##### Researcher

Great. OK, right. So, obviously, I've had a look at your profile and stuff on the website, so I've sort of looked at, you're kind of like more teaching focused it looks at the moment, but also doing some postdoc work.

##### Participant 7

Yeah, that's right.

##### Researcher

And yeah, you obviously did your PhD in [topic]. But in your own words, can you just kind of tell me about yourself and your background and your current job?

##### Participant 7

Yeah. So I consider myself to be a [discipline] scholar. My research is interdisciplinary. It combines [fields]. My understanding of what a [phenomenon] is, is perhaps not a very business of understanding. It's a [disciplinary] understanding of how people [work].

##### Researcher

Great. So in your current role, how much time do you have dedicated to each stream of work, so like research and teaching?

##### Participant 7

Oh yeah. Yeah, I've got, my teaching takes about 6 hours a week. 6, 7 hours a week. My research is the remaining sort of 30 odd hours.

##### Researcher

OK, great. And what kind of made you want to have a career in academia? What drew you to being an academic?

##### Participant 7

Gosh, that's a really interesting question. You know what it's like, you do well in your undergraduate degree and then you quite enjoy the challenge and you quite enjoy the reward. So you start your postgraduate degree, and then if you do well or you just feel like there's this one more thing that will make you feel complete, and then you enrol on the PhD. And you think once you've got the PhD, then you'll know it all, and you'll feel complete. But you don't. A PhD teaches you how little you actually know. You think you will be an expert, but I think you realise that you learn about how much you don't know. And that pushes you to want to know more. And I think it is really quite a luxurious lifestyle. I know that it comes with pressures. I know that it's a lifestyle in which work never leaves you. It's always with you. But it is a very luxurious lifestyle, I think, because if you're lucky to be in an environment where you are free to do your work, where you want, how you want, what more can you ask for, really? You have got flexibility, you interact with wonderful individuals with beautiful, inspirational minds that constantly make you feel like you don't belong, haha, imposter syndrome I think it's called. And my gosh, conferences, obviously not now, not with Covid-19, but it's such a treat to go away, meet people, eat nice food and talk about ideas. It's a luxurious lifestyle, and you have control over what you do and you own what you do. It can be daunting, it can feel overwhelming at times, but it's yours. You design it, you take ownership, you carry it through to the end. And once you see that materialise in either, you know, that dissertation that you're holding in front of you or that acceptance letter from a journal. My gosh, the joy. It's indescribable. I had a paper accepted two days ago.

##### Researcher

Wow, congratulations.

##### Participant 7

Thank you. And I, I felt like I grew two inches.

##### Researcher

Hahaha.

##### Participant 7

Yeah. So it's, I wouldn't say there was a single factor that pushed me. I don't think I always wanted to be an academic. I think I just like learning and I like teaching other people about what I learn. And I like putting challenges in front of myself. And the academic environment lets you do that. So it was organic, it was organic, it was a combination of liking the lifestyle, but also just liking learning. And you know, I'm actually not too bad at it. I think. I think.

##### Researcher

Lovely. Thank you. I mean, I can't obviously relate on the publication front because I haven't ever submitted anything for publication yet. Obviously, I'm just like a fresh student, but I can imagine it is like a really great feeling to know that your work, to get that kind of confirmation that what you've done is actually like good and publishable. I'm looking forward to that one day.

##### Participant 7

Yeah, the publication process, it can be long. It's an emotional process. Good and bad emotions, unfortunately. So when it materialises into something, when you feel like somebody out there actually thinks that you have got something meaningful to say - it's indescribable.

##### Researcher

Yeah, I bet. So just following on from that, what would you say the purpose of academia is?

##### Participant 7

The purpose of academia is to make a better world. It's to understand how we act in the world and to find better ways of being in the world. That might sound a little idealistic. But I think, and it's a very general question, actually, because it depends on the discipline as well. Of course, at the moment, medical sciences are at the forefront of, you know, making the world a better place. Not to say that social sciences haven't got a place in there, of course they do. The challenge that we're facing currently is a medical challenge, but also a societal challenge that changes the way we work, changes the way that we relate, and these things need to be discussed and spoken of as well, by us, by social scientists. I am a social scientist. I'm not a natural scientist. But we need somebody to translate the challenges that are unfolding in front of us to help us comprehend what's going on. And I think as academics, we have got that responsibility to translate, to capture the world, to tell future generations, help them understand the world. I was listening to an interview with someone, and of course, I don't remember who it was with. He was saying that we, as writers, have got a responsibility now to capture, to write about this moment, for future generations in, you know, 50 years time, for whom it will be incomprehensible what we're going through now. So we need to write and analyse and capture and explain the world to future generations.

