##### Researcher

OK, great. So just to kind of begin with, obviously I've read your profile on the website so I know a little bit about you. But I guess, in your own words, can you just tell me about yourself in terms of your kind of background, your career and your current job role, please?

##### Participant 23

Yeah. So I started as an academic after I graduated as a PhD student. So my objective after my master's was really to become an academic. So I had this kind of almost vocational kind of objective of becoming an academic since the master's. Not before, before that, I wanted to work as a consultant. And then I changed my mind. And so it was a kind of vocational thing for me. So I did my PhD with a clear objective to work in a university. I started my career in [home country], and after a couple of years, I moved to the UK. And that was part of a long term kind of plan to live in another country. It's always been something I wanted to do. And academia is a great opportunity to do this because the job market, it's a worldwide job market. So this is something I wanted to do. So I applied to different places, not just in the UK, but mostly in Europe and in Canada. And the UK was extremely reactive. So I moved to the UK to [previous institution], I had a really great time there. So I was a [role] in [discipline] in [previous institution]. And I really enjoyed collegiality, the friendliness of colleagues, relationships with the students. So that was really great. And then at some point, after eight years, I thought that it was time to move on to another place. And I moved, I moved to [region] [years] ago. So I moved to [current institution] and I'm here as a [role]. So that was a promotion there. So I teach, I teach [topic] and I teach a course which is more related to my research to MBA students. It's course on [topic], and my research is mostly around [topics]. So I'm kind of, I guess you would say mid career. I'm a [role], so the next step will be [role]. So I think maybe in a couple of years I will certainly apply for that. But at the moment, I'm very, very happy being a [role]. It's a kind of comfortable in between, you don't have too much admin things to do. And you're no longer a totally junior colleague. So that's, that's good.

##### Researcher

Great. And you mentioned that you looked into becoming an academic because it is kind of an international career. You can really kind of go anywhere in that kind of job because, you know, there's universities all over the world. Obviously there are, I guess, some other careers as well, that have that same kind of quality where you can kind of go international. So what was it about specifically, I guess, about academia that had the edge, do you think? What about academia really kind of drew you? Why did you kind of want to do a PhD in [topic] and become an academic?

##### Participant 23

Yeah. Thank you for the question, it's interesting because one of the advantages of being an academic is you can work from different places. But that was not my main motivation for doing this. It's just a kind of good side advantage of being an academic. But no, I agree, it wasn't just that. And I have friends who work in the insurance industry and banks and stuff who travel the world all the time. So, when I was an undergrad student I did internships in companies. And what I was a little bit disappointed about was that companies are a lot about processes. So there's lots of following processes type of things. Even if, of course, as far as you become more senior, you have more responsibility, but I felt that there was something missing. And what I enjoy the most doing my undergrad programme and then my master's was to write down my thesis and dissertations and the work that we had to do, like reports and stuff. I really enjoyed that. And so I thought perhaps it's something I need to think about, writing things. And when I was an undergrad and master's student, I also was teaching kids mathematics in a kind of private school for rich kids. Just as a side job, you know. And I really enjoyed it. I really enjoy teaching classes. And I was comparing my moments teaching people and my moments as an intern in a company, sometimes feeling the day was going very slowly. And then teaching it was just, you know, the hour went like that. So I thought, hmm, maybe it's something I really enjoy doing. So after my master's, I didn't, I mean, I took a short cut when I explained to you everything at the beginning. But after my master's, I did, in [home country] we have something that is called the [diploma]. You don't have that in the UK. It's a, it's a kind of diploma, super diploma for those who want to become like elite teachers in a high school. So you have two levels of diploma, the normal high school teacher and you have [diploma], which is like the elite one. So they go to the best high schools. They have the best students. And they also can teach at universities without having a PhD for undergrad students. So I took this exam, this competitive exam. So there was a one-year preparation and then the exam. And I got the exam, I mean, it's a competitive examination so there's a limited number of people who get it. So I got it and I thought hmm, actually, it's really what I want to do. I want to teach, but not in high school. I want to go to universities. So that's when I decided to do a PhD and also because I was really keen to research things, to have my own time, three years of my life doing, you know, working on a subject I had chosen doing it as I wanted. So it's something I really enjoyed. So even if, financially, all my friends who got graduated at the same time as me were earning like three times, four times what I was earning, I really enjoyed this PhD experience. And then from that moment from the PhD, my objective was really to become an academic. And during my PhD, I spent a year, so instead of collecting data, as you do, doing interviews, I worked part time in a consulting firm, as a way to collect data. So it was also something that confirmed my desire to become an academic, because it was also part of - when I was an undergrad, I wanted to become like a consultant, something like that - but then I realised that it was not what I thought it was. It was not as intellectual and deep as I thought it was. So I was really happy to be like the researcher in the consulting firm, helping the actual consultant doing the job. So it's how it unfolded, somehow.

