##### Researcher

Okay. Great. So just to sort of start off, obviously, I looked at your profile, which is extremely impressive. And you obviously you wear a lot of different hats, but kind of just like, in your own words, can you just tell me a bit about your kind of background, your career so far and your sort of current job role, please?

##### Participant 22

So I started off thinking that I will not become an academic. So I did an MBA and then I sort of liked the university life and postgraduate studies in the UK. And I decided to carry on and do a master's, second master's, and then do a doctorate. And then from then on I had a sort of typical career of an academic, though I returned to my home country for a few years and that sort of slowed down my progress. But then I returned back to the UK, and then I did a postdoc in the UK and another one in [another country]. After that, I found this permanent job and have been the [senior position] - I started of as a lecturer, two years later, became a [role]. And then a year ago I took over as [senior role]. And my area, I mean, you've read my profile, so probably that's the boring stuff. But my expertise is [subject].

##### Researcher

Okay. Great. And obviously you do a lot of research. Do you also have any kind of teaching responsibilities as well?

##### Participant 22

So I am teaching one module. Normally you would teach two, but because of my admin role and also I teach a very large class of 600 students. So that's a mass. First year undergrads, 600 plus first year undergrads. So that's a pretty large module. And I have help. So I have some assistants working with me and they're great. But teaching can be quite demanding. And obviously we are living a different experience this year because of the pandemic, blended learning. So, teaching takes more time now because I have to redesign my work on top of my admin role and all the rest. So yeah, I also do, I'm doing a bit of executive education teaching elsewhere, but my main job is undergraduate teaching.

##### Researcher

Okay. Yes. I saw you are an associate fellow at [another university] as well. So is that the kind of executive education side of it?

##### Participant 22

Yeah.

##### Researcher

Okay. Great. So that's really interesting. So obviously there's a lot of different kinds of responsibilities there with quite a major, I guess, administrative position as well within the school. So what kind of, I guess, you don't need to put a figure on it, but I guess, how much time do you dedicate to each of those kind of areas of your job?

##### Participant 22

That's a difficult one because I'm also supervising students and I tend to be a very hands-on supervisor. So I forgot that's the other thing I'm doing. And then, well, I think normally it would have been roughly, I'm supposed, based on the time I've been contracted as a full member of staff, I'm supposed to be working out of 1600 hours of work, 500 should be on admin stuff, 500 hours on teaching and the remaining on research. I find that because of the pandemic, and I just took over just before the pandemic broke out, that I end up spending most of my time on the admin stuff. And obviously now teaching as well. So I must say that in the last year research has really suffered as a result. I do research but it has considerably slowed down and I'm sort of living off the effort I've put in, in previous years. So there is work that I have done and now my co-authors are taking over and kind of speeding up things on some things where I was involved in previous years. So yeah, it's a bit, especially because of the pandemic, I think things would be much simpler if it wasn't for that. But as a result of the pandemic, the teaching has become more demanding and the admin roll as well.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting thank you. And just picking up on something you said. You said you did an MBA and you weren't necessarily expecting an academic career. So based off of that, obviously, I would be interested to know how you kind of ended up going into academia in the end, what was it that drew you to that kind of career?

##### Participant 22

Well, I mean, I've been brought up kind of driven, like my father had also a PhD and my brother as well. It's been part of the family. But I started off with my MA. I was working in [sector] so I thought I would kind of become a [profession]. But once you go to [previous institution] and you study there, then you start probably, at least for me, I started thinking that this is a nice place to stay in. And by the way, I don't like numbers, so why am I crazy, to want to become a [profession]? So by the end of it that I sort of convinced myself that I want to become an academic. So yeah, that's the story of it actually.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. So obviously we've spoken a bit about your different responsibilities. So you've got research, teaching and admin. What would you say, in each kind of area, what are the kind of expectations of you in terms of what I guess you are supposed to kind of achieve within a given time period? I guess in terms of publications, and then obviously there are teaching metrics as well. What kind of expectations are there in that sense?

