##### Researcher

Okay. So I've had a look at your profile, so I know, I know a bit about you and kind of what you're doing in your role at the moment, but in your own words, could you just tell me a bit about yourself in terms of your background, your career to date and your current role, please?

##### Participant 31

Yeah, sure. So I finished my PhD in about [year] at [PhD institution], worked as a lecturer there for three years, moved to [foreign country] to [foreign university], which is in [foreign city], worked there for three years as an assistant prof. Had a good time there, enjoyed that, had no real admin responsibilities. [Foreign country] universities are quite different from UK universities. You don't have to do much, what they call service is what we call admin. Then spent a couple of years in [a different foreign region] after that, from 2011 to 2013, didn't enjoy that very much - massive teaching loads, not a very intellectual atmosphere. So moved back to the UK in 2013 and got [role] at [previous institution]. I was there for four years and ended being [senior position] there, in charge of the exec MBA on their [city] campus, which was good, learnt a lot, was a great place to work. But you know, it was nice to be closer to [city]. And then [current institution] was an up and coming place. Obviously it's a well established university, but the business school is quite young and it had big growth potential and stuff. So I thought, you know, I'd move from [previous institution] to [current institution], play a role there, maybe a bigger cog in a smaller wheel type thing. And I have been at [current institution] since [year]. So I'm [role] there, I've been [senior position] there for [sub-discipline], but I'm not [senior position] anymore. I was also previously [another senior position] with corporate relations. But I'm now [another senior position] working on exec education and accreditation. So now basically, I'm just doing accreditation and exec education.

##### Researcher

Okay. And do you still have any kind of involvement in the corporate relations sort of side of things?

##### Participant 31

Yeah. Because nobody else has picked that up. We don't have anyone in charge of that. So yeah, I'm still doing bits and bobs around that.

##### Researcher

Okay. That's really interesting. So I guess kind of going back to the start then you said you finished your PhD in [year]. What was it that kind of, I guess, attracted you to a career in academia? Why did you kind of do a PhD and go down that route, do you think?

##### Participant 31

Well, I suppose I was interested in ideas. Most of my friends were going off to join [industry] firms - I did a bachelor's degree in [discipline] - and I wasn't particularly motivated to do that. So I was really motivated, my final two years of university, I did some of the more critical theory based courses, so I just thought it would make more sense for me to do something that was, that gave me more freedom intellectually. I don't think I'd have coped well with the rigours of a big firm or going to work in the city or something like that. It didn't really suit me at the time when I was in my sort of early twenties. So yes, pursued a PhD. I wasn't sure I was going to go into academia and even at the end of my PhD I was in two minds about whether to go into academia or find something else to do. But I got offered a job almost serendipitously, so I felt like I couldn't turn that down. I gave it a try and yeah, I never looked back, really. I mean, I wouldn't really do anything else. I can't do anything else, so, haha.

##### Researcher

And you obviously said, you know, you moved from [previous institution] to [current institution] in [year], and you said, obviously, location wise, it was a bit better for you and that kind of thing. Was there any other kind of factors that sort of inspired that move?

##### Participant 31

Well I suppose at [previous institution] I didn't see what my next move was going to be. You know, I was made [senior position] probably when I was 35 or something, you know, that was quite a big position for me. And it was a steep learning curve. But after 18 months of doing it, it was all quite repetitive, you know, running the exec MBA and doing the various things involved in that. So I looked ahead and I thought, well, what I do next here? The next step up is to become [more senior role]. But I was still quite young for that and probably far away from fulfilling that role. So I thought maybe an interesting challenge would be to move to a different place and bring the sort of knowledge and expertise I thought I'd maybe accumulated at [previous institution] and help [current institution] move in that direction. So that was a factor as well, I suppose.

##### Researcher

Okay. That's interesting. Thank you. So in terms of what you're doing at the moment, so obviously you wear a lot of different hats I would say, lots of different kind of aspects to your role. Could you tell me how much time you have to dedicate to different areas of your role and what kind of areas they might be, such as teaching responsibilities, research and then obviously, you know, you've got your quite heavy leadership position as well, which would take a lot of time, I imagine?

