University of Southampton

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Accounting for Academia: The Role of Performance Metrics in Shaping Academics' Gaming and Emotional Health

by

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Abstract

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NPM introduced managerialism into public sector institutions. UK business schools have not only been impacted by the neoliberal changes but have also contributed to the promotion of managerialist ideology post-NPM. As a result, Performance Measurement Systems (PMSs) have been extensively adopted as an accountability and management control tool. This research aims at examining the strategies employed by UK academics to deal with various PMSs, including gaming, and the effects of heightened PMS pressure and academics9 gaming on their emotional well-being. It adopts a qualitative approach framed around a triangulation of interviews with UK academics, social media, and relevant document analysis. The results showed that university managers game the evaluation metrics by creating ambiguity around the criteria, manipulating contracts and REF submissions, fractional recruitment, or even strategies of treating students as customers. Additionally, academics cope with the pressure of intensified PMSs by gaming TEF and NSS, playing it safe by choosing the journal before the topic, blackmailing their institution or even grooming their ECRs and PhD Students. They also suffer from anxiety, stress, fatigue, pressure, and other well-being concerns related to the over-audit by the evaluation metrics.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Shahenda Ahmed Shehata

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I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In the 1970s, the UK faced financial crisis and budget deficits (Ter Bogt and Scapens, 2009). These challenges led to significant reforms in the public sector amidst political, social, and economic changes. These reforms were aimed at improving the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of public institutions to meet the expectations of citizens <customers= (Broucker, De and Leisyte, 2015; Radice, 2013). The call for change stemmed from a growing demand for accountability to public sector stakeholders, a focus on managerialism, and the adoption of a results-driven approach known as New Public Management (NPM) (Ter Bogt and Scapens, 2009; Broucker, De and Leisyte, 2015). Scholars have described NPM as the incorporation of private-sector practices into the public sector (Ter Bogt and Scapens, 2009; Dobija et al., 2019).

The advent of NPM coincided with the tenure of the Thatcher government, during which the UK underwent a shift from statism to liberalism (Radice, 2013). This change entailed a call for privatization, financialization, deregulation, the promotion of free markets, and the advancement of capitalism. Neoliberal ideologies in UK higher education (HE) were rooted in HE's crucial contributions to capitalism, including the cultivation of skilled future entrepreneurs, professionals, and managers and influencing the actions of the ruling elites (Radice, 2013, p.411). Moreover, there has been a noticeable shift toward valuing individualism and efficiency over collectivism and equity, thus elevating the emphasis on 'economic' values and fostering a more individualistic and utilitarian societal and public sector model (Poole et al., 2006).

NPM entails a departure from the traditional approach to public administration, with the goal of introducing managerialism into public sector organizations (Clarke, Gerwitz, and McLaughlin 2000). UK business schools have not only been impacted by the neoliberal changes but have also contributed to the promotion of managerialist ideology post-NPM. The ascendancy of managerialism is closely associated with the shift from neoliberal capitalism to managerial capitalism in business education and research (Klikauer, 2015; McLaren, 2020). Business schools have embraced managerialism, positioning themselves as instruments for controlling labour and producing ideology to safeguard capitalism and maintain the power of the business elite, all while presenting themselves as part of the solution to social issues (Guilhot, 2007). Managerialism in UK business schools and other public sector institutions is closely tied to the significant budgetary challenges of the 1970s, which led to the emergence of NPM and the prevailing idea that these institutions should be operated like businesses, emphasizing accountability and performance assessment (Juusola, 2022).

As a result, academic and administrative roles have been separated, and managerial controls such as Performance Measurement Systems (PMSs) have been introduced (Billsberry, Ambrosini and Thomas, 2023). This trend reflects the rise of neoliberal ideology in society and has firmly entrenched managerialism in UK business schools (Sims, 2019). Managerialist controls aim to measure and stimulate employee performance towards organizational goals, using a corporate economic logic that involves quantifying teaching and research performance, revenue generation, cost-cutting, and budgeting (Bobe & Kober, 2020). This emphasis on performance inputs and outcomes has given rise to numerous metrics and performance reviews, with scores and points becoming common parlance (Jones et al., 2020). These changes have given rise to the concept of the managerial university (Klikauer, 2015).

The performance of business schools is evaluated using both internal and external metrics to gauge student satisfaction, teaching and research quality (Adisa *et al.*, 2023a). External metrics include rankings and league tables, the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the National Student Survey (NSS), external quality assurance by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), and risk assessment of business schools. The first Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) took place in 1986 with the aim of making research funding more competitive by allocating funds based on research quality (Deem, 2004; Harley, 2002). This exercise continued to evolve through different versions in 1989, 1992, 1996, and 2001 to adapt to changes in the academic environment and address gaming behaviours among academics. The Research Excellence Framework (REF) was introduced in 2014 as an extension of the previous RAEs, serving as an accountability tool for allocating research funds based on research quality. Business schools rely on this framework to secure financial resources and enhance their reputation (Antipova, 2021).