##### Participant 22

Yeah. So in terms of research, in my school they have sort of pretty reasonable expectations compared to some other places where I know you either publish in four-ranked journals or you are completely out. But they are much more flexible. And so they are happy if you publish a mix of, whether it be known as ABS three, ABS four, ABS four star publications, and in fact, they sort of, we are not even using these rankings. So as long as you publish, when you are applying for a promotion, your work is being reviewed by colleagues and if they think it's good enough, then... and obviously you have a constant production of research, but not like crazy expectations. So I think if I publish a good paper every year, I should be okay. If I have more, I would, I would be even better. But it's not as crazy, as difficult as it is in other places. You can pace things. And then they also value contribution in other parts, for example, now that I have this admin role, obviously that matters. So if I wanted in the future to apply for promotion, obviously they would not only do it around my research, but also how I did on the admin role. And the admin role, essentially, at the moment, I think we are in the firefighting mode. So if you are firefighting well, in the pandemic and all these issues that are coming back, I think you're doing a pretty good job. So it's not very easy to sort of say what makes someone good at their admin or sort of senior leadership role. But I think if you are making sure there is no crisis and your dean is happy with what you're doing and you seem to be doing the things you're expected to do. And for me, it's about making sure my colleagues are happy, they are not stressed as far as I can help it, in terms of how I allocate work and as long as things are fair in the way that work is allocated and that they have the most support they can possibly have in doing their job as good as they can, then I think that might be sort of success. In the current year, I think in another year, different circumstances, then I would expect to make changes to how some things are running and do more stuff. But I think with the pandemic that's probably what success means. And in terms of teaching it is about, I think we have, you have to go through a threshold in the teaching evaluations. Which is a reasonable expectation. They don't expect you to have five out of five. But if you have a good enough, good enough teaching evaluations, then you are OK. And in fact, because, I don't know how it is in your school, but in our school, and I think in many schools, not many students respond to teaching evaluations.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. So in terms of, obviously, there's a lot of different kind of responsibilities there, there's a lot of different hats that you're wearing in that sense. I guess sort of thinking back to before you were in your I guess your current institution and before I guess you were fully in academia, is that the kind of role that you envisioned for yourself? Like, did you want to do a job that was going to be sort of balanced, to have quite a heavy administrative kind of role and also do teaching and research, or were you very much sort of looking for one particular aspect?

##### Participant 22

Yeah. Being a full time academic and on a teaching and research contract, overall we are being encouraged to take up leadership roles. And this role is quite heavy, and this is normally a role that someone who is more senior in the academic career ladder would take. But, just, the job came up and I applied and I think, you know, probably some of the professors probably don't want this role, so I ended up getting the job. Because it really can be distracting in terms of research. And I do see that. It is distracting. But I sort of saw that as an opportunity for me to try out my leadership skills and also make a difference. So I thought it's a challenge, I suppose I should apply for it. And then yeah, I think it's part of the job more or less to also have some sort of admin role, and obviously teaching and research is like what you're contracted for. So nothing, none of this is a surprise. And I wanted to apply for the job so I can't complain if I'm very busy.

##### Researcher

Okay. Great. And something you mentioned, you said how, I guess, it's quite a reasonable environment in terms of the expectations placed upon you, it's not too harsh in terms of obviously sort of like the publication side of things. I wonder if you could make any kind of comparison, because obviously, you are a fellow at [previous institution], and that's where also you did your doctorate. Is it, would you say it's kind of similar there? Or would you say the expectations there are kind of heightened?

##### Participant 22

Well, they are definitely different because it's a different sort of school. And every school has different expectations. [Previous institution] was more of the American-style of business school, whereas [current institution] is more of a traditional British university. It is also a Russell group. So of course, the expectations, when I said they are reasonable, they're not low expectations. But for me they are reasonable. They're not like the sort of expectations that we have in the US business schools where you are supposed by the end of your PhD to have five publications and then publish three papers every year. It's more reasonable. Or even some UK business schools they are like that, especially the ones that are more into the sort of typical American style of business schools, who have executive education and this sort of thing. So there is an expectation and it's quite a clear expectation, but it's not the "if I don't have three AMJs and five ASQs, I'm going to lose my job" sort of expectation. So you can publish in ABS three and ABS four journals, so it's more flexible.

##### Researcher

Okay. Excellent. Thank you. So you mentioned obviously the ABS three star four star. And that is, I guess, quite a prominent thing that comes up. Does that, is that quite sort of like a heavy influence on what you decide to do in terms of your research activities? Is that very kind of influential in where you decide to sort of publish and that kind of thing?

