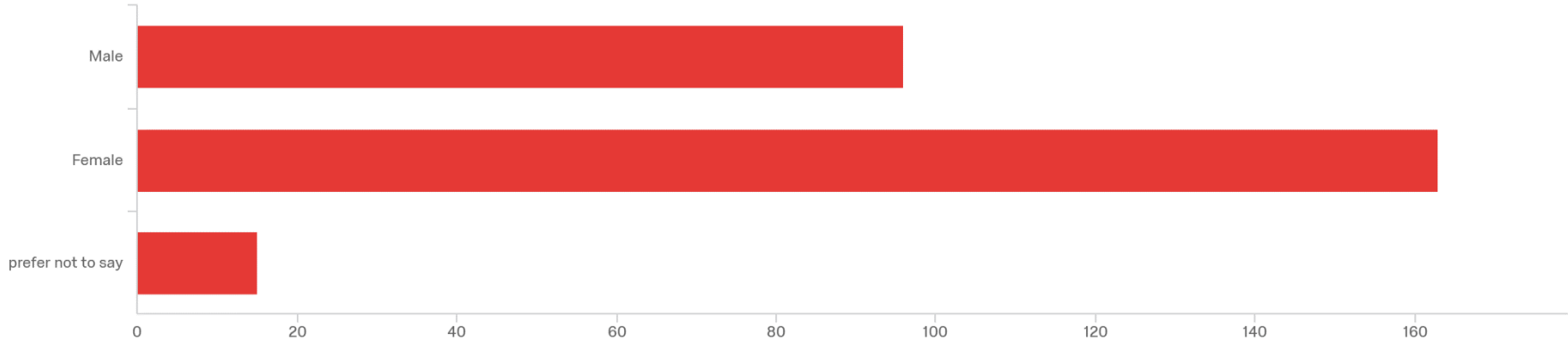
Q31 What is your length of service as an academic in the sector?

Q31 - Length of service in years as an academic (not necessarily at this institution)
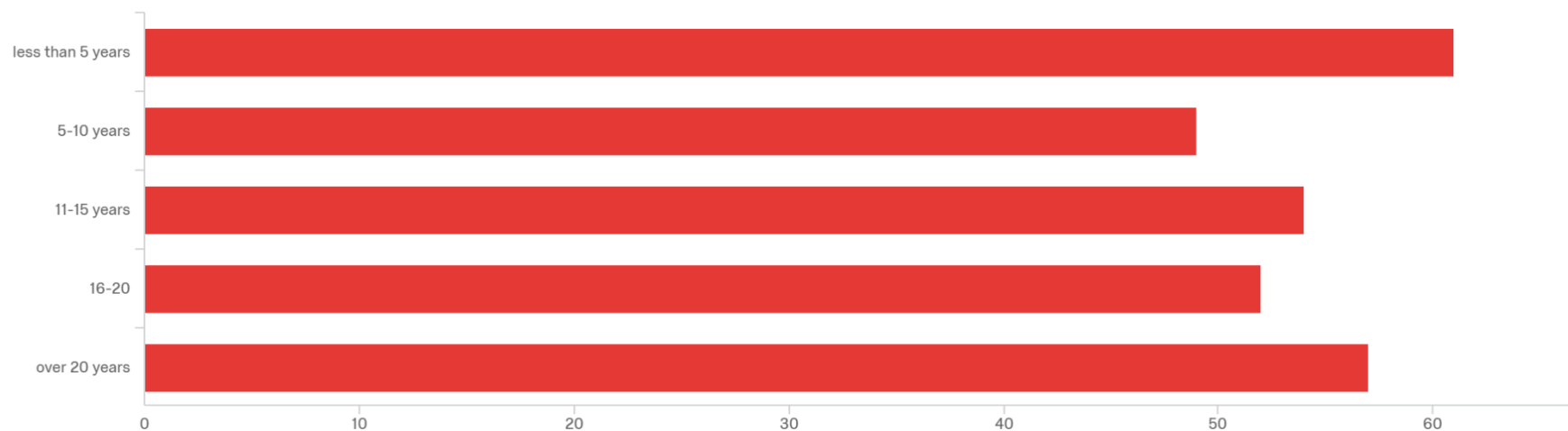
Q32 What is your role/ job title?
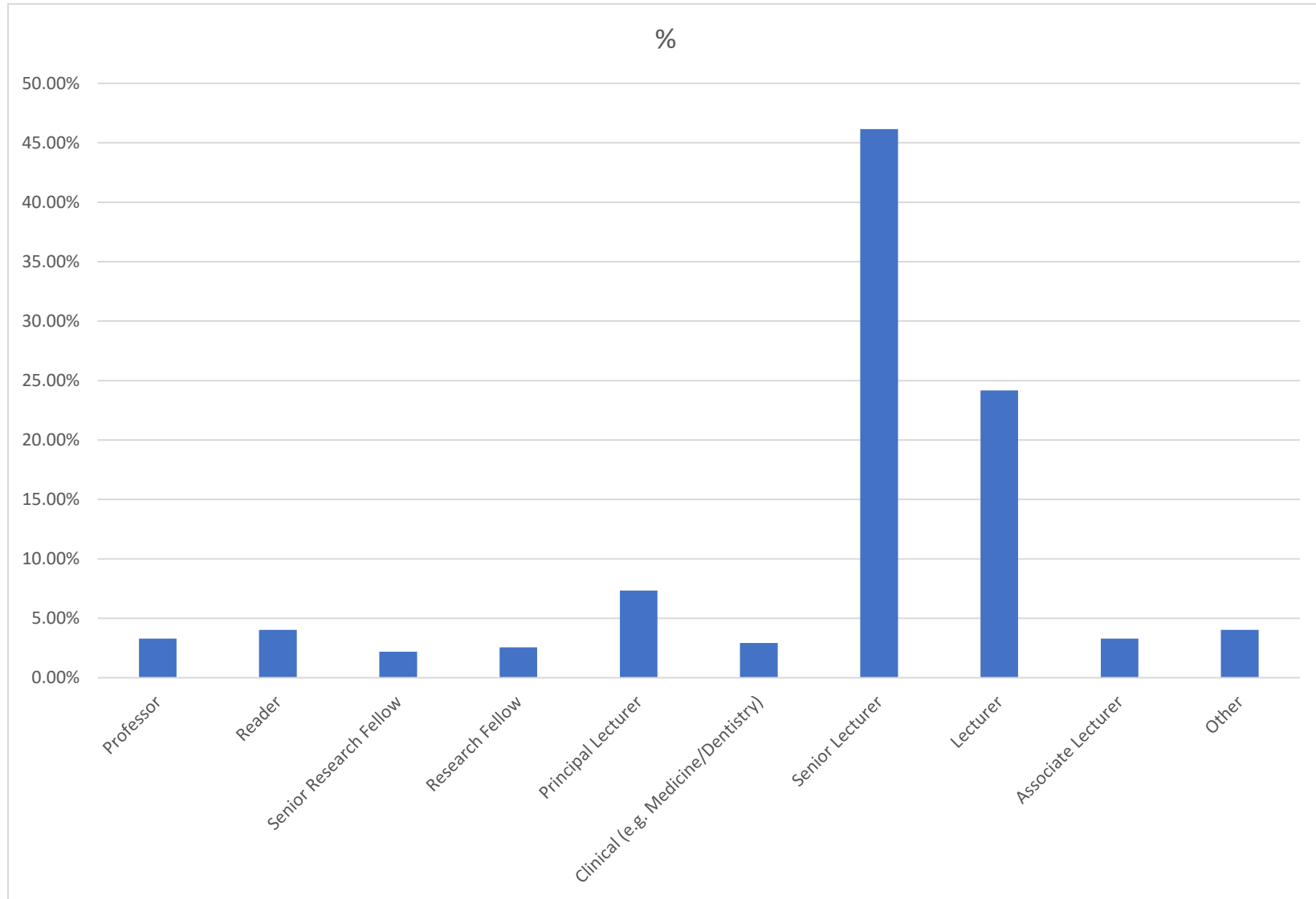
Q34 What are the contracted hours per week do you work?