The National Student Survey (NSS) was introduced in early 2005 and is overseen by the Office for Students (OfS) (Thiel, 2019; Arthur, 2020). This survey assesses student satisfaction with various aspects of their university experience, including teaching quality, learning opportunities, assessment and feedback, academic support, organization and management, learning resources, and student involvement. The primary goal of the NSS is to evaluate teaching quality and enhance student contentment (Adisa *et al.*, 2023b). The significance of NSS for universities is undeniable (Thiel, 2019; Arthur, 2020). Not only is the survey a competitive advantage, serving as a key tool in recruiting potential students, but its results also influence the university's ranking in league tables and are taken into account in the TEF ratings (Barkas *et al.*, 2019a). Subsequently, the TEF ratings determine whether a university is allowed to raise its tuition fees (Forstenzer, 2018). These ratings evaluate universities based on employment rates, proportion of highly skilled jobs, and NSS scores. Universities are awarded Gold, Silver, or Bronze classifications based on their level of excellence and innovation in the teaching process.

These PMSs, induced by managerialism, were entrenched in UK business schools seeking better performance and efficiency. That was the result of the belief that the private sector practices are more efficient than the public ones based on the usage of market mechanisms (Loveday, 2018; Du and Lapsley, 2019). Several accounting scholars, such as Gebreiter (2022) and K. Kallio et al. (2021), have delved into the influence of PMSs in universities. Their studies have uncovered that the emphasis on journal rankings and the pursuit of research funds has led to a decline in research quality and a focus on standardized, short-term research. This shift has resulted in a customer-centric approach to students, with 80% of business schools' revenue coming from student sources. Teaching activities have increasingly leaned towards textbook-driven and technical approaches (Gebreiter, 2022).

Martin-Sardesai et al. (2017) examined the impact of RAE implementation on internal university processes. Their findings revealed that universities adjusted their mission on strategic and operational levels due to the tie of government funds to research performance evaluation, while also extensively implementing research PMSs reflecting the NPM paradigm. The infusion of market ideologies in higher education has led to the erosion of university values and traditions. Students are now viewed as customers, and professionals as providers of educational services (Brown and Carasso, 2013). Consequently, providers are compelled to cater to customers' demands, and the market fosters competition and gaming among providers in supplying high-quality, low-cost educational services. Managers' practices have been likened to those of the "Soviet era of command and control," and universities have been characterized as "corporate" or "neoliberal" entities adapted to the era of the "knowledge economy" (Loveday, 2018).

Consequently, Business schools apply cost-benefit accounting seeking to defend their existence in the current market as knowledge is not a public good anymore but a commodity and a means of generating profit. Moreover, departments are viewed as internal cost centres, owning their decentralised budgets (Feldman and Sandoval, 2018). PMSs are implemented not just for measurement but to encourage discipline among academics and universities. Metrics can be used as benchmarks to reward or punish performers. This creates an incentive for university managers to manage the PMSs. However, university managers9 gaming techniques are still underdeveloped areas of research (Goodin, 2000; Salter, 2010). Indeed, managers set the rules of the game and the norms that (re)shape the interaction of individual actors (Goodin, 2000). This explains why academics9 behaviour cannot be separated from their managers.

Managerialism places a one-dimensional approach, 8thinking inside the box,9 at the heart of academic behaviours (Klikauer, 2015). It limits intellectual and scientific progress, favouring conformist academics and research output over quality and career prospects. It tends to eliminate dialectical thinking in favour of one-dimensional thinking and ditching their collegial

"management" structures for senior management teams (Billsberry, Ambrosini and Thomas, 2023). Managerialism aims to operationalise academic work in financial terms, prioritising efficiency, effectiveness, value-for-money, competition, PMSs, rewards and accountability (Parker, 2012). Such managerialist approach marginalizes academic staff's freedom, workplace democracy and involvement in decision-making (Joseph, 2015). It reinforces management's right to manage, reduce, and often shrink the status of academic staff into boxes of hierarchical structures.

Indeed, academics are increasingly under pressure and experiencing limited autonomy due to the overt control by PMSs (Loveday 2018). These systems are leading to individualism, competitiveness, opportunism, anxiety, stress, and overall negative well-being among academics (Kallio et al.9s 2016; Deasy & Mannix-McNamara, 2017). Furthermore, the implementation of NPM in higher education has resulted in changes in academics' appointments, with part-time contracts replacing full-time permanent positions as a reflection of managerialism (Gill and Donghue, 2016; Santiago and Carvalho, 2008). Consequently, this has led to professional fragmentation, reduced autonomy, decreased freedom, lower self-worth, and job insecurity (Du and Lapsley, 2019). A survey of academics found that 66% held negative perceptions of research PMSs, as they believed it reduced research freedom, imposed heavy administrative burdens, directed academic activity, and consumed valuable research time (Martin-Sardesai et al., 2017).

The use of PMSs in academia has led to a "publish or perish" research culture, where academics are driven by quantifiable metrics and encouraged to 8play it safe9 by identifying gaps in the literature, adopting established methodologies and theoretical assumptions, and publishing carefully crafted yet ultimately meaningless research (Becker and Lukka, 2022). In business schools, the widespread adoption of PMSs has resulted in unethical behaviour known as "gaming behaviour," where academics manipulate the systems to meet targets. Academics start to play the game when they choose career advancement, concentrate their efforts on increasing their capital and secure the most advantageous position through bonding the rules and responding to targets at a superficial level (Kalfa, Wilkinson and Gollan, 2018).