##### Participant 22

Yeah. So although my school is not obsessed with that list, but also takes into account the quality of work produced, I am obsessed with that list. And especially the ABS four star ones. So, I think it's more pressure that I place on myself to publish at the very top of, if I can, the very top, ABS four and hopefully one day ABS four star, rather than a pressure that I get from my school necessarily. So I think a lot of the pressure comes, at least, in my case, comes from my own expectations I have. And from the people I work with who also publish in the sort of journals, like the very top ranked journals. So for me, that is the level I should be aiming for rather than me being asked necessarily. I mean, of course, they would be happy if I published in those sort of journals. But it's not like you either publish in those journals or you're out. There is some flexibility.

##### Researcher

So, you kind of, it's an expectation of yourself coming from you. I guess you could kind of say that I guess you've kind of internalised then those kind of values of that kind of high ranking ABS journals in a way?

##### Participant 22

I mean, I understand that, I mean, our progression is about reputation, and in one way or another, we know that publishing in these sort of journals sort of ranks you within your community as to how good you are. You could say it's a community pressure and the people that I am working with are also in that sort of mindset. Therefore, that is why I think it's important to publish in these sort of journals, because I have the aspiration to be that sort of academic that publishes in these sort of journals.

##### Researcher

Okay. Great. Thank you. So I want to move on slightly and talk about impact. Obviously, impact is something, it can mean a lot of different things, especially in obviously an academic sort of context. So you have sort of like impact in terms of citations and that kind of thing, more like academic impact. And then you have kind of impact beyond academia to external stakeholders. So I would be interested to know to what extent there is kind of a view that you should be making impact beyond academia, so not just publishing, but also kind of outreach and sort of community kind of involved stakeholder activities?

##### Participant 22

I'm sure you know about the REF sort of impact case studies, and I'm sure they've come up a lot in your interviews. So there's, it's not like 100% an expectation, but it's very, very welcome if you can have an impact case study. And as far as I understand, I don't know what the process is, but my understanding is that then universities get more funding from the government if they have impact cases or something like that. I don't know how it works, but that's my understanding. So, you're very welcome if, as an academic, you do publish an impact case study, so there is that side of things, which is obviously good for you and your career because it's sort of, it's one additional thing that's good if you want to apply for promotion. But there's also the personal aspiration of doing research that is also having some sort of impact. And I think because I am also from a more traditional sort of business school education, I always have in mind the practice implications of my research. So I'm not one of those "lost in theory" academics. Probably not smart enough to be lost in theory. I also want to have some sort of practical impact with what I do. So I really like, with the research I do, the fact that I present to people who are practitioners and they can make something of it, or do some things that help them become better in the way they do their work. So they are like the two sides of things, the more formal REF aspect and the more personal aspiration of having an impact with your research.

##### Researcher

Okay. So I guess there is a certain level of kind of personal importance placed on the kind of impact side of things. Do you feel like that is, I guess, reflected in the kind of goals of the business school and their kind of focus as well?

##### Participant 22

I think the business school is really interested in impact case studies, obviously, because this is part of the REF profile. But I think, I mean, it's good for you if, for example, your research is being mentioned in the media because that also raises the visibility of the school you come from. And that has to do with the reputation. So technically, if someone has the school mentioned many, many times in the media and people are reading about it, then you sort of say, okay, so there must be some good people there who are doing good research, right? If the school is being mentioned so often in a good way, in a good way. So I think there's this reputational aspect as well, which is good for the universities, if they have academics who's research attracts a wider attention and has some sort of impact. And I know other colleagues who are advising the government, all these things have an impact and could potentially be impact case studies, but they also have an impact on practice and gets the name of the university heard among different stakeholders.

##### Researcher

Okay, that's really interesting. So, I guess obviously, impact case studies being one element. What would you say kind of are the most kind of important things for an academic to kind of progress in their career in a business school context, from your own experience? Like what are the key factors? Obviously, you spoke about lot publications. Would you say they are kind of like the golden sort of commodity in being a business academic?

##### Participant 22

Yeah, definitely. I mean, in different schools there are different traditions. I have colleagues in other schools, not like top business schools, but business schools that are very much designed to do professional development training. And so, for example, at [another university], so that's like an example of a business school where it's very much like known for it's sort of advanced students sort of training, those are the types of programmes they offer. And I know there is a lot of pressure there to do a lot of teaching - and obviously research. But I think there are some places where because of the way they are set up there's more pressure around teaching and other places where things are more balanced. So I think in my school because we are a Russell group school, obviously research matters a lot. For me to progress in the next sort of step up the academic career ladder, I need to be publishing. I mean, probably through my admin role as well, but I think research is the critical sort of element of it.

##### Researcher

And from your kind of perspective, why do you think that is the case? Why do you think so much more emphasis is put on kind of that element of the career over kind of other elements by the institution?