##### Participant 31

Yeah. OK, so this is always a challenge, you know, whenever we periodically have to fill in this track data, you've probably not had to do this as a PhD student, but academics have to occasionally fill in a survey to say how much time they allocate to their activities per week. Research, teaching, basically the question you asked. I always have to make that stuff up, because I never keep tab. So I cannot give you a super accurate answer. But I'll give you what I think is probably a standard week. Always been precious about research, I mean, you could easily get swamped with admin duties, in which case - and you see this happening to people in universities - they turn around and after eight to ten years they've hardly produced any research because they've been doing these big admin roles and they complain about it. You have agency there. You have the opportunity to still perform those leadership roles and still do research. I've always been super precious about research because as you know, your career doesn't advance in academia unless you're producing research. That's the first golden rule. So I'll always have at least two and a half days a week to do research I would say. And, you know, that's term time. During summer and stuff that can be longer, if you go for full week trips to collect data or whatever. And I've always travelled to different countries to do that. Teaching, I have a light teaching load this year, because I won a grant which gives me buy-out. So actually all I have to do for the next two years is deliver eight lectures a year. And I have to administer the course and respond to student queries - I've got 200 students on an undergraduate course. But all the tutorials and seminars are delivered by a PhD student of mine. So my teaching load is very light. So you know, in terms of time, I mean, I think I've got like 20 hours of teaching or something for the whole year. And you know, exec education, the exec education stuff is quite sporadic. Sometimes I'll have an opportunity where we have to put together a pitch or a bid for a contract, and that can take up a full day of your time or something very quickly. Other times there's not much happening. So for example, this week I've had a few hours of meetings to do with exec education, a few bits of prep to do for an exec education course that I teach. But that's it. And then accreditation again, that comes in waves, because if you've got a peer review visit coming it's a very intense time, you've got to work closer to the deadline, maybe you'll be spending three days a week for a couple of weeks just on accreditation. But you know, some parts of the year I'm only doing two or three hours a week on it. So it really varies a lot. And I do, because I'm in charge of executive education, I also teach executive education courses, and that can be quite a lot of preparation. Just now I'm doing an online one, which is a lot of prep, but that's optional, right? That's not part of my workload, and you get paid extra for that. So that's a different set of motivations. I know that's a real mismatch of an answer. I wish I could carve it into percentage terms, but what I would say is, always making sure I have that research time protected. Try and save two and a half days a week, and I try and have at least one full day a week, but that's all I do. I don't even respond to emails till after lunch or whatever. Yeah. And teaching is minimal, and the rest would be sort of admin stuff.

##### Researcher

Yeah. That's really interesting, a perfect answer. Honestly, really good to get that kind of gauge of the different activities you're engaged in. So you mentioned, I guess, being very precious about research, trying to really keep that research time as yours because it's important for your kind of career progression and development. Is research kind of your main, I guess, driver, you know, we talked a bit about how you came into academia. Was it research that was really the aspect that really drove you, as opposed to, I guess, sort of being in a kind of leadership role or the teaching side?

##### Participant 31

Yes, it's absolutely research. I'm totally motivated by ideas. And the leadership stuff came later, and it's almost sort of by accident. When I was at [previous institution], you know, five, six years ago, the dean just said "hey, we want you to do this role". And, you know, if you come from a lower middleclass background, that sounds like progression, right? And they pay you an extra few thousand pounds a year. So you think, oh, that's important. I can't say no to that. And you know, you've got a growing family, and any extra money you can get always helps. So you know, I sort of did that, and then, it was hard to start with because I wasn't really prepared for it. Nothing had prepared me for that sort of role in my career up until that point. And then I realised I started to quite enjoy it. You know, and now I wouldn't just do teaching or research the whole time, I think I'll always want to do one of these sort of big roles. But that being said I wouldn't want to just do that either. You know, I look at the dean position, I look at what the dean does, and he's not doing very intellectual things these days. He's just going from meeting to meeting and I think, and other deans moan about how much they miss research as well, right? Because most deans get into academia because they're into research. So I mean, it's something I would think about in the future. But I've been in two minds about it because I think my main passion is still really, if I think about what I enjoy the most, and get excited about the most, is just sitting about writing papers, which is a bit sad really, because who reads these things? Not that many people. But it's what stimulates me the most, I would say, intellectually.