##### Researcher

Great. Excellent. Thank you. So I want to sort of talk more about the specifics of your job and what you do. So are you able to kind of tell me the formal requirements of your role? And by that I mean things that you are required to deliver or achieve, maybe in, for example, a given academic year. So, for example, that would be something like, I don't know, a certain number of publications or a certain level of research output or even like, teaching focused, it could be like student evaluation scores. And if possible, could you tell me where these requirements kind of come from? So if they're like a business school level or university or so on.

##### Participant 7

I'm actually on a fixed term contract. My situation is unique in that I am an hourly lecturer. I'm not a lecturer, I'm an hourly lecturer, and I support other lecturers in the deliveries that they are performing. I support other lecturers. So I don't design my own modules, I deliver hourly teaching, all modules assigned by other academics who very much involve me in decisions and give me scope to have my input. I don't have, on the teaching front, I don't have any specific targets, so to say, beyond the targets that I set myself or those that I set in agreement with the lecturers that I work with. So, I see where your question is going. But because I'm on a fixed sort of hourly contract, I am not subject to the same targets I guess, you could argue. For the research, of course, I've got that's something that was that was written into my contract, which is the delivery of two reports, plus freedom to work on manuscripts and publications. And there is a lot more flexibility on what this means because it depends on what journals you target and it depends on who you work with. If you work on your own or if you're dependent on other - not dependent, you collaborate - with other people and then you need to consider timetables as well. So some of the research requirements had been written into my contract and agreed at the time of appointment. Others, I've got flexibility to design and maybe my targets are ambitious. They're too ambitious. But I've got an idea of how many manuscripts I would like to produce. I'm getting to the review stage, but that's very much, I'm in a lucky position because I can decide that with my mentors, my line managers. So, so long as I do the required reports, I've got flexibility to work on additional publications, manuscripts, based on my own choice, really.

##### Researcher

Thank you. And do you feel like that workload is manageable in conjunction with the teaching responsibilities that you have?

##### Participant 7

Yeah, it's a challenge. It is a challenge because you cannot lock teaching into six hours a week. Students will email throughout the week and you want to be a good teacher and you will reply to those emails and you will meet with the students if they would like to meet. Obviously not now. But you can organise online meetings. So yes, research, working in academia, there's no clear cut distinction between teaching and research. I think the two, in terms of time that is, of course, there is no clear cut temporal distinction between how much time is spent on teaching and how much time is spent on research. That means that you have to be quite self-disciplined. So whereas sometimes there will be a week when you will do more teaching, there will be other weeks when your teaching responsibilities are a bit less, when you have less marking, for instance. Marking is a very busy period. I have to prioritise marking because we work to institutional deadlines. Every school will have regulations in place about when marks should be returned to the students by. And then obviously that means that you have to plan your marking. If you're marking on modules where there are over 200 students, within sort of 20 working days when the marks need to be returned to the students, that means that marking will be prioritised. But then you know that later on you will be, sort of, picking up those hours. When you have less teaching, you will be doing research. So it does require you to be quite self-disciplined. I think the great academic is one who teaches and researches. I don't think I would just want to do one. I like having a mix of both. I like being able to tell somebody about the work that I'm doing, and if you're doing research-led teaching, then that's your opportunity. I think research, as well, especially if you're writing up, writing, it can be quite lonely. It can be quite isolating. So it's great to have a space where you can interact with other people to take your mind away from thinking about writing.

##### Researcher

Definitely.

##### Participant 7

Does that answer your question?

##### Researcher

Yeah, no, definitely. Yeah, really good. Thank you. And so you talked about, you have to produce two reports as part of your research contract, is there any expectation of you to engage with any sort of external impact activities? So are you expected to try and do something to reach stakeholders? I guess with the with the nature of your research, it's probably quite stakeholder involving during the research stage, isn't it?

##### Participant 7

Yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely. And expectations, I think there is an expectation, but I think I also expect it of myself. So I think it's an unwritten expectation. Because like you rightly said, because the nature of my research is such that it does involve stakeholders, I want to involve stakeholders. So I sort of, I expect this of myself as well. And I think the people who are involved in my postdoc monitoring will be pleased to see that from me, I think.

##### Researcher

Yeah.

##### Participant 7

Yeah, I suppose yes, it's an unspoken, it's not written into my contract, not in words anyway. But I want to do it. And yes, I expect myself to do it.

##### Researcher

Yeah, of course. Yeah. OK. And in general, what kind of attitude does [university] take to impact? I've had a look and obviously seen that they place emphasis on impact. I wonder if that sort of comes into play in what you do on a day to day basis.