##### Participant 22

Well, we're being contracted for teaching and research, and it's a core part of our work. And the whole discussion about the impact you have with your research as well. I think obviously this, being good at research, will hopefully lead also to having a bigger impact or raising the visibility of the school. But it's probably, that's how, you know, university life is. You just rely on, it's not just in business schools, in every subject area, it is research that really matters if you are on a teaching and research contract. And in other subjects, probably writing a book is more important than publishing a couple of papers. So there is this variation as well depending on whether you are in the law school, probably, or in politics. A colleague I know is working in the politics department and there's a lot of interest by the school for them to publish books. It's different with the business school. But it's always some sort of research. That's how university life is. So I'm not sure if it's like a good explanation of why it's important.

##### Researcher

Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. Okay. So I want to sort of move on slightly and talk about, I mean, you kind of mentioned the effects of the pandemic on, on your work. So you said teaching has taken quite a lot of control, a lot of your time and the kind of admin role as well, and research has sort of taken a bit of a back seat. Do you feel like the kind of expectations of you have changed in this time as well? Do you think that there's a bit of, I guess, not so much like wiggle room, but kind of more of a compassion that, you know, in these times it might be a bit more difficult to get that research done and do those publications?

##### Participant 22

Definitely. And I think that's very much a discussion we have in my school, and I'm sure that's a discussion that's happening in other schools. So there's much more understanding that you can't carry out things in the way you could before, just because... for a number of reasons. It may be that getting participants is not that easy. I know a colleague of mine who is doing health care related research. Obviously getting hold of medics to interview isn't the easiest thing. There are other colleagues who have young children, they are home schooling them. And obviously they hardly can find time in the day to concentrate on research. Or they maybe find half an hour and then there is a break of two hours. And then again for half an hour. And I have colleagues who are looking after elderly people. So there are all these stories that you hear, you know, and there is a lot more empathy that people may not be able to, they probably can't do things they want to in the way they were able to before the pandemic. So that's definitely, there's much more empathy. And there is also, I think, empathy about, in the sense of caring about how people are coping with this situation. So it's not just oh, you're not as productive, but also this caring of "how are you doing? How are you managing?" At least for those of us who are in leadership roles, we are exposed to all sorts of stories of people, so you sort of naturally tend to be much more mindful also that people can't do their job as they could, but also they may be struggling a lot. So there is much more like empathy and compassion of each individual person and how they're doing.

##### Researcher

Ok, great. Thank you. Obviously, you mentioned that teaching has become quite a big thing since Covid-19. Obviously it's always been a major part, but it's been taking up a lot more time. How, I guess, is that kind of affecting you at the moment? Do you feel like you are in a position where you could, I guess, kind of progress to the next stage of your career? Or do you feel like it's kind of interrupted kind of your journey in that kind of sense?

##### Participant 22

I think teaching has. It's just that now, because we have to record a substantial part of our delivery. I do find that it's almost taking up as much time as me generating a new module. A bit less than that, but significantly more than, you know, just going into the lecture theatre and you teach. Also because I am a bit of a perfectionist, so I might be recording for 15 minutes, and then suddenly I say something wrong and I'm like, oh, I have to do the recording again, one more time. It's almost like you suffer with recording things because you have to do things again and again until we get them right. Whereas if you're in the lecture theatre you just go there. You say whatever you say. You say "excuse me, that was wrong", and then you move on. I think if it wasn't for the pandemic, although I have a leadership role, things would have been much smoother and I would have more free time. But as a result of the pandemic, obviously, most of my work is pandemic related issues or implications, so that takes up quite a bit of time. But teaching, yeah, probably, I would have spent less time last year. In previous years, I would have spent less time if I had the material ready, and I would just have to do some preparation the day before. But now it does require more time. But I don't think that's the deal breaker. It's not taking up all my time.

##### Researcher

Okay. Great. That's really interesting. Thank you. In terms of I guess, kind of the workload element of things, obviously there's a lot of different things that you're doing. Do you generally find that your workload is manageable or do you often feel like there are maybe too many things going on and too many different things to focus on?