##### Researcher

Absolutely. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. That's really interesting. Thank you. And I want to ask now a little bit about kind of the I guess, expectations placed on you based on all the different activities that you just spoke about. Obviously I guess you're in more of a unique position being in kind of a leadership role which will take up a substantial amount of time. Has that kind of had an impact on the expectations of you in terms of kind of research outputs and perhaps thinking about other things?

##### Participant 31

I think the reality is in any university in general, and business schools are not unique in this respect, you're expected to do everything. So I think if you're going to do these [leadership] roles you're not expected to stop producing research. And it's not had a detrimental impact, I would say, on research. Sure, there's times when I sit there and think "why am I doing this?" when I'm in these endless seas of meetings about accreditation or exec education, which I don't think are particularly intellectual, and I feel I should be writing papers or collecting more data or something. But that's quite rare. Mostly it hasn't had an impact on my research and I had a full REF submission. I mean, in metrics terms, I don't know, I mean I had ten fours for this REF period or something. So the vice dean for research could just take his pick from what he wanted. So its not stopped me from producing things. I know some people have this argument, and it's fairly common, that you do a leadership role, your research is really going to suffer. And I'm sure that's true in many cases. But that has not been my experience and in fact I would say it's probably the opposite. Because if I wasn't doing these leadership roles, what would I be doing? I'd have a higher teaching load and I'd have some crummy admin role anyway, because everyone in UK universities has to do an admin role. So I'd be course director for some horrible master's programme, right? Which would be probably, possibly just as time consuming, with less reward, and certainly less interesting. And I would have less flexibility with that because you're enslaved to the bureaucratic machinery of exam boards and chasing up academics and the rhythm of the academic year. But what I'm doing just now with accreditation and exec education, it's a step removed from that. And yeah, there are busy times of the year, but it's not just like a constant stream of rubbish, right? So to summarise what I'm saying, if I wasn't in these leadership roles, I'd be busy doing other low level bureaucratic nightmarish type stuff. And I think I don't think it'd be any less time consuming, potentially more time consuming and I'd be less in control of what I was doing. My rationale for keeping on doing the leadership stuff is partly that as well. It's partly because, actually, it gives me the opportunity to protect my research space. Is that clear?

##### Researcher

Yeah, absolutely. 100%. That is really interesting. Thank you.

##### Participant 31

But that's not a universal view, right? I hear colleagues all the time, moaning about how they're this role or that role. Whether it's my institution or other institutions. And I just think maybe academics just like to moan a lot, really. You have agency, you have the opportunity to shape these things to some extent.

##### Researcher

So yeah, kind of drawing on that, you say, you know, you don't feel that kind of same way, even though you are in that position where some other people might feel like their other time is kind of being compromised. But that's not the case for you. I guess, so you mentioned, obviously you are very sort of protective of your research time, and you mentioned about having agency and stuff. Is there any other kind of strategy that you think you perhaps have for why you've been able to really maintain that good stream of outputs or a way you've kind of navigated your workload to be able to prioritise research in that way?

##### Participant 31

Well, I suppose it's also how you approach any task you have to do, whether it's teaching, right, I mean, you could spend your whole time on preparing materials, dealing with students, giving extensive feedback, et cetera. I mean, you have to draw a line at some point about what you're prepared to do. That doesn't mean you take your teaching, you know, and view in a very cavalier fashion. You can be very effective as a teacher, as an educator, without spending every hour of the day devoted to it. So, I would get scunnered - completely at the end of my tether - if I had to spend all my time teaching. So I draw a line with that as well. In terms of, you know, the teaching prep and the amount of effort you, for example, put into the PowerPoint slides you prepare for a lecture. At one point, enough is enough, right? Because you've got, you've got a revise and resubmit for a journal you want to work on. So I think people have very different attitudes to these things. And what I find is a lot of people focused on teaching and maybe their admin stuff, they complain about not doing enough research, because they've got a phobia about doing research, or they're just not that good at it. So that doesn't seem to be the case with me. I really enjoy doing it. I'm not in a position to judge that, but I'm really enthused about doing it. And I want to make sure that I always have the space to do so. So the efforts you put into all those other tasks, whether it's teaching or any other admin tasks you've got to do is important. And I suppose over time I've developed the sensibility whereby I'm happy to draw a line at a certain point.