##### Researcher

Yeah, that's really interesting. So you mentioned that you really enjoy the teaching aspect when you did sort of a bit of teaching before your kind of current career. So in that respect, obviously teaching is one part of the job, obviously there's the research side as well. And obviously there's admin and things like that. What is your kind of favourite part, I guess, of the job? Because obviously it is a multifaceted job, there is lots of different aspects. So what was it that really sort of drew you in? Was it the teaching side or was it more kind of research. Or was there something else that kind of appealed to you the most?

##### Participant 23

At the beginning it was teaching because I didn't know anything about research. So when I was 22, 23, it was really teaching because I was doing these mathematics and economics lessons in this company. And I really enjoyed it. So at the beginning it was really teaching. And then because I had this kind of taste for intellectual work and, broadly speaking, like thinking, and studying, reading things and writing. And because I enjoyed the the PhD very much, research became something very important. And now, so, if the question is what was the initial kind of magnet? I think it was teaching first and then research, but not in this order, like, it was more important than the other. It was just a question of time. So the very first, I mean, if you take the timeline, until I did my [diploma], it was more teaching. And then when I did the [diploma] I realised that would be teaching like 30 hours in a high school or in the university, but without much time to do anything else. It would be teaching, teaching, teaching, all the time, all the time, all the time, even if you have the [diploma]. I think it was maybe a little bit monotonous because it's one thing to teach a mathematics class once a week, but teaching that every day the same thing. I really think that it's a nice compliment, and I know that some colleagues they prioritise research and they don't like teaching much, but I really enjoy both. I think it's a nice combination and I like preparing a class because it's very personal. You develop, you develop your class as you wish, you develop the syllabus as you wish, which reflects not only what you know but who you are. And then teaching itself, the teaching, the act of teaching is really valorising, compared to research, where, you know, it can be really hard. There are lots of punches in the face, all the time, by the reviewers. And it's a very long time process. So you start working on something and then you have the rewards several years after. While teaching, you prepare a class and you go there and when you see the students happy and they participate, they smile, and you feel that they like what you do, they enjoy it. So that's very gratifying. That's very rewarding. So it's a nice combination. I think one of the good aspects of the job is that there is not a single day that is similar to the others. Because, you know, yesterday I spent my day preparing different videos for my teaching. Today I will write down things for some other teaching, and I have you, and I have a meeting, and tomorrow I will do just research. So every day is different, which is nice, enjoyable. And then admin can be interesting if you have a good manager. I think it's something that is unvalued or overlooked in the university world, is the role of management, the role of people, the line, the line managers, and how they allocate a job. Because if you have an admin job that you don't like and very often it's how it works, you say, well, somebody has to do it, so you do it. Then it's just, you do it, because you have to do it. And then there is no enjoyment whatsoever. But if you can put a little bit of yourself in the job and the manager understands that, and asks you, "do you feel like doing this?" And gives you the choice, he or she gives you the choice, that makes a big difference. And that's one of the differences between my previous job in [previous institution] where people were allocated admin jobs, whatever, you will do that and that's it. And everybody was like, well, okay. And then the job was not done very well because people didn't really care. And at [current institution], I'm lucky to have a really good line manager who allocates jobs according to what people like to do.

##### Researcher

Okay. That's really good. Okay. That's all really interesting thank you. I want to talk more a little bit about your role. Sort of at the moment. So could you just tell me at the moment what your kind of teaching responsibilities are, what your kind of research responsibilities are, and if you have any kind of admin kind of responsibilities at the moment?