Q34 - Contracted hours per week
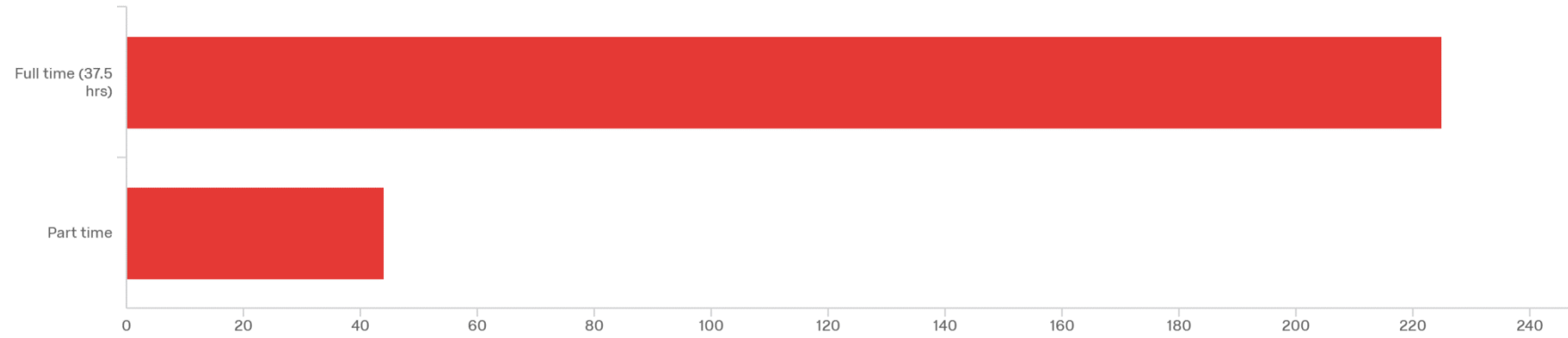
Q36 Do you have a permanent contract yes or no?

Q36 - Permanent contract?
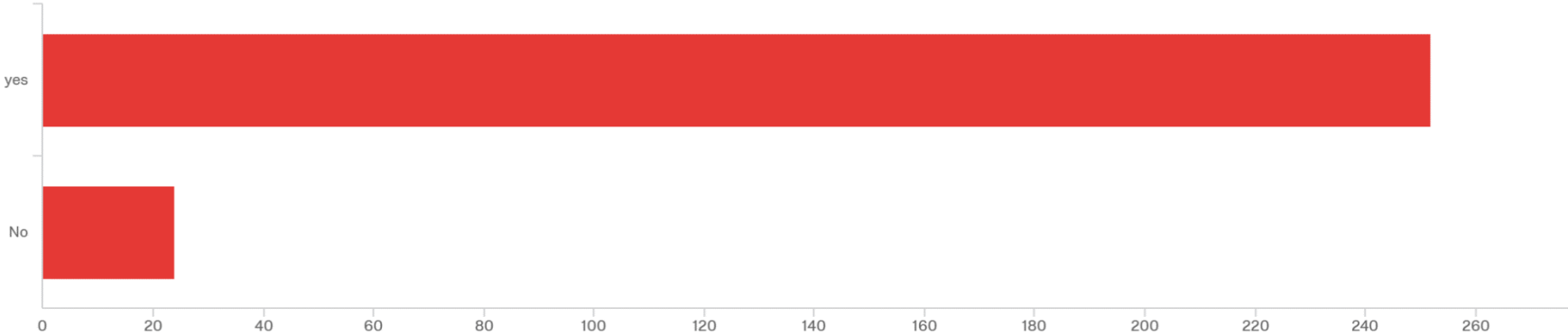
Q37 Have you ever worked outside of HE/FE?

Q37 - Have you ever worked outside of higher/further education?