Aboubichr & Conway (2021) found that academics could game the system regarding their *research* performance in five different ways. *Gratuitous proliferation* such as producing numerous articles from the same data. *Hoarding performance*: keeping information about accomplishments and only revealing it when beneficial. *Collusive alliances:* agreements between two or more scholars to include each other in their research to inflate publication numbers and meet performance goals. Playing it safe: tailoring research to fit journals and overlooking risky, controversial topics, and finally *Cooking the books*: falsifying, fabricating, or

altering data. Few scholars have paid attention to academics gaming the research metrics, however, research into academics9 gaming behaviour, its emergence, and its connection to PMSs is still young (Bevan and Hood, 2006a; Oravec, 2019; Aboubichr and Conway, 2021).

1.2 Motivation for Research

The introduction of PMSs in UK business schools, driven by neoliberal and managerialist ideologies, has significantly reshaped the academic landscape (Radice, 2013; Bobe & Kober, 2020). Despite the growing body of literature on PMSs and their impacts on performance, there has been limited scholarly attention to how academics engage in *gaming behaviors* to cope with these systems (Bevan & Hood, 2006; Oravec, 2019; Aboubichr & Conway, 2021). The existing research often fails to sufficiently explore the connection between PMS pressures, and the emotional consequences of these pressures. This study aims to fill these gaps by examining not only how academics game PMSs but also how these systems affect their emotional well-being, contributing to a deeper understanding of the behavioral and psychological responses to intensified performance metrics in UK business schools.

The importance of this research extends beyond filling a gap in the literature. The consequences of PMS-driven gaming behaviors have far-reaching implications for universities, policymakers, and academics. For policymakers, this research offers critical insights into how current evaluation frameworks (e.g., REF, TEF, NSS) may unintentionally promote behaviors that undermine the intended goals of academic performance assessment (Forstenzer, 2018; Martin-Sardesai et al., 2017). Academics often opt for "safer" research topics to meet publication targets, potentially stifling innovation and limiting academic freedom. By revealing these dynamics, this study can inform policy revisions that aim to reduce these unintended consequences and encourage more balanced, quality-driven academic outputs (Gebreiter, 2021).

For business schools, the study provides an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of their PMSs, especially in terms of how these systems influence not only academic output but also the emotional well-being of their staff (Coutinho, 2016; Boncori et al., 2020). Insights into the experiences of more than fifty academics from over twenty UK business schools will allow institutions to evaluate the impact of PMS pressure on mental health concerns such as anxiety, burnout, and stress. The findings could prompt universities to develop alternative approaches that foster healthier democratic work environments while maintaining performance standards (Kinman, 2014).

From a theoretical perspective, this research advances the discourse on managerialism in the public sector. By investigating the interplay between managerial practices and academic behaviors, it contributes to theories on how PMSs perpetuate a culture of compliance and gaming, rather than fostering genuine academic excellence (Klikauer, 2015; Parker, 2012). This study seeks to refine existing theories on managerialism and workplace democracy by revealing how these systems influence individual behaviours and institutional outcomes.

Indeed, the significance of this research lies in its ability to contribute to both theoretical knowledge and practical applications. By highlighting the gaming strategies employed by academics and university managers, as well as their emotional and professional consequences, this study has the potential to inform policy frameworks that better support academic staff while ensuring that performance metrics accurately reflect teaching and research quality (Aboubichr & Conway, 2021; Salimzadeh et al., 2017).

1.3 Summary of Research Approach/Methodology

The research seeks to develop both theoretical and empirical accounts by exploring the emotional as well as the behavioural responses of UK academics to the changes in the UK business schools9 academic workplace and the intensified use of PMSs. This study uses managerialism and workplace democracy as a theoretical foundation that interprets the research data. The analysis involves triangulation of more than fifty interviews with academics in the UK business schools, their social media platforms and any relevant documents related to the business schools9 internal and external policies and frameworks. This research included academics from different teaching/research-intensive or the Russell/non-Russell Group universities.

1.4 Research Questions

In the context of the mentioned gap, the research addresses the following questions:

1. How does managerialism (re)shape the UK business schools9 academic workplace and the intensification of PMSs?

2. What are the pressures faced by professional academics due to the changes in the academic workplace and the intensified PMSs?

3. How do academics engage in gaming and/or other strategies the UK academics use to cope with various PMSs?

4. How do the increasing pressures from extensive PMSs and the academics9 involvement in gaming strategies affect their emotional well-being?

The first research question will be addressed by conducting a thorough examination of pertinent documentation (e.g., university websites, university publications, REF website, TEF website, DORA website, CABS website, and various ranking websites) to reflect on the changes that managerialism has brought to the business school academic workplace. The remaining three questions will be addressed by an empirical investigation of academics9 interviews and an analysis of their interactions on social media platforms.

1.5 Research Objectives

In light of the pressures of entrenching managerialism in UK business schools, this research aims to examine the strategies employed by UK academics to deal with various PMSs, including gaming behaviours. In addition, this research seeks to explore the effects of heightened PMS pressures and academics9 gaming behaviours on their emotional well-being.