##### Participant 23

Yeah. So my teaching I teach two classes plus some bits and bobs here and there. So the main class, or the two main classes I have, so I teach one master's, master's level in [topic]. So that's something I am not a specialist in, I'm not an expert in. But that was a course that had to be filled in. So when I was recruited at [current institution], it was clear that there was this course and the one who was recruited should do it. But actually it's pretty easy to do because I'm trained in [subject]. So it's just a [subject] applied to [context]. And I also have a master's, my master's was in [discipline]. So I did [topic], I did all this. So it's okay. And it's pretty enjoyable because you can bring in lots of business cases and examples and exercises. And so that's the first course I give. So it's a nice mix of students coming from all over the world. And it's very nice to have Germans, with Malaysians, with Americans and South Americans. It's very nice. A very nice bunch of people, very enjoyable to teach. So that's one thing. And I have an MBA course, which is on [topic]. So the exact title is [title]. So it's mostly about [areas]. And I've not taught it yet. So I teach it in two weeks. So it's a block course. So I'm preparing it at the moment, recording videos and doing all these online things. And so that will be the second course. And then I have some sessions with the undergrad students, in a big course called [programme]. And I'm just doing two sessions for the main teacher who doesn't feel like doing these sessions, more about [topics]. So I'm doing this. And so that's the teaching side. The research side, it's an ongoing type of, working on different projects. So at the moment I have one research paper that is currently under review in a journal. So this one is, as we say, in the pipeline, and I have to, I received the reviews actually for the second round a couple of days ago. So I have to work on the paper again to improve it. So the paper is about [topic]. So that's one project. The other project is about [company] and we have interviews with [company employees], and we try to understand [topic]. So it's a paper that I am working on with co-authors, and it's not yet submitted. So it will be submitted this year. But for the moment we submitted it to conferences for the summer. So we submitted it to the [conference], and I'm still working on the paper and the objective is to submit it by the end of this academic year. So that's the second project. And then I have another project which is about [group of professionals] and the way they have [topic]. So it's based on interviews, we did interviews before the pandemic and then the pandemic, with the pandemic, everything fell apart. But instead of just scrapping the project, we decided to change it into, oh, that would be interesting to do some follow up interviews and see how they change. So that's something we are working on. We did the interviews and we are analysing the interviews right now. So the paper is not written. We submitted it to [conference]. So I don't know if you know this conference, and you don't need to submit a full paper. So we submitted a kind of long abstract, and we are waiting for the reply. And if it's accepted, then we'll write the full paper draft by, I think it's June, and then the conference is in July. So that's a third project. And then I have some other things I'm working on. But further down the line. It's something about [group of professionals] again. So based on all the data we collected on [group of professionals] based on ethnographies we did before the pandemic, when we could actually meet people in real life, and that is at the stage of designing the analysis. So we've not done the analysis yet. So we've collected the data, but we've not analysed the data fully. So that would be further down the line. The paper will be something like in 18 months time or 12, 12 to 18 months time. Yeah. And then I have another project. But again, you know, this one, I have the finance, I have the funds, but I've not collected the data yet. So I have different projects at different stages of progress. I don't know if that's the sort of detail you expect?

##### Researcher

Yes, that's absolutely perfect. Perfect. Yeah. So do you have, in addition to those kind of responsibilities, do you have any kind of admin role or any kind of, obviously there is admin involved in teaching and research anyway, kind of integrated. But do you have any other kind of roles in that respect?