Page Options ⌄

Yes — 250

No — 26

■ Count
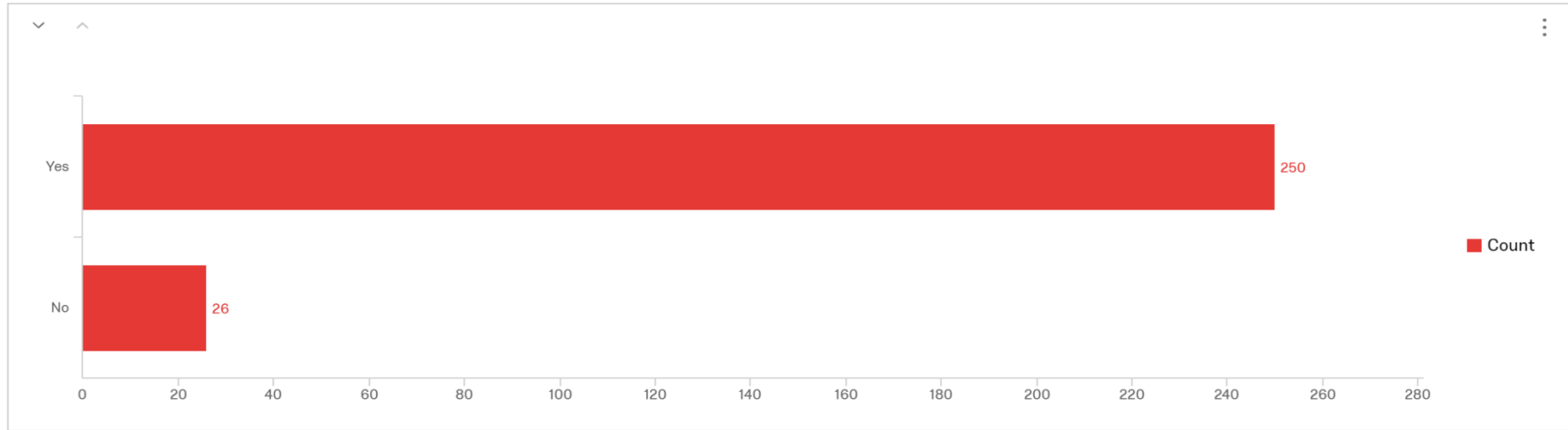
Q38 If yes, in what sector did you previously work?

Q38 - If yes in what sector did you previously work? (if this applies you may want to tick more than one of thes...

Page Options ⌄

**Appendix iv -
Inferential Data Results**

INFERENTIAL DATA RESULTS

Age Range is an ordinal variable. Non-parametric bivariate Spearman's rho correlation was used to calculate correlation coefficient either positive or negative and an asterix added if sig P value, 0.05- strong medium or weak-P value/sig. (2 tailed-plus or minus) to evaluate whether there is an association. In this case very little to no correlational association was found.

Gender is a nominal variable with two separate categories. Mann Whitney U Test was used to test differences. Result indicates a null hypothesis. This variable shows some relationships.

Length of service is an ordinal variable. Non-parametric bivariate Spearman's rho correlation used to calculate correlation coefficient- strong medium or weak P value/sig. (2 tailed) to evaluate whether there is an association. This variable correlates with almost everything.

Academic role is an ordinal variable. Non-parametric bivariate Spearman's rho correlation was used to calculate correlation coefficient- strong medium or weak P value/sig. (2 tailed) to evaluate whether there is an association. This variable shows some associations.
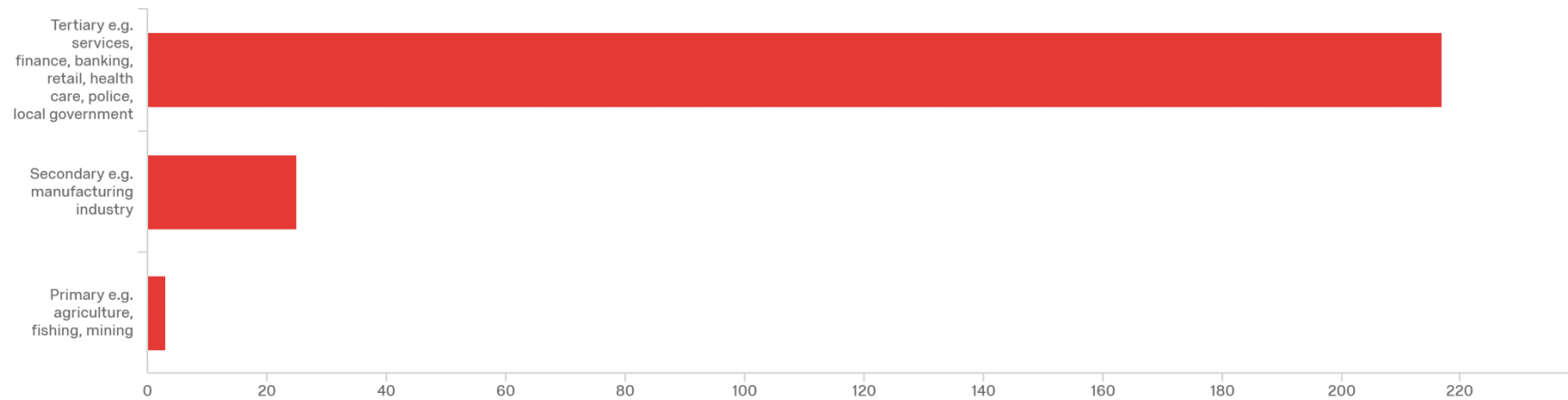
Contract full or part time is a nominal variable with two separate categories. Mann Whitney U Test was used to test differences. Result indicates a null hypothesis. This variable shows some relationships.

Permanent or non- is a nominal variable with two separate categories. Mann Whitney U Test used to test differences. Result indicates a null hypothesis This variable shows some relationships.

Table Key:

C= correlation coefficient with * or ** means that less than < 0.01 = significant association (Sig. (2 tailed) / P value < 0.05) (age/ length of service/academic role)

X= no correlation/association (age/ length of service/academic role)

NH= Null Hypothesis=no relationship between variables (gender/full-part time/permanent/not)

RNH= Reject Null Hypothesis= there is a relationship (gender/full-part time/permanent/not)

	Age	**Gender**	**Length of Service**	**Academic Role**	**Full/Part time**	**Permanent/not**
Section 1						
Workload say 76% average working time pw 10 hrs, 20 or more over and above 37.5 (Theme A) Q1	**X**	**NH** Women and men no difference in extra hrs worked	Correlation Coefficient 0.193** P value 0.001 the more service the longer hrs worked	Correlation Coefficient -0.226 P value < 0.001 The higher the role the	N 264 MWU 1,614.500 P value 0.000 Full time staff work more hrs than non	N 271 MWU 1,956.000 P value 0.004 Perm staff work more hrs than non