##### Researcher

Okay. Thank you. That's really interesting and useful. So I guess, yeah, we've talked about kind of different expectations and stuff. You mentioned the absolute importance of research and publications as well. What kind of sort of standards and I guess kind of pressures do you kind of experience related to research in terms of kind of how you disseminate your research? Is there kind of specific outputs that are kind of favoured and that you feel like you should kind of go for?

##### Participant 31

Yeah. So I mean, you'll hear this from every other academic, it's all about the ABS list these days. Deans will turn around and say "oh, we have a balanced scorecard to how we measure performance", or "it doesn't matter exactly if you're publishing in a four journal as long as you're publishing something that's recognised as high quality according to other criteria, that's fine". But really they just use the ABS list as a proxy for all that stuff. So that drives what I do to some extent. I mean, I don't publish exclusively in journals that are four on the ABS list. There are other journals I like and enjoy trying to publish in, that are not ranked as highly there. And I think it's important to do that because it's more true to my sort of intellectual self, if you like. But, yeah, expectations would all be around the ABS four thing, and getting that is very good for my career. But then equally I've worked in three different continents, and everywhere I go they have a different set of criteria, right? So in [foreign country] it was all about the FT50 list - it was the FT40 list when I was there. So there were different journals I was forced to pay attention to there. And then I moved [foreign region] and they used some Australian dean's list, which is a much more generous one than the FT50 list or the ABS list as well. And that gives you broader scope. So I recognise that you need to publish in places that satisfy multiple criteria in case you want to move again. Plus I've got international co-authors who are subject to other performance measurement criteria. So an ABS four for an international co-author may not mean very much, but if it's an ABS four and on the FT50 list, then everyone's happy. So it's pathetic, but it's very metric driven, I suppose, because that's what matters to people. And I'm driven by that as well, by those standard measures of performance criteria. As much as I would like to say I'm above it and I don't pay attention to it, I'm not.

##### Researcher

Yeah. That's interesting. I guess what I want to know from your kind of perspective is, why do you think that is the case? Why do you think the ABS list is so important? And why is that kind of measure of publication, why is that so absolutely critical to career progression in business schools? And you know, in relation to perhaps other activities such as teaching and taking on extra admin?

##### Participant 31

I don't know where that, I don't know where that came from initially. I mean, I remember my first day on the job as a lecturer at [PhD institution], my sort of mentor took me to the side and said "right, worst case scenario, at the end of your first year, you'll win a teaching award is - this'll be a disaster for you, what you need to do is get your PhD published, get a couple of papers published from your PhD". And that's still true today. Now, that culture is embedded, and it's endemic to all business schools in the UK. I'm not old enough to know when that changed - I know it wasn't always the case. You meet some pretty old academics now and, you know, research in the 1980s was not a major thing. They weren't under huge question to do very much. Plus, there wasn't huge pressure to teach that well either. Universities were probably quite cosy places. But yeah, it is now. Maybe it's to do with just the funding you get from the REF. But even then I don't think that makes sense because as a proportion of institutional income, REF income is not high. You know, business schools make much more money from international students doing master's degrees. So you would think that would lead to teaching being more prioritised. But actually it's not really. You can still be a sort of mediocre teacher and do well in business schools, provided you're an excellent researcher. That may change in the future. You know, we're talking more about impact, which may mean you have to be more instrumental in your research and more practise based, which would be a problem for someone like me because I have no real interest in having impact - at least not in practice. And if I did move towards a more teaching based model where teaching was prioritised, then that would catch me out as well. Not because I'm a bad teacher, you know, I'm a sort of 4.2 out of 5 teacher, but if I was expected to be a 4.8 out of 5 teacher that would have implications on research. And universities are sites of knowledge production. We should absolutely give students a good deal at the same time. But you know, if research takes a back seat, then I think you'll start to attract different sorts of people into the profession. So a bit of a rant there. I suppose my short answer is I don't know why it's like that but someone with a longer career than me would be able to explain some of those changes and when they came in. For me, for me, I grew up in an environment where research has been all that matters. And that's been true - I've worked within 5 universities in 3 continents and it has been true everywhere I've been, really.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. And just going back to when you were at [PhD institution], were you there at the time of the RAE 2008?