##### Participant 23

Yes, I have what we call here [research-focused admin position]. So it's kind of a research director, but director is a bit... I mean in [previous institution] it was called research group head. So it's at the group level. So I mean, just to explain, so the university, you have different schools and the school is the business school. I mean, you know that. And then the business school, you have different groups or different departments or divisions, depending on where you work it's named differently. But in [current institution] it's groups. So you have the OB group, the marketing group, strategy group, finance and accounting, whatever. So I belong to the [sub-discipline] group and each group has what they call a [research-focused admin position]. So it's somebody who kind of represents the group in the research type of committees and groups at the school and [faculty] level. So the [faculty] is the level broader, one level above the schools. So I belong to the [faculty] of [subject area], something like that. So my role is basically to champion research within the group and to represent the group in the different committees and research committees at the school and [faculty] level. So it's an interesting, it's an interesting job because research is something I really like and enjoy doing. So it's good to see the admin side. And I also like this championing kind of role, but it's not just talking about my research, it's talking about other people's research too. So I need to know what others are working on and communicate whenever there is a publication or something within my group, communicate, communicate about the output or the article within the group so that everybody knows that this colleague has got this publication. And I try to make it, to make it more interesting to read than just "oh, our colleague has had a four star publication" - it's a bit boring. I try to read the paper or scan-read the paper and and write a nice easy to understand abstract of the paper which is not the official abstract, which can be a little bit like formal and boring. So something more enjoyable to read. So, it's nice because for me because it forces me to read many different things and also to translate some knowledge, which is not really my field or specifically in my field, into easy to understand language for others in the group. So it's a nice way to do that. And then, of course, going to committees and meetings and stuff, it's another part of the job. So I mean, it's not the most interesting bit, but because it's a lot of time, it's very time consuming. I'm not a big fan of meetings, long meetings, and these meetings are like 2 hours. But at least it gives you some insight about the organisation, the structure, both just your own little bubble and how the university is actually organising and structuring research. So with Covid-19, for example, we have lots of meetings about all these projects and all the money suddenly falling from the sky - whenever you have Covid-19 in your title, you're able to apply for funding. So that's interesting. That's interesting to see how research is structured and also the direction it's going towards more external funding and pushing towards more... I mean, you see the direction, which is interesting. Which you don't really see when you just work on your own stuff. So that's my main admin role.

##### Researcher

Okay. Thank you. I guess kind of in addition to all of that, obviously, kind of in recent years there's been an increased emphasis on impact. So impact being, I guess, there's two sides to impact. There's academic impact in terms of citations and that kind of thing. But also there is impact more in the sense of kind of the impact case study element of the REF and the kind of expectation to reach external stakeholders and make some societal changes. So in your kind of role at the moment, is there any expectation on you to engage in that kind of activity?

##### Participant 23

So there is no expectation in the sense that if you don't do it, nobody will, I mean, you won't be sanctioned. But there is strong encouragement to think of impact when you start the research. But it's not like, it's not in the contract. So at the moment we are at that stage. Strong, strong encouragement to think about impact. But if you don't have an impact case, well, that's, that, if you have good publications, then that's qualifying.

##### Researcher

Okay. That's really interesting. And I guess speaking about you personally as an academic, do you make, I guess, a conscious effort to kind of think about the impact of your work? Do you think about how it might reach stakeholders in that sense?

##### Participant 23

I think it's a very attractive prospect, you know, to be able to make an impact. If you, if you just take this kind of idea seriously, it's the idea that you do research and through your research, you're able to save lives. The problem we have, I think, in management, is that we don't really save lives. I mean, it's not the main objective. So this impact thing was, I think, designed for people producing solutions to, direct solutions and who were able to patent these solutions. And the patent was actually the impact. And so when you can write an impact case and say, you know, I created this and that was patented and that was actually sold over to this company. I mean, Oxford, for example, with AstraZeneca, will make a great impact case. They found a vaccine and then they partnered with AstraZeneca to produce the vaccine, I mean that's the idea. That's exactly what this impact thing was made for. To encourage the hard sciences to be more proactive in doing patents. And of course, because, because it was not just hard science, they applied it to the school of philosophy, and, whatever, management and religious studies. But that's not the same thing. So, I guess there is still some mixed feeling about this impact case. And so, your question is about me personally. What I think is, compared to my colleagues in [home country], we don't have this impact thing. I think more about, when I started research, I think more, you know, in the back of my head, okay, can I actually, you know, have an impact beyond writing a paper and using this paper in my teaching? Which is already a big impact, I think, you know, when you can use your paper. So that's something that has changed a little bit, because for my personal, I think it's a personal, it will be a personal pride if I were able, the next REF - not this one, because this one is cooked already - but for the next one, if I were able to write, to be able to write an impact case and say, you know, I've changed the lives of people, I would be very proud. Because also, I think that it would help me to go beyond academic applications, to be maybe be able to speak to newspapers and, whatever, other outlets. So that would be, it would be nice. But at the same time, I think that our field is more a field of sense giving. We just give sense, you know, about things. So our role is more to bring things into perspective and so that managers when they, when they listen to us, because managers, they don't read academic papers, they don't have the time. So they read maybe the Harvard Business Review, but that's it. And I mean, only consultants do that. So it's not even the average manager. The managers may come and do an executive MBA, for example. They become and do an MBA. And that's where we have an impact, I think. When we teach to MBA classes, but also undergrad classes, because they are managers in the making. So we can certainly change the world that way, in that if we're trying to explain to people, or to give people materials so that they think about what they do in a different way, then that's how we can change the world. I would have an impact, for example, if in my class I have a student, and a student, because of what I said, and because of what he, his reflection, you know, based on my teaching, will become the next, I don't know, Steve Jobs or, you know, whatever. That would be a great impact. But of course, it's not something that can be put into an impact case. Because nobody cares. But I think that's how we have an impact. But of course, if I can have a direct impact, and change the way people manage, that would also be interesting. But it's, I think it's more complicated for us than for the school of molecular biology, for example, because that's what they do. I mean, that's what they do, that's what they can do easily. I mean, not easily, but you see what I mean? It's more in their genes to do this than us. So, yeah, that's my personal reflection on impact. I mean, I have more reflection, but I don't know, maybe you have more questions, though.