##### Participant 7

Yeah, absolutely. Yes. So [university] does take impact very seriously. And I think I am lucky to be in a business school that takes such an openminded approach to what you can do as a business school scholar, because my research is not typical business research, but it's research that draws on the literature from the field [various disciplines]. So, yes, our school does attach a great amount of importance to producing value, not just in terms of, you know, making CEOs, but producing individuals who can engage with the community. I've always been in [university], so I suppose, with the exception of one year, I've done most of my education in [university] as well. So I guess maybe I didn't realise that I've been internalising these values from day one, when I started my undergraduate degree. So I haven't got a comparison as such if you would like to... so, I'm not in a position to critically reflect on what it's like in other schools, because that's the way I've always done things, so maybe I've sort of taken it for granted.

##### Researcher

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Kind of like an internalised thing because you've just been exposed to it for so long.

##### Participant 7

Yeah, I guess. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

##### Researcher

Yeah. That's really. Interesting. Great. So obviously, so, you've got obviously your teaching, your research, and there is impact that is kind of an expectation on those who are in the business school. Do you feel like that is a lot of different things that you are expected to do, or do you feel that that's fairly manageable? In terms of focusing on teaching and research alone and then also having to remember, OK, I need to do something to create impact as well.

##### Participant 7

Hmm... how do I answer that question? You know, you'll think I'm being idealistic, but I'm so lucky because my research is, my research is about things that are valuable to society. So I think it sort of goes hand in hand. I mean, the challenge is now, especially now, but that's not just our university, it's every university, that what you can actually do is limited. Because many face to face events that I had planned had been cancelled. And that's nothing to do with [university] or any other university. It's to do with the public health challenges that we that we're living through these days. But no, I've had quite, quite a nice mix up of teaching and research that enables me to do the two things, that very much marry up. And the pressures come from I suppose what I what I impose on myself. I am, I am a high achiever. Sometimes I probably bite off more than I can chew. I've got my colleagues reminding me that I need to look after myself. Which, of course, I think for an early academic, it's, I suppose, yes, the challenge for early career academics, is getting that first fixed permanent job maybe. So you do want to really work very intensely to maximise your chances of getting that. Yeah.

##### Researcher

Yeah, excellent. And you touched then on how things have been cancelled because of, obviously, the pandemic. Has there been any other ways in which that has kind of affected your work or maybe the work of the business school as a whole?

##### Participant 7

Oh, gosh. How hasn't it affected the work of the school? Well, I don't think any university really knows exactly what the next academic term is going to look like. I guess you have to, sort of, almost expect or plan for the worst. It would be silly not to.

##### Researcher

Mm hmm.

##### Participant 7

I think a lot of universities are considering moving the teaching online. A lot of the teaching will be online, especially until we have some kind of vaccine.

##### Researcher

Mm hmm.

##### Participant 7

I think research is going to be much harder to do. I think doing face-to-face research is going to be more challenging. In real life, I don't really see ethics committees allowing you to do an ethnographic study any time soon. Interviews, that's different because you can do it online. I think secondary data, secondary data analysis is going to become very popular among many of us, even those who do not consider themselves to be experts in that - we'll have to be. We'll have to become experts in using and reusing other people's data. It is going to be a different world and I think not just next year, but probably for the next few years as well. We'll be adjusting, obviously delivering good quality education in an online environment while looking after our own mental well-being. Online teaching, I've done some online teaching, and I've got to say, I find it more exhausting than face-to-face teaching.

##### Researcher

Mm hmm. Yeah.

##### Participant 7

Even face-to-face teaching can be very tiring, of course. But in an online environment, there is also that fear that something goes wrong. You know, your connection breaks or you forget to switch your microphone off and mute yourself when you should. Nobody knows what will be, but we know it will be different and we know we have to be prepared to pay attention and look after ourselves and also find ways of delivering, not just teaching, but also pastoral care to students who are likely to feel insecure. And they will be looking up to us to tell them what's coming. We don't always know what's coming, but you have to, you have to reassure the students that you do, without making false promises of course. So you have to think on the spot. I think you have to be more available for the students as well, I think, in an online environment, when they cannot just come to your office. And how you do it, do you create an online office hour? Do you invite emails? Do you check emails nonstop? And if so, then how do you give yourself time to do research? Because that also requires, you know, an uninterrupted block of time if you can. A couple of hours or so to really get into it. I think it's going to be different and some people might like it. Others might find it more challenging.

##### Researcher

And do you think overall you would personally find it more challenging?

##### Participant 7

I've always liked working in an office. I've always liked going to a physical space where I'm away from home. And to be fair, I felt at first, when the lockdowns were introduced, that I would have a very difficult time staying focused. But I actually surprised myself with how much I managed to do, possibly because I've got conditions at home to do that, unlike some of my colleagues who might have family members to look after. So I understand that it's not the same for everyone. But it's surprising how quickly we as human beings just get used to new situations and find a way of coping, because we have to, because we have no other choice. I felt I've worked, yes, I've worked more, more intensely. At least that's my impression. I've worked more intensely than I had before the lockdown.

##### Researcher

Mm hmm. Yeah. I think a lot of people feel like that. Well, I certainly feel that way as well. I do feel like things have ramped up a bit.