334

	Age	Gender	Length of service	Academic Role	Full/Part time	Permanent/not
					longer the hours	
I feel supported by the institution to be the best I can be at work-48% no 23% undecided (Theme A) Q2	X	Men feel more supported than women N 255 MWU 5,858.000 P value 0.001	Correlation Coefficient -0.298** P value<0.001 the longer staff work the less supported they feel	X	N 265 MWU 5,662.000 P value 0.027 PTs feel more support than FTs	NH No difference=
I am surviving not thriving only 20 % are thriving (Theme A) Q3 Recoded so don't use 1st one	X	NH Men likely to be thriving	Correlation Coefficient -0.23** P value <0.001 correlates negatively- the longer staff work the less likely thriving	X	NH	N 274 MWU 3,863.000 P value 0.010 Perm staff less likely to be thriving
Section 2						
71% say academic schools are not adequately staffed (16% undecided) (Theme A) Q4	X	Female staff more likely to say inadequate staffing N 259 MWU 6,065.000 P value 0.001	Correlation Coefficient -0.276** P value <0.001 negatively correlates- longer service say not staff adequately	Correlation Coefficient 0.129* P value 0.035 Lower grade staff think staff adequate	N 268 MWU 6,227.500 P value 0.004 FT more likely to say not adequately staffed	No difference= NH
83% say their ability to perform well at work influenced by availability and quality of classrooms and office space (Theme C) Q5	X	Female staff more likely to agree N 259 MWU 9,409.000 P value 0.003	Correlation Coefficient 0.242** P value < 0.001 Longer service staff say their ability to perform is influenced by space	X	N 268 MWU 3,264.000 P value 0.000 FT more likely to say space important to function well at work	N 275 MWU 1,514.500 P value 0.000 Perm staff more likely to say space important to function well at work
80% agree -16% undecided commercial considerations increasingly supercede pedagogical (Theme B) Q6	X	Female staff more likely to agree than men N 258 MWU 9,376.000 P value 0.001	Correlation Coefficient 0.310** P value < 0.001 Longer service staff more likely to agree	X	N 267 MWU 3,486.000 P value 0.002 FT agree	N 274 MWU 2,076.000 P value 0.008 Perm staff agree
67% say role of academic is becoming de-professionalised (Theme B) Q7	X	Women more likely to agree that we are becoming de-professionalised N 259 MWU 9,004.000 P value 0.034	Correlation Coefficient 0.354** P value < 0.001 Longer service staff say	X	N 268 MWU 3,710.000 P value 0.007 FT more likely to feel de-professionalised	N 275 MWU 2,191.500 P value 0.021 Perm more likely to feel de-professionalised
	Age	**Gender**	**Length of service**	**Academic Role**	**Full/Part time**	**Permanent/not**

Q8 Only 32% think it makes unis more efficient **Q9.**72% disagree-20% undecided that centralisation makes unis more effective in facilitating teaching and research (Theme B)	X	Q8 NH Q9 N 258 MWU 6,5348.000 P value 0.022 Male staff slightly more likely to be less pessimistic than female staff	Q8 correlation coefficient 0.346 makes unis more cost efficient P value NOT significant/ BUT Q9 Correlation Coefficient -0.308** P value < 0.001 longer serving staff disagree that more effective not significant but staff do feel effects of centralisation not good	Q8 correlation coefficient 0.122* P value 0.048 for cost efficiency BUT Q9 for effectiveness Correlation Coefficient 0.246** P value <0.001 Higher roles more aware/org memory remember school offices decentralised uni.	**Q8 NH Q9** N 267 MWU 6,356.500 P value 0.001 PTs more likely to think centralisation makes unis more effective	**Q8 NH** Q9 N 274 MWU 4,384.000 P value 0.000 Perm staff more likely to disagree unis more effective as a result of centralisation
80% say IT has changed the way I work positively (Theme D) Q10	X	N 257 MWU 8,682.000 P value 0.017 Fairly even split	Correlation Coefficient 0.236** P value < 0.001 more negative with longer service	X	N 264 MWU 4,180.000 P value 0.041	N 271 MWU 2,058.000 P value 0.018 FTs more likely to agree
Section 3						
Contradicts the above 55% agree the use of IT rather than face to face communication has had a detrimental effect on internal comm (Theme D) Q12 deliberate number switch with below	Correlation Coefficient 0.131* P value 0.034 An association older staff feel it is detrimental on internal comm.	N 258 MWU 9,249.000 P value 0.007 Women agree IT detrimental men more positive about effect of IT	Correlation Coefficient 0.357** P value < 0.001 longer service agree more that IT has detrimental effect	X	N 266 MWU 3,946.000 P value 0.038 FTs more likely to say detrimental	N 273 MWU 1,740.500 P value 0.000 Perm staff more likely to say detrimental
60% say NOT regularly actively involved in school/institutional decision making (Theme E) Q11	X	N 259 MWU 5,942.500 P value 0.001 Men likely to say that they are involved in decision making	Correlation Coefficient -0.175** P value 0.004 longer service staff feel not involved	X	NH	NH
53% (22% undecided) communications with Senior Management are NOT good	X	**NH** No gender difference	Correlation Coefficient -0.354** P value < 0.001 longer service	Correlation Coefficient 0.202 ** P Value 0.001 Higher grades	NH	N 273 MWU 3,936.000 P value 0.008 Perm staff likely to disagree that

			more likely to say not good	more likely to disagree that comms good with SM		comms with SM good
(Theme E) Q13						
Section 4						
88% think a positive academic staff experience (ASE) is linked to student experience (Theme F) Q14	X	N 259 MWU 8,9648.500 P value 0.027 More women likely to say this than men	Correlation Coefficient 0.145* P value 0.017	X	NH	NH Perm staff more likely to agree
96% say greater focus and investment in ASE Would benefit the uni and Ss (Theme F) Q15	X	N 259 MWU 8,828.000 P value 0.035 More women than men agree	Correlation Coefficient 0.247** P value < 0.001	X	NH	N 274 MWU 2,199.500 P value 0.008 Perm staff more likely to agree
98% say academic voice must be heard, respected and maintained for the benefit of the institution (Theme F) Q16	X	NH No gender difference	Correlation Coefficient 0.240** P value 0.001	X	NH	N 274 MWU 2,336.000 P value 0.025 Perm staff more likely to agree

Appendix v -
Research Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

Research Participant-Interview Information Sheet

Title of Research: 'The marketization of HE in the UK and the lived experience of academic staff and the changing nature of their work'

Researcher: Andrea Taberner

DBA Course Leader: Dr. Dorota Marsh

Director of Studies and Supervisor: Prof. Richard Sharpley

Dear Colleague,

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study that is part of my Doctorate Business Administration at LBS here at UCLan. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done, and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether, or not, you wish to take part in an interview. If you do agree to take part, I would appreciate any feedback about the interview process.