1.6 Research Philosophy

This qualitative research is based on explanatory *interpretive* philosophical assumptions, as access to socially constructed reality (*ontology*) could be achieved through social constructions of languages, shared meanings, people's consciousness and intentions which derive from their actions (epistemology) (Hoque, 2017). Myers (2020, p. 45) suggests that 8the social researcher could subjectively understand the context of a phenomenon through the meanings that participants9 words assign to them in a subject-subject relation to its field of study9. Kovalainen (2015) explained ontology as seeing reality to be a kind of subjectivism based upon different perceptions, interpretations and experiences of different people according to different times as

well as contexts, while he pointed to epistemology as obtaining knowledge from the social actors. Notably, researcher reflexivity does affect the outcomes of interpretivist research according to its axiological assumptions.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

In pursuit of the research objectives and in order to answer the above-mentioned research questions, the thesis is made up of the following chapters:

Chapter 2: Market Demands for UK Business Schools: The Research Context

This chapter lays the foundation by providing the historical and ideological context for the study. It examines the evolution of PMSs in the UK higher education system, tracing their development through the pre-NPM, NPM, and post-NPM eras. By doing so, it addresses the second research question: *What are the pressures faced by professional academics due to the intensified PMSs?* This chapter highlights the shift from autonomy to market-driven accountability frameworks such as REF, NSS, and TEF, setting the stage for exploring how these frameworks affect academics.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

This chapter reviews relevant research on the impact of PMSs on UK academics. It delves into the emotional and behavioral consequences of these systems. The literature review also explores the unintended consequences of PMSs, such as emotional ill-being and gaming behaviors, which is vital for understanding the pressures that lead to coping mechanisms.

Chapter 4 Theoretical Framework: Managerialism and Workplace Democracy in Business Schools

This chapter develops a theoretical framework by focusing on managerialism and its clash with workplace democracy. By doing so, it addresses the first research question: *How does managerialism (re)shape the UK business schools9 academic workplace and the intensification of PMSs?* This chapter forms the conceptual lens through which the study examines how managerialism reshapes the academic environment. By exploring this framework, the thesis connects theoretical insights with empirical findings on the behavior of academics and managers under PMSs.

Chapter 5 Research Methodology and Methods

This chapter describes the research methods used, justifying the qualitative approach that involves interviews, social media analysis, and document analysis. The methodological rigour

and triangulation of data collection methods ensure that the study can robustly answer the third research question: How do academics engage in gaming and other strategies to cope with PMSs?

Chapter 6: PMSs and University Managers' Gaming Behaviour

The empirical results of this chapter explore how university managers manipulate PMSs to meet the metric goals. It introduces specific gaming behaviours by managers, demonstrating the top-down pressures that filter into academic behaviours. This insight provides part of the answer to how institutional gaming tactics impact academic practices, and contributes to the literature on the unintended consequences of PMSs.

Chapter 7 PMSs and academics9 gaming behaviour

Focusing on academics, this chapter examines the coping mechanisms employed by academics under the pressure of PMSs, particularly gaming behaviours. It provides a detailed answer to the third research question by categorizing the types of gaming strategies used by academics, such as manipulating research outputs and student feedback.

Chapter 8 PMSs and academics' emotional ill-being

This chapter addresses the final research question: How do the pressures from PMSs and gaming strategies affect academics9 emotional well-being? It explores the emotional toll of PMSs on academics, linking these pressures to symptoms such as anxiety, stress, and burnout. These results lead to significant contributions to understanding the emotional responses of academics to PMSs.

Chapter 9 Discussion and Conclusion

The final chapter synthesizes the findings, showing how the empirical results answer the research questions. It reflects on the theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions of the thesis, concluding that the intensification of PMSs leads to strategic gaming behaviors and emotional ill-being among academics. Furthermore, it argues for a more balanced approach to PMSs that considers the emotional well-being of academics and the integrity of academic work.

This structure leads to significant contributions to understanding the emotional and behavioural responses of academics to PMSs, offering a detailed analysis of managerialism's impact on workplace democracy and academic autonomy.

Chapter 2 Market Demands for UK Business Schools: The Research Context

2.1 Introduction

This chapter delves into the historical evolution of PMSs in line with New Public Management (NPM), providing a context for understanding their development. It traces the ideological evolution of thought in UK universities from the pre-NPM era to post-NPM, highlighting key milestones. Additionally, it offers a comprehensive overview of the research and teaching aspects of PMSs, spanning from the 1940s to 2023. The chapter further examines the impact of funding policies on the evolution of PMSs, specifically exploring changes to the Research Excellence Framework (REF), National Students Survey (NSS), and Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

2.2 Historical background of the transformation of the UK Higher Education

The transformation of the UK higher education system, particularly since the late 20th century, reflects a dynamic interplay of political, economic, and social forces (Williams, 1997; Scott, 1995). Historically, UK higher education was an exclusive institution reserved for a small, elite portion of the population (Shattock, 2012; Willetts, 2013). However, from the 1960s onwards, significant reforms, both in policy and funding, dramatically expanded access, laying the groundwork for the mass higher education system in place today (Scott, 1995; Willetts, 2013; Williams, 1997).

A pivotal moment in this transformation was the Robbins Report of 1963, which advocated for the expansion of higher education to meet rising demand. David Willetts (2013) notes that Robbins' recommendations were driven by the belief that higher education should be available to all qualified individuals, marking a shift from a narrowly focused elite system to one with a more inclusive outlook. However, this initial move towards expanding access also brought about fundamental challenges, particularly in terms of funding and accountability.

The most significant reforms to higher education came under the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher from 1979 (Watson & Bowden, 1999; Williams, 1997). Thatcher9s market-oriented policies aimed to expand higher education access while reducing state funding, reflecting broader neoliberal ideologies that favoured privatization and individual financial

responsibility (Williams, 1997). The government's aim was to foster a more self-sustaining higher education system, relying on students and institutions to bear more of the costs, which began the shift towards a "market route" in higher education policy. This approach eventually led to the introduction of tuition fees and student loans as mechanisms to relieve the financial burden on the state (Barr & Crawford, 2005).