##### Participant 31

Yeah. So I left [year], but I was probably submitted then as an early career researcher. I had one publication in an ABS 3 journal. But at that time I didn't care, right? They put me in for this RAE meeting. They asked me what journal I'd published in, and I said I had an R&R in [journal]. And they were all happy about that. But I'd already published some in some international [topic] journal, which is not really an academic journal, but I was really proud of it, right? Because I was sort moving in [topic] circles at the time. And the dean at the time looked on his list and it wasn't there. And he said "well, that just doesn't mean anything". So, haha.

##### Researcher

That's interesting. I guess the reason I ask is because obviously the RAE obviously transformed to the REF for 2014, and as you know, impact, impact case studies became an element of that. And the kind of impact the agenda evolved in a way that it wasn't, I guess, kind of as explicit before? In terms of actual research assessment and sort of measurement, I guess. Have you seen any kind of shift towards a focus on impact at all?

##### Participant 31

Yeah, definitely. I left the UK in [year] and I didn't come back until 2013, having been in two different places, and they were starting to talk about impact then, it was already part of the agenda in an embryonic way. The first impact case studies I think were in the 2014 exercise, right? That wasn't an issue for me. They just sort of hired me because of my publications. But then, constantly there were like impact seminars at [previous institution] and obviously at [current institution] we have now have an associate dean who is in charge of impact, which is not something you would have had a few years ago. So this agenda has picked up steam from 2014. They're still not quite sure what to do with it, because it's so hard to evidence it and a lot of people just get their mates to write letters, it's a very ropey evidence base for the actual impact, and a connection between the research you produce and the actual impact that takes place on a policy, an organisation, it's quite problematic. So I wouldn't be surprised if the impact agenda fell away because of that. Because, you know, a lot seems to ride on it just now, but it's less credible, you know, with publication outputs it is much easier. I know the measures are not perfect on these things. They're quite crude in many respects, but you still get a rough idea of what is good quality and what is not. With impact, it's highly variable and much more subjective I think. So when it comes to impact, I've not done much with that. I've just stuck my head in the sand and hope that it goes away. And I don't see it picking up that much steam because I don't see any credible way to measure it or evidence it. And it's maybe become a little bit more concretised and structured since 2014, but not that much, you know, you sort of have these vague ideas about, well, impact equals reach and significance. What on earth does that mean, right? I mean, I don't know.

##### Researcher

Yeah, that's interesting. And I guess on the one hand, you have impact that is measured in impact case studies on the REF, but I think on the other side, you know, you could sort of think of impact as being less formal, more kind of serendipitous a little bit. And the reason I say that is because obviously, you know, [admin role] with exec education, which I guess kind of in it's nature could be quite impactful from a teaching perspective, would you agree? Because, you know, you're kind of reaching those executives who are working in practice quite directly. Do you see it that way? Or do you have a different stance on it all?

##### Participant 31

That's interesting. So I definitely use that language of impact in our promotional videos and stuff. And in making cases for more resource from the faculty, you know, "this is important for our impact agenda because, unlike undergraduates, if we teach exec education we'll have a direct impact on organisations and decisions that they make, blah blah blah". And this discourse is useful in persuading people to give you money. Do I ultimately believe that? I mean, it's a bit of a salesman discourse. I guess I'm a little bit sceptical of it, even though I articulate it myself. I mean, you definitely see with executive education that you can help people with their careers. Mostly exec education is not executives, it's mostly mid level managers. We don't promote that, but most business schools are mostly teaching middle managers with their executive education programmes and just call them executive education. And you can see that they definitely help people on their career journey and make the more competent with finance, or you give them confidence to talk the language of marketing, or something like that over a few days. And you know, that's nice enough and pleasant. And I suppose that is impact. Yeah, but I don't come away having delivered an executive education course and feel like I've massively changed the world for the better or anything. So a more meaningful impact would be to change policies and government regulation or to, you know, well, my area, I study [topic], would mean introducing more [associated] regulation or something. And make wealth distribution more equitable. That would be a serious impact. I don't do that in executive education, but I don't do that in my research either, and maybe I should. So I think it's a different type of impact, really. But it is impact - not REF style impact, but, yeah.

##### Researcher

Okay, that's interesting. So I guess kind of based on that idea of impact, obviously still working kind of on the corporate relations strategy, that kind of area, I also read on your page you're the [champion] for engaging with businesses in [city], is that correct still?