The purpose of the study

I am interested in finding out how marketisation of the UK HE sector has had an impact on academic staff. The themes include context, identity, morale, emotional responses to changes, relationships (with colleagues, administrators, managers), the nature of academic work, why and how you do what you do in the way you do your work and what strategies academics employ for the context in which they find themselves. In addition, the researcher is interested in any suggestions, however, small and incremental, which could improve the lived experience of academics at this university. The research themes outlined below:

1. Your academic identity/ biography/ context/ culture?

2. What does being an academic mean to you and why?

3. The nature of your work and changes-what do you do as an academic, why and how?

4. What motivates and incentivises you in the workplace?

5. What environmental factors (obstacles and facilitators) influence your actions, behaviours and emotional responses?

6. Relationships and communications (internal) at work with students, colleagues, administrators and managers and internal communications

7. Your work/life balance and wellbeing as an academic staff member

8. What, if anything, could enhance the academic lived experience in the work place?

Why have I been invited?

You have been invited as an academic working in higher education as you have volunteered to be interviewed after having completed the questionnaire, or you may have been recommended to me by a colleague.

Do I have to take part?

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw your consent at any time. Please see the section below on data storage for details about what happens to your data if you withdraw.

What will participating involve for me?

I would ask you to meet me for approximately one hour in a place that is convenient for you. I will ask you to tell me about what being an academic means to you and how long you have worked in HE and ask questions related to the aforementioned themes.

I would like to record our interview and I may take notes during our session. You may have a copy of the transcript of the interview if you like and if there is anything in it which concerns you and which, on reflection, you would like to be excluded from the data you can contact me to tell me this.

I am concerned to minimise any disruption to your working time so I will arrange interviews at a convenient time and a place for you. The data I gather will be used in the writing up of my DBA thesis. You will not be identified in it, other than broad detail such as gender, job title and

discipline. I will alter any key biographic details to ensure this is the case. Your place of work will not be identified. Anonymity and confidentiality are assured.

Data storage and security

If you tell me you wish to withdraw from taking part in this interview study and do so in the period up to 3 weeks after the date of our meeting, I will destroy any notes and recordings as soon as practical and your input will not feature in any part of the research. If you withdraw after that time, the data from our meetings may stay in the study.

All research data; consent forms, recordings of interviews, pictures, notes, other communications, will all be stored securely in UCLan's safe data storage facility in compliance with GDPR May 2018 Data Protection Act. All data should be transferred as soon as possible to the UCLan system and stored there.

Any recordings of our meetings will be uploaded to my documents within 2 days of our meeting and then deleted from the recorder. I am the only person to use the recorder and when it is not in use it is kept in a locked cupboard.

What will I have to do?

If you are willing to take part, please sign the consent form below and return it to me. I will be in touch with you to arrange a suitable time to meet with you.

What if I have any concerns?

If you have any concerns or complaints about this research you can contact:

Prof Richard Sharpley or Dr Dorota Marsh LBS, Greenbank Building, UCLAN, Preston PR2 2HE
Tel: 01772 201201

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

In taking part you will be assisting me enormously with my doctoral interview study and for that I am extremely grateful. You may find that taking part is an interesting and thought-provoking experience and it may contribute in a modest way to your own reflections on your identity and work as an academic.

Thank you for reading this information sheet. If you have any questions at all about the research, please do contact me.

My Name: Andrea Taberner

Tel: 01772-893847

Email: amtaberner@uclan.ac.uk

Consent Form

Title of Project: 'The marketization of HE in the UK and the lived experience of academic staff and their work'

Name of Researcher: Andrea Taberner

<div style="text-align:right">Please initial box</div>

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 10th August 2018 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason (please see note on withdrawal above).	
3. I consent to the interview /session being audio-taped. (Please see note on data storage above).	
4. I agree to take part in the above study.	
5. I agree to the use of the anonymised data being used in publications including the thesis	

If you have any concerns or complaints about this research you can contact:

Prof. Richard Sharpley or Dr Dorota Marsh LBS, Greenbank Building, UCLAN, Preston PR2 2HE
Tel: 01772 201201
Name of Participant:

Date:

Preferred contact method and details:

Signature:

Appendix vi -
Example of Interview Transcription

PO27

ATQ1: Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. Could you give me a very brief overview of your career background, what you have done in your career so far and how long you have been working in HE as an Academic and your previous roles and your role now.

PO27: I came into HE in 2002 so have been here quite a long time. My experience at UCLan is the sum of my experience in HE. I have had various different roles. Prior to that I worked abroad for about 5 years, I came back and completed a PGCE and an xxxx subject specialism at FE and during that time I worked in FE and a little bit in HE. Then more opportunities presented themselves around 2002 and that is the point at which I entered HE more seriously. At that point I spent from 2002 for five years as an hourly paid Lecturer then I became a Lecturer for about five or six years and then became a Senior Lecturer about four or five years ago.

ATQ2: What does being an Academic mean to you, if you had to define it how would you do so and do you consider yourself to be one, and if not why not?

PO27: I think it is a difficult term because when people ask me what I do that is not what I would say. I would not describe this as my role. I would say I am a teacher, primarily. When you say an academic there is a certain kind of snobbery linked to that, and I guess it suggests more research based than teaching and although I do both, I consider myself first and foremost a teacher. I have always been a teacher in the UK and overseas, teaching primarily. I do more teacher training now but still feel that teaching is at the heart of everything I do. Even though my role is much more research based, it all informs the teaching still. Even though my teaching hours are less than they used to be because of the research, I am still all about teaching. Even though I want to get into doing more research and having that as a greater weighting to my role and am moving in that direction, I will never lose the teaching, I will resist that. That is where my heart is. I describe myself as a teacher rather than an Academic, but internally we are often described as academics to differentiate between us and administrative staff.