By the 1990s, the UK had transitioned into a mass higher education system. Peter Scott (1995) described this era as one where the meaning of higher education shifted dramatically. Universities were no longer solely seen as centres of intellectual pursuit but also as key players in national economic development, aligning education policy with the demands of a globalized knowledge economy. As higher education expanded, it became increasingly important to ensure that institutions were financially viable, leading to a growing reliance on tuition fees, which were introduced in 1998, and later capped at higher levels (Green, 2006).

The marketization of higher education also brought changes in accountability systems. Michael Shattock (2012) highlights that British higher education policy after 1945 increasingly prioritized efficiency, competition, and accountability. Universities started to implement business-like administrative structures, concentrating on financial management, student enrollment, and graduate employability (Starkey and Tiratsoo, 2007). These transformations mirrored wider neoliberal shifts within the public sector, where universities were increasingly anticipated to function similarly to businesses, emphasizing financial viability while adapting to market needs (Silver, 1990).

Indeed, the transformation of UK higher education is rooted in policies that promoted mass participation while shifting the financial burden from the state to students and institutions. The move towards marketization in the late 20th century fundamentally changed how higher education is financed and governed, with long-term implications for access, equity, and the role of universities in society.

2.3 PMSs in UK universities and neoliberal ideology

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, several Western countries, particularly the UK and the US, experienced severe economic recessions (Lapsley and Miller, 2019). These economic crises were marked by sharp declines in industrial output, rising inflation, and mass unemployment. In the UK, for example, the unemployment rate more than doubled between 1979 and 1982, reaching approximately 12%. Budget deficits soared as governments struggled to stimulate their economies, leading to significant economic losses, particularly in manufacturing sectors, and a surge in public debt. This context revealed the inadequacies of state interventionist policies,

prompting a shift toward neoliberal economic policies that emphasized reduced government spending, privatization, and the adoption of market-driven approaches in the public sector (Lapsley and Miller, 2019).

Accordingly, neoliberalism thinking has emerged extensively in the public sector, leading to a set of reforms, such as reduction of government funds, privatization, managerialism, commercialization, marketization of the public sector, intensified competition between its institution, and dealing with citizens as customers (Conrath-Hargreaves and Wustemann, 2019; Guarini, Magli and Francesconi, 2020). Alawattage and Wickramasinghe (2022) enquired about the impact of neoliberal political ideology on management accounting practices, as neoliberalism considers every setting as a market which induces competitiveness and economic rationale of the market participants. This ideology transfers from the macro-political to the micro-organizational level and can be clearly seen in the form of PMSs of employees. The employee evaluates him/herself not just against each other but also with him/herself. Organisations are market-driven and its core revolves around creating a competitive advantage that leads to a strategic positioning in the market. Neoliberalism created hybrid logics and the balanced scorecard is a perfect application of these multiple logics with its financial and non-financial aspects (Kallio et al., 2021; Alawattage and Wickramasinghe, 2022).

In addition, neoliberalism reformed not only the management accounting practices but also public institutions, such as universities, which spots light on managerialism, funding structures, governance, and accountability regimes (Besley and Peters, 2006). From an economic viewpoint, neoliberalism induces the self-interested individual, free market, commitment to free trade, and laissez-faire. Moreover, it limits the government intervention to just the protection of individuals' rights. New public management (NPM) was the base for this new ideology that reshaped UK business schools toward acquiring more research fund, marketization, managerialism, corporatization, modernization, privatization of HE, and usage of quantitative PMSs to induce performance (Grossi, K.-M. Kallio, *et al.*, 2020; Gebreiter, 2021a).

A stream of accounting literature addressed various management accounting practices in business schools, such as Budgeting, PMSs, costing, control and analysis, and many more (Schmidt and Gunther, 2016; Svirko *et al.*, 2021). My research focuses on PMSs as an accountability tool in UK business schools. Indeed, Accounting literature has revealed that the application of NPM in knowledge-intensive public institutions (e.g. universities) requires the adoption of private sector practices, such as quantitative PMSs. This hybridity of public and private managerial practices led to the complexity of PMSs within the business schools, conflict of goals, logics, and values. It also led to uncertain outcomes (Grossi, K. M. Kallio, *et al.*, 2020) and increased levels of stress. In fact, work stress reins the innovation in both teaching and

research. Also, dealing with students as customers has led to a dysfunctional impact on academics (Kallio et al., 2021).

In the UK, the most influential PMSs in business schools could be seen in the application of NSS which measures the degree of student satisfaction with the university experience, and REF which measures allocated fund based on research quality (Besley and Peters, 2006; Gebreiter, 2021a; Alawattage and Wickramasinghe, 2022a).

2.3 PMSs in UK Universities and History of NPM

2.3.1 NPM's Origin and the Development from Traditional Public Administration to NPM

The origins of NPM lie in a significant departure from traditional public administration, shaped by both economic theory and private-sector managerial practices. NPM emerged in the late 20th century, particularly from the 1980s onwards, as a response to perceived inefficiencies in public sector governance and growing pressures for more accountable, effective government operations. Its development is best understood as a blend of two distinct intellectual movements: new institutional economics and managerialism {Hood, 1991}.