##### Participant 31

I was when I was [role related to corporate relations] - that probably needs updating. I've given that over to somebody else now. We have, somebody's job title is now [title], a more junior academic. So I didn't do much on that. I was over stretched.

##### Researcher

OK. But obviously still involved to an extent with the strategy. I guess what I want to know is because, you know, we talked about impact and you're not necessarily, you know, an academic that is totally passionate about impact, you know, you're very passionate about research, but you described yourself as being slightly cynical about impact and you don't necessarily kind of engage in those in those behaviours. You said you kind of stick your head in the sand a little bit. But I guess kind of, on the surface, if you look at the kind of corporate relations strategy, that to me seems like a very kind of impact focused kind of role, perhaps. I guess I just want to know from what we've spoken about impact, kind of, what made you want to take that on as a role? Is it kind of something you wanted to kind of learn more about in terms of, you know, impact, or was it was there another reason why you kind of took that on?

##### Participant 31

It wasn't impact motivated. I mean, you're right, there is obviously impact connections there, you have better connections with organisations, you have better access to them, you can go in and influence how they behave, maybe through your research, and you can influence policy as well. And you know we have examples of that, longstanding relationships with the school people have with [organisation] or with different professional bodies. And through the research and those connections that does lead to impact. My motivation for doing the role was less to do with that and more to do with the fact that I'd done it before at [previous institution] and the dean thought I'd be good at it here. And I quite enjoy interacting with external organisations. Not necessarily to have impact on them, but because sometimes, it's just, having spent my whole life in academia, it's interesting to see what the world the of practice is like sometimes. So I learnt a lot from it. And also through those connections I've managed to get access to research sites. So it's kind of, I guess it's more of a self interested motivation for being involved in it. I find it stimulating to interact with people from different walks of live, I learn a lot, and it's very useful to get research participants.

##### Researcher

Okay.

##### Participant 31

But as I'm there, I'm trying to help facilitate connections for other people who can can then go on and have impact.

##### Researcher

Yeah, that's interesting. Thank you for that. I understand that aspect, that makes a lot of sense. So you also mentioned there, with the sort of [champion role], you sort of handed that over to someone else. You felt slightly overstretched with that as a role. Generally in your role at the moment do you ever kind of feel that overstretched sort of workload in your sort of day to day working life? Or do you generally feel like the workload is quite manageable?

##### Participant 31

No, I've found a nice balance now. But beforehand I suppose it was slightly imbalanced. So that transition from [corporation relations role], which included everything I'm doing just now, plus the more corporate connectivity piece, plus the [champion role], at that point I kind of felt myself sometimes getting dragged into too much. And what ended up happening was, as a self preservation strategy, I just didn't do much on [champion role], and the corporate connectivity piece, I could have done more on that. But, you know, I'm not going to let my research gets sacrificed as a result. So, you know, the dean was happy enough with that. I mean, he wasn't happy initially because deans just want to get as much from you as they can, but he wasn't going to get blood from a stone. So he eventually after a long negotiation allowed me to relinquish those two aspects, the corporate connectivity and the [champion role]. But I wasn't letting them engulf everything I was doing, I was just not doing as much on them as I could've. And that's, you know, and other people may have allowed themselves to be engulfed until they're swamped with those other things and then they would've regretted not having done any research, you know. And then, you don't get any thanks back for it. Or very minimal thanks for doing these things. So it's important to try and manage those responsibilities in a balanced way.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. Thank you. So I wanted to move on, I actually was really interested, I was looking at your publications, and there's something that I found really kind of interesting. The sort of [academia related topic] in [journal], it is fairly kind of along the lines of the kind of stuff that I am looking at, I find it very interesting. And I guess what I want to ask you is what kind of was behind you kind of writing that piece and the kind of sentiments that you sort of communicated in that paper? I'm interested to hear about that.