##### Researcher

That's absolutely fine. Thank you. That's really interesting. So, I want to go back to something you mentioned towards the start of the interview. You talked about how your kind of aspiration in the sort of, I guess, short-to-medium term kind of time frame is to get [role] level. You said, perhaps, in maybe two years you'll think about applying for that. So I guess with that aspiration in mind, what are you kind of expected to achieve to kind of get to that stage? I guess, obviously in terms of research. And if there's anything I guess to do with teaching or anything else that could perhaps come into that. What are you thinking that you need to prioritise and really work on to kind of get to that stage?

##### Participant 23

I think that getting some grants would be something that certainly would help. So at the moment, I have an internal, I've got internal grants, but I didn't get any external grants. So certainly the next stage will be, it will be to get research funded through external grants. And if I can have external grants and work with other institutions, that would be, I think, a big leverage for getting a promotion. So that would be something. And of course, keeping on, keeping on publishing, and keeping on getting good evaluation from students and teaching. So that, that's, of course, the basics. But the next step will be extra grants and maybe PhD students, because I don't have any PhD students at the moment. And perhaps they would expect a [role] to have some experience, recent experience, with PhD students. So that would be something certainly down the line to consider.

##### Researcher

Okay, great. That's interesting. Thank you. Another thing you mentioned when you were talking about your [research-focused admin role], you said it's fairly time consuming. It takes a lot of time, long meetings, a lot of effort involved in that. And then I guess in addition to that, you know, you're working on a big number of projects at the same time, writing papers, applying for conferences and all of that. And then you have your teaching as well. And then obviously you have your own personal reflections on impact. And that is something that is quite attractive for you. So it's a lot of different aspects to your job, I would kind of infer from that. And as you said, certain aspects of it are really time consuming. So how do you prioritise and manage your time? What are you kind of focusing on? And how do you, what is your kind of way of dealing with all of these different aspects?

##### Participant 23

That's a good question. I am very, I think I am very organised, but that's my nature. I am extremely well organised. I try to organise my time almost too rigidly sometimes, but it keeps me in line with what I do. So, and I try to avoid meetings as much as I can. So, for example, colleagues, some colleagues they like their meetings. So whenever they have something to ask you, they would say, "oh, can we meet on Teams?" But the issue with that is when I work on something, and I have, even if it's a 20 minute meeting, then it keeps me more than half an hour off, because I need to get ready for the meeting and be there. And then after the meeting, I will think about the meeting, so I'll take some time to get back to what I was doing before. So I try to organise my day so that, for example, today I have meetings. So it's a day with meetings. And then after the meetings, so my meetings end at 2 o'clock this afternoon, I'll take a walk just to empty my head, and get back and do some research. So I have a schedule, a programme, day by day of what I do. And I know, from the beginning of the week, I know every day what I do. And I think it helps to have, for me, at least, it's a very, very mundane thing to say, but I think it helps to have a paper diary, a paper agenda. So I have this, and it helps me to, and I write down lots of things, it helps me to keep track of everything I do. I think it's much better than Outlook and Google calendar. Because Google calendar, you're always reacting to the pings. And you don't have this kind of broader vision. For example, I know, because it's in my calendar, that in one week I need to return some reviews for a paper. And because I wrote "week minus one" so I know that, okay, so today it's week minus one. So I have seven days. Well, with an electronic calendar, it's not the same. So that's one other thing. But I guess the most, the most important for me is to always prioritise research. Because the problem with research is there is always something more urgent to do. And if you don't prioritise research, then you will never do research. So I prioritise research. And for example, the MBA course I'm giving in two weeks time, the MBA manager, the director, wanted me to get it ready by August. And I told him no. I mean, I didn't say it that way. But it's not how I work. I don't plan, like, six months ahead and get everything ready six months ahead. Because if I do that, then I won't do any research, because then I will have some other things to do. I like to have deadlines for the teaching and admin stuff, so that I know, okay, to prepare this course, I need maybe a month, so I will start working a month ahead. And, and I organise my time and try to schedule my time pretty tightly, so that yeah, so that there is no bad surprise. I mean, not too much, not too many bad surprises.