One of the key influences on NPM was the new institutional economics, which challenged traditional bureaucratic models. Theories such as public choice {Black, 1958}, transactions cost economics {Arrow, 1963}, and principal-agent theory critiqued the inefficiencies of post-war II bureaucracies. These economic ideas laid the groundwork for administrative reform by promoting concepts like contestability, transparency, and an emphasis on incentive structures. Rather than focusing on hierarchical order and minimizing duplication, as in traditional administration, NPM sought to introduce competitive pressures and market-like mechanisms into the public sector {Hood, 1991}.

The second key influence was the managerialist movement, which stemmed from the private sector's emphasis on professional management. This movement promoted the idea that management expertise, rather than technical knowledge, was the key to organizational success. Managerialism in the public sector brought a focus on results, encouraging managers to be "free to manage" without being constrained by rigid processes, and emphasizing performance measurement and organizational culture {Peters & Waterman, 1982; Hood, 1991}. This shift was consistent with the broader trend of scientific management that had influenced business practices since the early 20th century.

The shift from traditional public administration to NPM also reflects a broader political and ideological transformation, particularly influenced by neo-liberalism in the 1980s and 1990s. Governments, particularly in the UK under Margaret Thatcher, embraced ideas of privatization and reduced government intervention, aiming to apply market principles to the public sector. These reforms sought

to reduce the size of government, increase efficiency, and introduce tighter financial controls on public sector bodies that remained {Brunsson, Lapsley & Miller, 1998}.

However, the shift to NPM was not without complications. While theorists like Osborne and Gaebler {1992} championed the idea that public sector management should move away from rules-based, process-driven routines to a results-oriented approach, the reality of implementation was more complex. Studies have shown that, in many cases, governments did not fully abandon process controls; instead, they often increased regulation and formal oversight within bureaucracies {Hood et al., 1999; Jones & Thompson, 1999}. This demonstrated the tension between the desire for managerial discretion and the persistence of traditional oversight mechanisms.

Moreover, NPM has been criticized for eroding the traditional public service ethic, which emphasized long-term commitment, career tenure, and a sense of social responsibility among public servants {Hood & Jackson, 1991}. In its place, NPM introduced a more contractual, market-oriented ethos, with a focus on short-term results and the bottom line. This shift, along with the increasing reliance on public opinion polling in decision-making, has led to concerns that NPM undermines the broader, long-term goals of public governance {Jackson, 1989}.

Indeed, NPM represents a major transformation in public administration, driven by economic theory and private-sector managerial practices. It has brought about significant changes in how governments operate, focusing on efficiency, accountability, and results. However, its implementation has been uneven, often retaining aspects of traditional bureaucratic controls, and its emphasis on market principles has raised concerns about the erosion of public service values.

2.3.2 Definitions of NPM and its Entrenchment in the Whole Public Sector

The term New Public Management {NPM}, as described by Dunleavy and Hood {1994}, refers to a controversial but widely used framework for reforming public sector organizations by incorporating business-like practices into their management, reporting, and accounting systems. NPM represents a shift from traditional public administration, aiming to make the public sector more aligned with the private sector in terms of personnel policies, reward structures, and operational methods. This shift can be understood as moving the public sector <down-group= and <down-grid= in social science terminology {Douglas, 1982}. Going "down-group" indicates a less distinctive separation between public and private sector practices, while going "down-grid" refers to a reduction in rigid procedural rules, allowing more discretionary power in areas such as staffing, contracting, and budgeting.

Key aspects of NPM include reworking budgets to focus on outputs rather than inputs, linking costs to measurable outcomes through quantitative performance indicators {Dunleavy & Hood, 1994}. It also

involves reinterpreting organizational relationships through a principal-agent framework, where management and staff interactions are viewed as contracts with incentives tied to performance. The disaggregation of previously unified public services into smaller, semi-autonomous units has been another hallmark of NPM, as has the introduction of competition between agencies and external providers, which is intended to improve service delivery through market-like mechanisms. This approach also increases user choice, encouraging citizens to "exit" from unsatisfactory providers rather than relying solely on traditional channels of feedback {Dunleavy & Hood, 1994}.

NPM was promoted as a universal solution to public sector inefficiencies, a claim that resonated across various domains and contexts. Hood {1991} describes NPM as a <public management for all seasons=, applicable across different levels of government, policy fields, and even international borders—from Denmark to New Zealand. This portability made NPM a dominant administrative philosophy, particularly in the UK, where it shaped public sector reforms throughout the 1980s and 1990s {Hood & Jackson, 1991}.

However, this universal applicability of NPM has also raised concerns. Lapsley and Miller {1998} argue that while NPM9s core ideas—such as the market, customer, and contract—were designed for the private sector, they have been adapted to public sectors that may be ill-suited for these models. For example, public institutions like higher education have had to <make things fit=, often bending organizational realities to accommodate accounting techniques that may not align with their core missions. Despite these challenges, NPM9s techniques have entrenched themselves deeply within the UK public sector, operationalizing its ideas even in domains resistant to market-driven approaches {Lapsley & Miller, 1998}.

Indeed, NPM9s influence on the UK public sector is profound, entrenching business-style practices across public services. Its focus on competition, decentralization, and performance management reflects a broader shift in accountability, even as its universal claims and adaptability continue to provoke debate about its appropriateness in different public contexts {Hood, 1991}.

2.3.3 NPM Doctrines

The rise of NPM can be associated with several major administrative trends and a set of core doctrines. As Hood {1991} outlines, four key <megatrends= accompanied the emergence of NPM: efforts to reduce government size, particularly through cutting public spending and staffing levels {Dunsire & Hood, 1983}; the shift towards privatization and quasi-privatization, alongside a move away from central government institutions towards decentralized service provision {Hood & Schuppert, 1988; Dunleavy, 1989}; the rapid development of information technology to automate public services; and the creation of a global public management agenda, focused on broad management and policy issues across countries rather than solely on national administrative systems.