##### Participant 31

Yeah. Okay. So, this is interesting. Yeah, I mean, obviously I subscribe to what I wrote in that article. But then you'll have heard from this interview that I'm also quite driven by metrics, right? Haha. Because those are the rules of the game and the field in which we operate. But I lament that to some extent because I recognise that that's short sighted. And, you know, there are higher things we can be striving towards. I'd like to write a book, but, you know, I'd have to take real time to do that, it'd take longer than an academic journal article, I'd have to stop writing academic articles for a while. But it wouldn't really be valued in our field, right? I mean, in some other fields, other departments, they want you to write books, they don't give a damn about academic articles. So, you know, but there are different rules of the game in different fields. And I think the business school world - although that article was about universities more generally - has become too metric driven. But yeah, as long as those metrics are there you're going to have people who play in accordance with those rules. And I'm also one of them. So I recognise that contradiction. But where did that come from? That came from me doing a [course] a couple of years ago at [university]. They have a [course] specifically on [higher education topic]. The dean at [previous institution] sponsored me to go on it, he thought it would be good, he did it before he became dean. So I thought fine, he's going to pay for it, it sounds like fun, no problem, I went and did that and one of my pieces of coursework was a big extended essay, in which I wrote that paper, and my supervisor was the guy called [name], who's editor-in-chief of [journal]. So he said I should submit it there. And I did, and it got published. So it was a bit serendipitous, but yeah, I probably wouldn't have written that if I hadn't done the [course]. So that's where that comes from. We should have this scope for more judgement, but deans and university administrators are nervous about that, because they need to have certainty, and they need to have concrete ways of measuring things.

##### Researcher

And that kind preoccupation with metrics and measuring things, is that why you perhaps are avoiding, like you said, writing a book, for example, you know, you said you would like to write a book, but you would have to kind of sacrifice a bit of that kind of research publications time. Do you feel like the reason that books are maybe not as valued as much in business schools is because of that kind of metrics thing?

##### Participant 31

I think, yeah, I think so. Definitely. But then, I mean in my case if I really think about it, why can I not, right? I mean, if I've got 10 or 12 articles every REF period, I only need four or five, right? Why would I not then parcel my time out a bit differently? Get my REF submission, and then focus on writing what I really want to write, which is probably slightly different things, more political things. I've not done that. I'm not sure what the answer is to that. Maybe it's that feeling of you're only as good as your last article, because that's a culture I've been brought up in academically. So no one's telling me I need to write books. So I guess I've internalised the performance measurement system, you know? I rail against it. I complain about it. But then I also embody it at the same time. So that would be my explanation for that. And I recognise that's a contradiction, but probably one that makes sense.

##### Researcher

Absolutely. Makes perfect sense. I appreciate your honesty and everything. So the last kind of thing I want to talk about in terms of I guess kind of moving on to the next section would be, I guess, kind of the future for you, for the business school kind of thing. What are your kind of future aspirations? I mean, would you ever want to take on a kind of ultimate leadership position in the business school? Or if not where do you see yourself going, are you quite happy on the kind of trajectory you're on at the moment? And I guess the second part of that question of where you want to be is, I guess, how do you kind of plan on getting there? I mean, you've talked a lot throughout this interview about your kind of strategies in terms of protecting your research time, lots of different things that you've done. Do you have anything else in mind, any other kind of strategies? Sorry, that's a bit of a long question.