##### Participant 7

Yeah.

##### Researcher

Since lockdown, because things have changed, there's lots of adapting to do and, and stuff. So, yeah, no, completely understandable, things are definitely more challenging.

##### Participant 7

I think that's the case when you work from home. There is an expectation, you almost have to justify to yourself and to other people that you can work from home. Even before the lockdown, if you choose to do work from home, you work extra hard because you don't want to lose the privilege to be able to work from home. Because it is a privilege to work from home, and you don't want to lose that. So you work extra hard not to lose it. I find that, maybe not just academia, but I think in many sectors that's the case. Yeah.

##### Researcher

Great. OK, thank you. And the last thing I want to talk about, we've kind of covered it a little bit when we were talking about impact, we were talking about how it's kind of an unwritten rule, kind of unspoken, but definitely kind of like a normative expectation. I wonder if there's any other kind of normative expectations that exist within your role. So I'm just thinking as an example, perhaps the type of journals you are expected to try and publish in. So I know obviously a lot of universities use the ABS journal ranking. I wonder, because obviously you didn't mention that anything about that was written in your contract that you must publish in X, Y, Z journals, but I wonder if there's kind of an expectation there for you to target specific journals. And anything else that might be more normative if you could tell me about that?

##### Participant 7

Yeah, yeah. So our university signed a DORA agreement, which is the declaration of research assessment, which actually is in place to, not for us to not have to worry about stars as such, but more about the content of your paper and what the paper actually does rather than where it's published. So what you argue and what audience it is that you're trying to reach, rather than how many stars the journal has. And it's great because then when it comes to the REF, the Research Excellence Framework submissions, you have got a committee of people who look at the contents of the papers and assess them based on that. But I think, I mean, I still very much use the star system even though I know that we've got that agreement in place. I still talk about stars and colleagues talk about stars. Not just from my university, but colleagues from other universities talk about stars as well. So, yeah, I do wonder about the extent to which we have internalised stars over the years as a way of communicating about the quality of our research. I would love to, I would love to think that really, as time goes on, we will step away from using stars actually and really look at the contents of what we're saying, rather than just the prestige of the journal where we're publishing. But to answer the second part of the question, the journals that I do target, like I said, I do target, I sort of aim for higher star journals first, before I then go down on the list. And it might be because of the journals that I read as well. I read four star journals and three star journals and therefore I use them in my own papers. And because I use the publications from these other journals, and then what I'm trying to say links up with the conversation started in other journals, so then the journals sort of become a natural avenue for me to publish at, because I can link what I'm saying with what other scholars said. So I can show that my article fits that particular narrative. So it's more of a, it's a bit of a, closed loop kind of thing I guess. One thing fuels another. Because of the journals that I read, I write for the journals that I read. But, yeah, the stars thing is interesting because we know they don't matter, but somehow they do.

##### Researcher

Yeah. So in your case, it's kind of just because it actually makes sense based on the work you're doing and what you're writing.

##### Participant 7

Yeah, yeah.

##### Researcher

As opposed to trying to please someone or just because it looks good. It's more because it actually makes sense to do that.

##### Participant 7

Yeah, yeah. So for the journal that I just had an acceptance at, I knew right away where I wanted to publish the idea because I just felt I had read a lot from this journal and I felt it fit that journal, because I used a lot of their ideas to help me frame my argument. And another journal that I'm now in conversation with, I knew like even before I finished my PhD, I found a paper in that journal that I really liked, that I really engaged with in my doctoral research, and I thought I would like to actually enter into a debate with this. But I feel at the time that, you know, this was the priority at the time. At the time, I had to finish my dissertation. That was a priority for me. But I sort of, I knew that that's where I wanted for my next piece to appear. Now, it has not appeared there yet, but I've entered into that conversation now. So I think the journals that you read are very much the journals that shape your argument, and then it makes it natural for you to target these journals with your publications. But it's also conversations that I keep having with the colleagues that I value who might mention a journal, they might say, "oh, I know it's a one star", or "a two star journal, but actually it's spread widely by practitioners". And I take their judgment because I respect my colleagues, I respect their judgment, and I add it to the list of journals that I could target regardless of how many stars they have. So, yes, stars are important I think, still, to us. But also my colleagues opinions, the opinions of colleagues that I value, they inform my target journals.

##### Researcher

OK, that's excellent. So I think in terms of actual questions, that's probably everything I wanted to ask. I think we've covered pretty much everything I wanted to talk about. So unless there's anything else off the top of your head that you can think of that you might want to add or anything else you want to say, then I don't think I have any more actual questions.

##### Participant 7

No, no, I haven't got anything to add. I hope that it's been helpful.

##### Researcher

Oh, yeah, definitely. Very, very helpful. OK. Excellent, in that case, I'll stop the recording now.