NPM9s core doctrines reflect a departure from traditional public administration practices. One key feature is the emphasis on "hands-on" professional management within the public sector, allowing managers greater autonomy in decision-making {Hood, 1991}. Another is the focus on explicit standards and performance measures, with output controls prioritised over process-based evaluations. NPM encourages competition within the public sector, aiming to improve efficiency and service delivery through market-like mechanisms. It also stresses adopting private sector management practices, including performance-linked pay, short-term contracts, and a managerial style focused on top-down control {Hood & Jackson, 1991}.

NPM further advocates for a disaggregated approach to public sector management, breaking down large administrative bodies into smaller, self-sufficient units that interact on a user-pays basis. This fragmentation promotes efficiency but also emphasizes cost-cutting over bureaucratic expansion {Hood & Jackson, 1991}. Another key doctrinal component is the separation of policy formulation from delivery functions, with managers responsible for execution rather than broader policy decisions. Finally, NPM promotes deregulation, favouring lighter regulatory frameworks and self-regulation, often designed to foster closer cooperation between government and businesses {Breyer 1982}. These doctrines collectively represent a significant shift towards a more flexible, performance-driven model of public sector governance.

2.3.4 Critiques of NPM

Critiques of NPM highlight various concerns about its effectiveness and impact. Dunleavy and Hood {1994} identify four main perspectives: fatalist, individualist, hierarchist, and egalitarian. The fatalist critique argues that NPM cannot eliminate persistent issues like human error, system failures, and corruption. Fatalists believe NPM is largely superficial, changing little in practice {Dunleavy & Hood, 1994}. The individualist critique sees NPM as an incomplete shift, stuck between traditional public administration and full market-driven reform. Individualists call for stronger privatization and enforceable contracts, criticizing NPM's reliance on quasi-contracts {Dunleavy & Hood, 1994}. In contrast, the hierarchist critique fears that NPM's focus on management erodes strategic control and public service ethics, leading to destabilization and policy disasters {Hood & Jackson, 1991}. Lastly, the egalitarian critique warns that NPM's marketization risks corruption and reduced accountability, benefiting elites while neglecting frontline staff and disadvantaged citizens {Dunleavy, 1991}.

Hood {1991} critiques NPM by highlighting its superficial nature," where new managerial jargon fails to address deep-rooted inefficiencies in public administration. He argues that NPM often increases bureaucracy rather than streamlining it, with new layers of management focused on performance metrics and budgetary manipulation rather than frontline services. Moreover, NPM tends to benefit an elite group of senior managers and consultants, rather than the general public or lower-level staff,

leading to calls for cuts in managerial roles and more democratic accountability. Finally, Hood challenges NPM's universality, asserting that its market-driven reforms cannot be uniformly applied across all sectors and contexts due to varying administrative values and cultures.

2.3.5 The development of PMSs in UK universities

Accounting, HE, public policy, and administration literature shed light on the trajectory change in the UK HE system from the early phases onwards (Broucker, De Wit and Verhoeven, 2017; Bleiklie, 2018; Ferlie and Trenholm, 2019). For example, scholars provided a historical lens to analyse the change in the funding system, tuition fees (Carpentier, 2012; Palfreyman and Tapper, 2016; Andrews, 2021), managerial and accountability structures (Deem, 2004; Westerheijden, 2018). This section presents a chronological review of these changes in the UK HE from the 1940s onwards, which is summarized in Table 2.1 below.