##### Researcher

Okay. That's great. That's really interesting. I'm conscious, obviously, we don't have too long left. So I have, I guess, kind of one final question just for you to kind of wrap up, wrap things up. So obviously you said you're prioritising research because, you know, there's always things that are going to be more pressing. So you really have to make that time for it. And as we talked about there, there are a lot of different kind of elements to your job. And you just talked about your own kind of way of dealing with that. Has that changed at all since the pandemic sort of came into play? You know, obviously some of the priorities of the business school might have changed, you know, online teaching, for example, that kind of thing. The environment has changed a lot, I think, and with homeworking and everything, it's a very, very different environment to the one we were in a year ago. So I'm wondering if you can just sort of summarise, I guess, how things have changed for you in respect to your kind of job role?

##### Participant 23

Yeah. So teaching takes more time, that's for sure, with the pandemic. And it's also very valorising to learn all these new things. I've learned so much since March. It's incredible. How to use all this video recording software, how to edit videos. And I mean, all these things are great. And teaching online is something I had never done before. So, but it takes more time, that's for sure. So as a consequence of that, it's even more important to be very organised with your time, because recording a video, recording a 20 minute video is more than 20 minutes. It can take half a day, because you need to know what you want to say, to write down a script, and then do the video in a way that is professional and nice and friendly. So it's something that you're not really trained for. It takes time. It takes more time. And in terms of research, of course, it's been a little bit turned upside down, in the sense that we cannot do face to face interviews, we cannot do ethnographies. So I had a project, for example, to interview [group of professionals] at [organisation]. And of course I said, well, with the pandemic, we won't be able to do that. So I'm trying now, but it's something that I scheduled to do after my MBA class or around March, to write them an email explaining that maybe we can do it by Zoom or Teams or Skype or whatever. So it's a little bit, it changes things a little bit. So with the pandemic in March, I mean, everything stopped. So I had this project to go to [home country] and interview some [group of professionals] at [organisation], and [city], interview some [group of professionals] there, but it didn't work out because everything was shut. So I had to postpone the thing by one year. I had the funds, actually, the financing. And they agreed, so I had to negotiate to postpone the funds, so that they would not just cancel the funds. So now I need to use the funds, so that's why I need to find a way to do things a little bit differently, and maybe to rearrange the research if they don't want to do any Skype interviews. So that's another thing. But at the same time, you know, it is also, I think there are a lot of good things with all these online things. For example, I would not have gone to [region] to meet you. And maybe you would not have gone to [region] to meet me. So it's much easier. And the same with teaching. You know, I don't think we need to be all the time in front of the students face to face. There are things that we can do online. Meeting students, tutee-tutor type of meetings, we can do that online. That's pretty fine. It's really convenient and, and especially, you know, in this country it's very cold. Sometimes it's nice to just stay home and do everything from home. There are good things and bad things I feel. And I also feel that the the UK compared to [home country], because I always compare to my country, has done really well. I mean the universities have done really well organising online courses, blended teaching and stuff. And I think they will, even after the pandemic, we go back to some kind of normality, we will certainly keep some of these, some of the good things with online, just everything online teaching, online research, online everything, that we've done, because of the pandemic. That would be a new way of doing.

##### Researcher

Okay. Thank you. That's really interesting. I think that brings us to a nice end there. And I won't ask any more questions. We've covered everything I wanted to talk about anyway and I've got two pages of notes so that's always a really good sign. So, I'll stop the recording now.