ATQ3a: In the time that you have been in HE albeit at UCLan and have had experience of FE as well, has the nature of your work changed overall, regardless of your role, the working environment, that you have observed, witness or seen?

PO27: There have been a lot of changes, there are some things that have not changed in all that time, frustratingly. For example, communication between higher level management and academics is always a problem. It always comes up through staff surveys which are being pushed more and more to makes us think they are listening, but ultimately the same things just keep arising again and again. Communication is an issue and listening to what staff want. The University has very much shifted, because of the difference in the fees now and the fee culture, that students are much more the customer now. The focus is on the students and there have been a lot of improvements for students, the physical buildings have improved, there has been an expansion in student support, and those things are really great, but that is at the detriment of considering the staff. Having staff rooms, would be a small change that would make a big difference. We had them, they were taken away and so on and so on, so that now we do not have them anymore. Staff space, office space, senior management to academic communication lines, the same things are being brought up all the time. While the student experience is improving, I don't think they consider the staff, or value staff as much as students.

ATQ3b: Have you noticed any other changes, positive or negative?

PO27: In terms of expansion of the University, improvements in buildings, yes they are investing a lot of money in those kinds of things. They are focussing a lot more on employability for

students which is great. There is a lot more support for physical and mental health issues for students. When you focus on the positives it is all about the students and that is not necessarily a bad thing, but the changes that staff have been demanding are still being ignored.

ATQ3c: What do staff demand, that you think is not unreasonable?

PO27: Social spaces, private meeting spaces for students, decent office spaces. I do prefer to share, but that needs to come with a balance of being able to have meeting spaces for staff and students.

ATQ3d: How would you like an office space to be then, how would you describe that?

PO27: One or two other people maximum 3. That needs to be balanced with meeting spaces for staff, resource spaces, very simple things like storage as well. It is all so squeezed.

ATQ3e: You mentioned space in many different ways, have you any comments about classrooms?

PO27: Timetabling is always a massive issue, they do their best, but where you do your best to be prepared, but it is all out of your control. But aside from timetabling we should be in a privileged position having nominated two rooms that are specialised priority rooms for TESOL. But this year even those have been taken away. We are in a better position than some, supposedly having these rooms, but even now there is no foresight. More bums on seats, increased student numbers but in a city centre campus you are just so limited on space. A disconnect between all the different services, people and teams and those who organise it. It is the same things every year.

ATQ3f: Do you find from a personal point of view once the initial hurdles of the beginning of the academic year are ironed out that life becomes a bit more tolerable?

PO27: Yes, I would say there are peaks and troughs. The stressful periods are at the beginning of the year. With all best intentions you can be as organised and prepared, there are just things out of your control.

ATQ3g: Talking of a particularly stressful time of year, you mainly focus on timetabling, rooming and space, has that become worse?

PO27: Yes, it has become worse, as the University grows, it is not balanced with incorporating more space. I have heard that there is very little staff space in the new XXXXX building. The well-being of the staff should come as high if not higher than that of the students. Because happy staff will equate to being more incentivised. I love my job and the students, but the things that frustrate me are the internal workings and management, higher up and the physical space.

ATQ3h: Is there anything else other than space at the start of the year which you and other academic staff feel are causing unnecessary stress?

PO27: Last minute things, organisation seems to be very last minute. Welcome Week - you cannot get hold of information in a timely way.

ATQ3i: Any other changes that you have noticed in the HE environment at UCLan that affect you and colleagues around you?

PO27: Unnecessary changes and added layers structurally, how schools and colleges function that changes all the time. I have seen many variations, that is frustrating because there are various consultations about these things but then they go ahead and do them anyway. One of the biggest changes is the removal of school offices, and centralisation of school offices, not having a dedicated school office anymore.

ATQ3j: How does that affect the nature of academic work most?

PO27: You build such a strong connection with the school office team, you spend a lot of time with them and work on that relationship to enable things to get done. Staff said no to centralisation, academics, admin, students and then they did it anyway. We are getting used to it now but are not happy especially those who have experienced the previous way still complain at lot. Not considering the staff, they say it is best for the students all going to one place, but certainly the admin staff felt particularly aggrieved by it all, that kind of idea as though they are just a human resource.

ATQ3k: Why do you think that management have gone down that route of centralising?

PO27: Streamlining, budget, as a way of getting rid of people, logistically, freeing up space, but they had the students in mind, but again it is not what any of the staff wanted. There were many more important things that they need to prioritise. They do not think about the working relationships because they are not on that frontline day to day. They just see the logistics of it all and the bottom line in terms of finance. That is what is missing that personal removal of face to face, because it is a business now. When I started that was not the case, but since the introduction and increase of fees it has changed. It has turned the University into much more of a for profit organisation.

ATQ3l: Have you noticed anything with IT?

PO27: Much more screen based, much more admin based. I would say a lot of the administration is being devolved to course leaders and/or subject leaders. I and another colleague who are course leaders, often joke we are being well paid to be admin staff. So we are being asked more and more to take on administrative duties and it takes a massive chunk out of time that could be spent better. That is a massive change and that is to do with the removal of school offices. They are having more and more pressure to deal with a number of different schools and are more and more stretched in the Hubs. Another massive change in terms of students is the amount of time we spend on the pastoral side of things. With the additional admin duties and the pastoral stuff pretty much takes up most of my days and weeks.

ATQ3m: Are you dealing with students pastorally more now than you did 16 years ago and what do you think is the underlying reason for that?

PO27: Presenting with or having undeclared mental health issues. I have debated long and hard with colleagues about why this is, we cannot come to a definitive answer. Is it because it is being talked about more, are there labels out there now, I don't know what the answer is but it gets worse every year. I think there are lots of factors but you cannot put your finger on one thing. I think it must be a generational thing, but it is having a definite impact on student studies and how we need to support them. It may have something to do with the fact that we are a widening participation University, but I know other universities are seeing increases too with anecdotal evidence and talking with others from other institutions.

ATQ3n: If that is becoming more of your job, as well as the admin how would you address that to stop it becoming more and more part of your role, in order to allow staff to get back to preparation, lesson planning, etc?