##### Participant 31

No, that's really well articulated, and, I don't know, I mean, this is something I've thought about quite a bit. I think part of me definitely wants to do that big dean role one day. I'd like the challenge of doing something different like that. Because the thought of just sort of do your teaching, research and sort of admin roles that change every three years for the next 30 years, it's a bit depressing, right? Maybe it'd be useful to do a really big job at some point. And the challenge of doing a dean's position, I think it's really quite exciting. Because you see a lot of deans out there, or heads of school or whatever, they're not always massively impressive individuals. And you sort of think, well, it can't be that hard. But then at the same time, you're not going to be doing research two and a half days a week if you’re the dean, right? I mean, some deans are successful at maintaining an element of that, but it's always much more marginalised. So I'm not sure about that. And certainly just now, my kids are too young to take on something that would be as all consuming as that. It would be a real game changer. But you know, I have applied for a dean position before. Last year or, probably the year before I suppose, a dean position came up at [another university] and the head hunters got in touch. And you know, I applied for that. I mean, they get in touch, all sorts of, you know, institutions, most of them are pretty rubbish. So, you know, but [headhunting university], I thought it'd be an interesting place. Didn't get short listed in the end. Everyone who got shortlisted, they had already been a dean somewhere else. And the feedback I got from the head hunter who met up with me, it was quite useful, he said "well, you need to take on a bigger role with more line management experience". I'm not really sure how I can do that unless you do a dean position, right? A bit of a catch 22. So, yes, I'd be interested in exploring that, if it was the right institution. I wouldn't want to do it at a sort of second grade university where you didn't have a bunch of good researchers around you. You'd have to be able to think you can make a difference. I thought that was probably the case at [headhunting university], because they had enough good people to make it interesting. They also weren't so mature as a school that you couldn't improve on it as well, right? You can still hire extra people in every year for 10% turnover rate and make a difference to it, improve an MBA programme, a couple of other things and, you know, it could have been a satisfying job, and on a decent scale as well, right? It's not big like [bigger universities], which are a different beast entirely. But how would you get the requisite experience to do that? I suppose you could go abroad an do a dean role. I'm not really prepared to do that, my family are very settled here. You could become a dean at a smaller institution, which is not as good, but then that's a risk, right? You know, you go to another place, you go to a post 1992 institution or something, maybe it's hard to come back to the Russell group. So, I don't know. Yes, I'm interest in that in principle, but I'm not quite sure how to get to that next stage. I'm not desperate to do it either. So for the time being, I think I'll keep doing these leadership roles that I'm doing and keep producing my research. And see where that takes me, if anywhere.

##### Researcher

Okay. That's really interesting. Thank you. And just you mentioned there about the dean role you applied for, they kind of wanted more line management experience. Just out of interest, do you directly manage a fair few other people? Or is that not something that's much of, I guess, a part of your role?

##### Participant 31

Well, not now, I mean, I have a sort of team of professional service staff that report into me, but I don't do their annual reviews or anything. Their annual reviews are done by the chief operating officer of the school who is the head administrator. But I suppose I have to manage them in some sense. I mean, I had more direct management experience when I was [previous role]. You know, I had like 20 direct reports.

##### Researcher

Okay.

##### Participant 31

But you know, that was a low level role, right? You spend the whole time just hearing people complain about how they're depressed or they've got, sort of, health issues. I mean, those are important things, but you don't do anything strategic, right? Whereas the [role] I'm doing just now, you're dealing with big strategic projects. So I'd have thought that was more interesting. I could get more line management experience by going to be [role] again, but I'd be bored out of my skull. So I don't know. I don't know what else I'm supposed to do to get line management experience, but then maybe that wouldn't be valued by people either, you know, being [role]. But maybe it would be, to convince someone you could do the dean position. But yeah, I'm not sure.

##### Researcher

Okay. That's really interesting. Thank you. Yeah. I think that's kind of everything I wanted to cover in terms of sort of direct questions. So in that case, I'm happy to kind of finish here, unless there is anything off the top of your head you can think of that might be relevant to the kind of things we've been talking about you haven't had a chance to say, or anything at all. Absolutely fine if not, don't worry about it.

##### Participant 31

Well, nothing on the topics we've already discussed, but it is probably worth mentioning - just for your files - that I'm also [role] of the local union branch, the UCU. I've only been doing that since December, but that's another role, a very different one. I'm not quite sure what my dean thinks about me doing that as well. But that takes up a lot of my time and involves holding the university to account in certain ways as well, which may prevent me being a dean, at least at [current institution]. But you know, it satisfies my sort of political, my frustrated political ambitions or something.

##### Researcher

That is interesting, and a whole other side of the kind of working life that you don't necessarily kind of think about with your workload, but it's important to you obviously. i mean, just another hat in a long line of hats that you wear, haha.

##### Participant 31

Haha, yeah I know, and I'm starting to think - maybe too many hats, right? I probably do too much. But then equally it's bounded, right? I stick boundaries around it, so it doesn't creep too much and become completely overwhelming.

##### Researcher

Yeah. That's very interesting. Yeah.

##### Participant 31

Well, it's always nice to reflect and have people ask you questions sometimes, so, you know, good luck with the rest of your PhD and if you need any follow up don't hesitate to reach out and I'd be happy to help you.

##### Researcher

Thank you, I really appreciate that, it's been a very, very useful and interesting interview. I've really enjoyed talking to you and hearing about your experiences. So thank you for your honesty and stuff. I really appreciate that.