##### Participant 22

Yeah, that's a lovely question, haha. I think I am just, so, in the previous year, I sort of got involved in too many research projects. And, you know, it's interesting, people you want to work with, and they want to work with you, and then you say yes, and then the pandemic comes and then you have a leadership role and then you try to juggle things. And it can be quite hard. But to some extent other colleagues are in the same boat, because they also have like multiple roles and stuff. And the pandemic has had an impact. But I think also for me, because I tend to be involved in multiple things that are running at the same time, I literally have like 10, 11 papers which are in different stages of development. So, that will tell you something about me doing multiple things in the previous year. So now I'm like, okay, let's prioritise things. So I think there's, you know, you just slow down on certain things and the ones that will suffer the most are the sort of research projects that I carry out on my own, because when you work with a team, then you want to make sure you're okay on the stuff you're working on with them. You don't want to be the one delaying them. So I end up sort of not being very good at the stuff that I would independently work on.

##### Researcher

Okay. So obviously an extremely kind of busy environment then, lots of different things going on, lots of different projects. I guess, sort of as a final sort of question kind of to sum up, I guess speaking about you kind of personally, how do you kind of navigate that environment? In terms of, you know, you have your own personal kind of goals for the future and somewhere you want to be. So you're obviously doing things in your career to kind of reach that end goal. And obviously in this environment, there's a lot things going on. So how do you kind of navigate that? How do you prioritise things? How do you, I mean, would you say you have a specific strategy for navigating this environment, or would you say you kind of just take each day as it comes?

##### Participant 22

Yeah. I was thinking when you were asking this question, I take it one day at a time. Haha. Because even if I have a strategy, it goes out of the window when I wake up in the morning. I say "OK, today is a research day, I'm gonna focus just on that", and then I wake up and there are like thirty emails or there's some sort of crisis that I need to attend to. Last week we had our first round of webinar, seminars, and I was like "okay, today will be a good day", and then suddenly one of my colleagues could not do the webinars. And then there was something happening with the Teams link. And it didn't work, so I had to go through, kind of take their place. And the whole day just was wasted on firefighting things that I wouldn't normally have to do. So it's taking a day at a time. I think that's the message. And obviously I have my long term sort of goals, which I explained, to aim for the good journals. So I think the only strategy I have is I sort of, I decided that some of the projects that are not as important. I'm just letting them go if I'm on my own, or even like in some of them, there are colleagues of mine who are also at the same sort of stage, and say, "okay, we have these three things, let's focus on one, because this is the most important and we aim for the best possible journal". So you sort of prioritise based on the, the only strategy is you prioritise based on the sort of journals that really matter for you and that you agree with your co-authors that would be the best one.

##### Researcher

Okay, yes. That's really interesting. So obviously, so, no specific strategy then kind of taking each day as it comes. Was that kind of the same before the pandemic or is that kind of a recent thing?

##### Participant 22

Yeah, it is a recent thing. It's the result of the pandemic. And it's also the result of me having the leadership role. So, now, I just think things are coming through. Before the pandemic and before my leadership role, I could plan much better how I carry out my work and then I could... even with research, it always takes more time than you plan. And then you set strict deadlines. But it was much simpler to do, to say to yourself, you do these things and then you actually do them. But over the last year, because of the pandemic and because of my admin role it's more like, every day you sort of, if you do even a small thing, then that's something. Sometimes even just seeing my emails from 60 they end up being like five at the end of the day, that's like a small win for me. It's like a small step each day.

##### Researcher

Yeah. Okay. That's really interesting. Thank you. I don't have any other kind of direct questions. I don't want to keep you too long, but yeah, so unless there is anything off the top of your head that you can think of that you might want to add that you haven't had a chance to say in relation to this kind of area, then I'm happy to sort of end things there.

##### Participant 22

Just one thing you may want to ask people, because I do see it from my role, interacting with colleagues, the whole aspect of wellbeing and how they manage things because of the pandemic. And I do see the stress levels, people are getting much more stressed, not just about the work, but I think it's a combined thing of the whole situation. And then obviously work is more demanding because you have to do things in a different way. So I think that might be something that you may want to explore. It might not be exactly what you're studying, so you're doing an institutional sort of a study?

##### Researcher

Yes, drawing on institutional theory and that sort of body of literature.

##### Participant 22

Oh, I think you have definitely picked the sort of a right way to study it. So I think it will be interesting to see if there are patterns between the different versions of how we manage things. So, for example, I am the organisational actor taking one day at a time kind of pattern. But I'm sure there are other people who are much more strategic. So it will be interesting to see the different paths that people take. That's very interesting.

##### Researcher

Yeah. It's really interesting and it's nice to sort of give people a chance to I guess tell their story as well. Thank you. I'll turn off the recording now.