PO27: Every part of the University whichever service it is, they are stretched, there is not enough money to employ more people to do these things. But for whatever reason they are spreading out the workload with fewer people and increasing that as the University grows. There is no correlation between the numbers of staff coming in and the numbers of students in a growing University and they are squeezing everything they can in the name of efficiency and less support from the Government and HEFCE.

ATQ3o: It does seem that from what I have heard that there is a large pot of money but it is whether people choose to use it? There is an abundance in investment in improving the student experience.

PO27: But that is not equating to the staff experience. There are too many bottom-line conversations, I am fed up of going into these Welcome Back Staff Meetings and them saying we are doing really great, but and the but always goes on for a long time explaining we need to do better. When it comes to retention, we are slated for not doing enough. We do as much as we can and what we are expected to do. They just look at the bottom line and never drill down to School level. They have tried a couple of times, but I don't know where that went and how far it got. They do not drill down to what the actual issues are. I look at my course, for example, I would say 90 % of the retention problems are something to do with things completely out of our control and regardless of where the student finds themselves it would have been the same result, but I am blamed for not doing enough and we need to do more. So, there is a lot of that going around, you need to do more, there is not enough praise for what we are doing. I don't think it is unreasonable to ask for a shared staff space and a private meeting room, we have been banging on about that ever since we moved from XXXX building. It is not a lot to ask for. I am fed up of taking students out, when students are physically upset, and I have to walk around the building to try and find somewhere. Everyone feels the same. The number of times I have had to sit outside on a public bench counselling students, talking about sensitive things, you would not believe. Some have said we should go outside the VC's office because there is always space there.

ATQ4: Moving on what motivates and incentivises you in the workplace, what do you really love doing?

PO27: I love seeing the students grow from first year to final year. I love creating a really supportive network and helping those students develop, personally, professionally and academically from start to finish. It is an absolute joy. And the second thing is the people I work with. I love the people I work with, we support each other within the team, within the School. There are so many in this School who have stayed for a long time. And if some of those other things could be fixed, I would enjoy it a lot more. Anything higher than School level or higher is just chaos.

ATQ5a: Although we have mentioned a little about environmental factors that facilitate or obstacles that affect your job, can you think of other things, on an institutional level. Can you describe some of the dealings you have had with other services, HR, Payroll, International Office, Travel Office, Marketing, Admissions, Admin Services?

PO27: Mostly chaotic, mixed experiences across all the services, and it is not always their fault. The University is quite disconnected in many areas and they all seem to be many businesses in this larger business. Procedures, bureaucracy and admin, which are ultimately the things that

happen when you deal with services is increasing. They are equally squeezed and pushed, there is not enough linking up between all these services. It is so difficult to book things with Travel, difficult to work with HR, I don't even talk to them. There is a lack of one person to talk to, faceless services. If we all had a dedicated person to speak with, for example in the admin team, we have people to look after our programmes, but you can't say that for services, not one person to go to. They seem to run for their own personal way, not there as a support. They feel disgruntled by us asking for support or help. LIS are better, but HR, Payroll. Mainly negative experiences, for example I had a priority parking place issued by car parking/HR. I had a back problem ongoing for a couple of years and then suddenly the rules changed, I have an Occupational Health appointment and now they have to decide if you get that parking permit or not. On the basis of a half hour meeting with OH they will be the person with the power to say if I can keep this permit, even though my GP supports it. On the basis of a half hour appointment they decide that I don't deserve this parking permit any longer and so that got stuck with HR and I complained. I dealt with one particular person, this dragged on for about one year. They never got back to me. It made me so upset and stressed out that I just left it and it has never been resolved. I probably should have chased it up. They are supposed to be there to support and help you, but you are put off contacting HR, Payroll, Travel, those three in particular because of the negative experiences.

ATQ5b: Have you had dealings with Marketing, International Office, Admin?

PO27: I just rolled my eyes for the purpose of the recording. Marketing again, it may be unfair, but they don't seem to know what they are doing, so many shifts within the department. You can't get in to the building itself. Another team I avoid. It is not all their fault, they don't go out to present themselves that way. Catering are great, but they do work as their own little business too, big charges for things. I have gone and paid for things myself and claimed it back, and eventually got the money back. I have done that on occasions. The processes for ordering these things is ridiculous. That has devolved to us too. You used to be able to go through the office. That stupid things from the woman who came from Payroll in the staff meeting – basically there are not enough people to do this job in Payroll, she does it in her spare time on a Friday afternoon, so therefore because they do not have the resources to complete new paperwork for external speakers, we are being tasked with this role and it is all to do with tax. So now we are expected to be tax experts, a workers' questionnaire. External speakers and anything they are claiming, we have to determine from this questionnaire if they are paid as self-employed or PAYE. Because Payroll have not got the resources to do it, we are being asked to do it. They talked about fines and the trouble we could get into if we do not do it, but they do not plough the resources in to do it. Other people who don't usually speak up said something. There were 20 slides explaining the process and what each question meant and why. The backlash from staff was massive.

ATQ6a: We sort of talked about communications indirectly and explicitly in some cases, if you were to explain to an outside person, describe internal communications at this University, how would you describe them?

PO27: Crap.

ATQ6b: What can be done about this, is this with colleagues, managers, students?

PO27: There is too much disconnect between all these things, nothing is smooth, nothing is easy, nobody makes it easier for you. The first thing I would do if I asked someone to do an additional task that they would not normally do, would be to make it as easy as possible for them. That seems sensible but we are constantly being asked to do things we have no clue about. They don't make it easy for us. There are not enough people to do all these things, and they are all

being devolved to us and I have become a glorified admin assistant with budgeting and purchasing orders and this, that and the other. Somebody needs to do that for us.

ATQ6c: Maybe a basic internal communications audit to be done. If it is not straightforward for academic staff to do then maybe someone else needs to do it.

PO27: I don't want to go for training for all these kinds of things. Look at the course leaders report this time round, what we have to complete. I can't spend more than 10/15 minutes doing one section, it sends you here, there and everywhere for stats and it does not make it easy. If things could be easier, services and connected together. The School Offices used to do much more of this stuff. We had a dedicated person to do that for us. I came back after summer and was in tears by 9.00am. These are the really stupid things that make me upset. I had gone in to the photocopying room, our office is quite near, I am the one who rings up for paper. There was no A4 paper left, a queue. I could not get my copying done, and I got so angry that people are not considerate to ring for paper. I put a sign up to say if you notice stocks are low, please ring XXXX and order some. This helps everyone. This sign got taken down. But I was so angry, and I cried. It tips you over.

ATQ7a: If I were to ask those that love you and your close friends, how would they describe your work/life balance, what would they tell me?

PO27: I work all the time and don't have a break. I am better now than I used to be. I do finish at a certain time and don't check my emails, because I have other distractions at home. I often used to check emails at home in evenings and at weekends. I went to training about supporting mental health, about 3 years ago and the guy who ran it, said I bet you are the type of person who responds to students in the evening and at weekends and I just laughed and said yes. He had a go at me and said that it was people like me who make it really difficult for others. I was really upset at the time, I had never thought about it like that. I thought I was helping them, but when you think about it you are not helping out the wider community, it gives academics a bad name. It did make me start thinking about it. It made me realise, because I get angry because the University don't listen about the very basic things. I will do my job, go over and above, but I am not doing weekend and evening stuff anymore. Some days I work really long days though. I have started going home a bit earlier or working from home. Students just keep coming in, they see you eating your lunch but still come in. With all the traffic in the office I have got to go home and work or come in a little bit later. This is for my own well-being. I now have contract parking, because one reason I came in so early was to get parked. They have closed half of xxxx and that is ongoing. I have paid for contract parking and it is a better deal and it is a personal space. Car parking is a massive issue for me and most staff. If you are early then great, but if you have other responsibilities before you come to work then it is awful. A massive weight was lifted when I sorted out my own space. It was a silver lining because xxxx had been shut and I ended up paying on xxxx Street and saw the signs for contract parking and I called them and organised it. It has made my life so much better. I work too hard with too many hours.

ATQ7b: Have you noticed other colleagues working too much?

PO27: Yes, everybody does, not taking their holidays, how many do not take their full annual leave. I can't remember when I last used all my annual leave, however you can work from home some days. Switching off and taking annual leave has been squeezed to such a small period of time in the summer you just can't take it.

ATQ8a: If you were the VC from tomorrow and you had a budget to match, what would you do to enhance the academic lived experience at this University, regardless of what is going on elsewhere?

PO27: Space, buy space, invest in space, not commandeer it for student accommodation. Space for staff well-being. We should go back to the staff surveys which say the same thing every time they are filled in and address them. Just consider the staff, give them a communal space. If I had to prioritise it would be private space for students first. First it would be staff/student private meeting space that could double up for staff meeting space. A table, light from a window and a plant in the corner seems to be a lot to ask for at this University. Then a staff communal space where people can meet which could double up for some sort of resource area. Great spaces for students, but staff need that too, in each School. If these problems were fixed that would be a massive thing. Invest in more staff so that we could devolve the admin, invest in more staff admin services so there were enough people to do those jobs that did not have to be passed to us. I would bring school offices back. I would invest in more car parking, space issue again. If they can't give us new offices, give us a budget to refurb them. I have already complained about having flea bites from being in my office.

ATQ8b: What else would you do, some things you mentioned earlier?

PO27: Invest in the mental health team and student well-being. Dedicated parking for staff, they have some of this at Lancaster. Behind union building the senior managers have this, but it is not even full. The good news is that all staff concerns are reasonable, fixable and relatively inexpensive if the will of management is there to address these. They are not hard to achieve to improve the staff experience. That is the only thing that makes me look elsewhere. I am not saying other places are necessarily better, it is not just us, but listen to the staff and let us see some tangible results from the things that come up again and again. Make our lives as happy as you make the students, it does not take much.

Thank you very much for your time.

Appendix vii -
Academic Interviewee Profiles

Interviewees profiles August 2018-February 2019

ACADEMIC Participant No	ROLE	Gender	AGE Group	LOS in HE in yrs not necessarily at this uni	Contract Type full or part time (FT or PT)	Permanent P or not	Only ever worked in HE*
PO8	Prof	male	45-54	11-15	FT	P	*
PO9	Prof	male	45-54	over 20	FT	P	
PO25	Prof	male	55-64	over 20	FT	P	*
PO14	Reader	female	35-44	over 20	FT	P	*
PO20	Reader	male	35-44	16-20	FT	P	
PO24	Reader	female	25-34	5-10	FT	P	*
PO6	R Fellow	female	over 65	11-15	Now PT was FT	P	
PO12	PL	female	45-54	over 20	Now PT was FT	P	
PO13	PL	female	55-64	over 20	FT	P	
PO21	PL	male	35-44	16-20	FT	P	*
PO29	CL	male	45-54	5-10	FT	P	
PO30	CL	male	over 65	5-10	PT	Not	
PO1	SL	female	55-64	5-10	FT	P	
PO2	SL	male	55-64	11-15	FT	P	
PO4	SL	female	35-44	11-15	FT	P	
PO10	SL	female	55-64	5-10	FT	P	
PO11	SL	male	55-64	11-15	FT	P	
PO16	SL	male	55-64	16-20	FT	P	
PO27	SL	female	35-44	16-20	FT	P	
PO3	L	male	45-54	Less than 5	FT	P	
PO5	L	female	34-45	5-10	FT	P	
PO7	L	male	34-45	Less than 5	FT	P	
PO17	L	male	34-45	Less than 5	FT	P	
PO28	L	female	45-54	5-10	FT	P	
PO26	L	male	34-45	5-10	FT	Not	
PO18	AL was L self-demoted	female	34-45	Less than 5	FT	P	
PO19	AL was L self-demoted	female	34-45	11-15	Now PT was FT	P	
PO23	AL was L self-demoted	female	34-45	5-10	FT	Not	
PO22	AL	male	55-64	Less than 5	PT	Not	
PO15	SPH	female	34-45	11-15	PT	Not	
TOTAL 30		**15 male/15 female**	25-over 65	3-25	4 part time	5 not P	5 only

Representative sample 50 %male/50% female almost reflects actual case study population split 48% m/ 52% f

3 Professors (all male)

3 Readers (mix)

1 Senior/Research Fellow/ Research Associate (female)

3 Principal Lecturers (mix)

2 Clinical (male)

7 Senior Lecturers (mix)

6 Lecturers (mix)

4 Associate Lecturers (3 of whom self-demoted from Lecturer and all female)

1 SPH (staff paid by the hour-female)