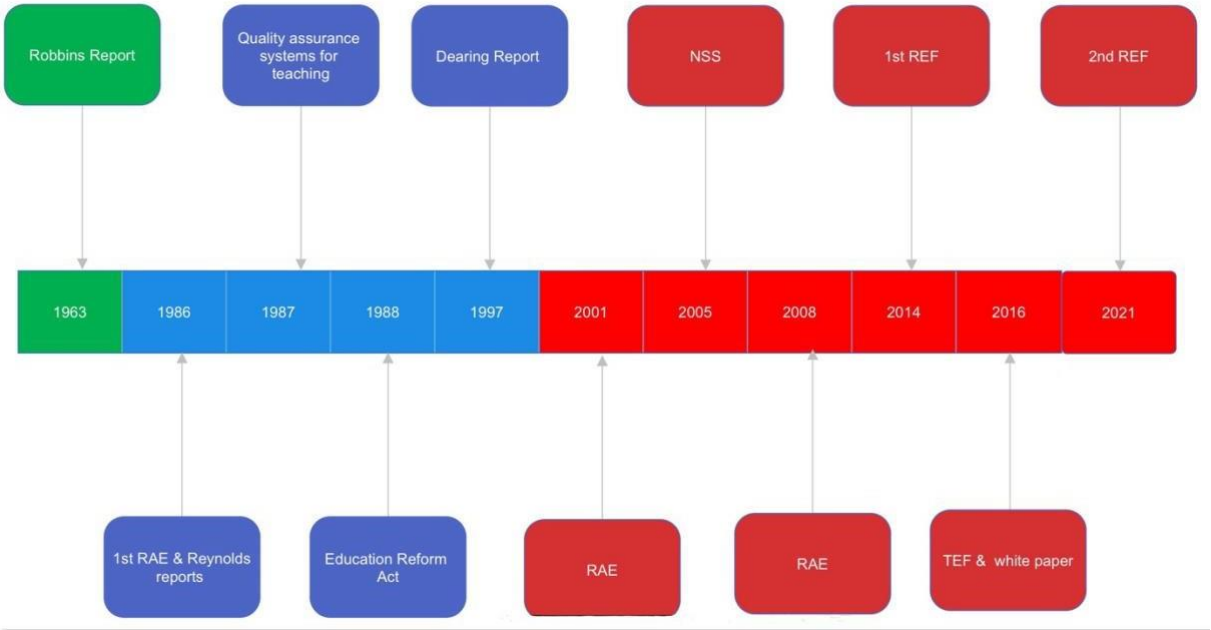


Table 2.1 Timeline of events detailing the development of PMSs and fund systems in UK universities from the 1940s onwards

1940s	• Higher education was in the prosperity period; mainly funded by the government. • Academics had a great level of autonomy and collegiality.
1960s	• A great expansion in the number of UK universities. • The 8Robbins Report9 was released in 1963.
1970s	• Thatcher's government led a radical political, social and economic transformation. • Neoliberal ideology led to a reduction in public funds and a gradual increase in tuition fees for international students.
1980s	• NPM established the market rules in HE.

	• Concepts of marketisation, new managerialism, competitiveness and privatization were entrenched in the HE sector. • In 1986, the first RAE was introduced to assess research quality (Research Aspect), while the publication of the Reynolds reports guaranteed standards of teaching quality. That was later reinforced by the issuance of the Education Reform Act of 1988. • In 1987 quality assurance systems for teaching were launched to evaluate teaching quality (Teaching Aspect).
1990s	• The second RAE was updated to a third version in 1996 (Research Aspect). • The number of students doubled in the last two decades (Teaching Aspect). • Units of analysis were seen as cost centers, where financial management replaced academic goals. • Dearing Report was launched in 1997
2000s	• RAE 2001 was produced, followed by RAE 2008 (Research Aspect). • NSS was launched in the early 2005 (Teaching Aspect).
2010s	• Two REF cycles were launched in 2014 and 2021 (Research Aspect). • TEF (Teaching Aspect) & the white paper were introduced in 2016. • Domestic tuition fees increased from £9000 in 2016-17 to £9250 in 2017-18.

2.3.6 UK universities in the era of Pre-New Public Management (NPM)

1940s

The main UK universities were established in the 19th century by the royal charter licensed by the act of parliament and targeted mainly business and political elites (Radice, 2013; Barkas et al., 2019). After the era of World War II, the UK HE was in a prosperity period, in which the academics had great autonomy and were consulted by other academics9 committees (Ter Bogt and Scapens, 2009). Also, the management of universities was mainly in the hands of academics, which was called <collegiality= or <professional bureaucracy= (Deem, 2004). Academics enjoyed professional independence and self-governance before the 1970s crisis (Berger and Wild, 2017; Radice, 2013). There was a significant increase in universities9 financial resources which were funded by the central government during the post-war prosperity period, and this dependence on public funds continued to increase from 50% to 90% from 1945 until the 1970s crisis. Moreover, endowments dropped from 10%-15% to only 1% (Carpentier, 2012).

Tight (2006) discussed the changes in public vs private HE roles and the boundaries between them from 1945 onwards. He described the university as a public corporate body that acts for the benefit of society as a whole/the general welfare of the people and is controlled by the state. While universities which are owned by an individual and not subject to state control are clearly private. In a similar vein, Naidoo and Williams (2015) explained the dependence of the HE sector on state-funded was due to the fact that the government provided HE as a collective and non-rivalry public good at that time aiming at equal access to all citizens and the positive impact of the sector on community and economy. In 1945, the Attlee Labour government came to power in

the UK; nationalized many industries, reorganized the HE sector, and placed it under closer control by the state (Lowe, 1988).

1960s

In the 1960s, there were wider concerns regarding higher education and its role within the economy (Croutch, 1970). This was followed by the release of one of the key government reports regarding UK HE which is <the Robbins Report of 1963= (Barkas *et al.*, 2019b). The Robins Report, also known as the Report of the Committee on Higher Education, chaired by Lord Robbins, was a landmark document published in 1963 that greatly influenced the evolution of higher education in the United Kingdom.

The report shed light on several issues, such as funding, expansion and structure of HE, student access and participation, quality and standards, curricula, teaching, academic freedom and autonomy (Tight, 2006). The report suggested a significant expansion of higher education to meet the increasing demand for university education in post-war Britain. It proposed the creation of new universities and the enlargement of existing institutions to accommodate a greater number of students (Robbins Report, 1963). Emphasizing the importance of widening access to higher education and increasing opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds, the report recommended removing barriers to entry, providing financial support for students, and promoting social mobility through education. The Robbins Report also called for the introduction of a system of student grants to offer financial assistance to students from low-income backgrounds, as well as the establishment of a national system of student loans to support higher education. At the time, the concept of financing student expenses through loans was completely dismissed in the UK, as universities played a significant public role and received 90% of their funding from the public purse (Layard, King and Moser, 1969). During that era, universities possessed a high degree of autonomy and were able to establish their own aims, priorities, and admission requirements without any interference from the government (Naidoo and Williams, 2015).

The report underscored the need for a diverse range of higher education institutions, including universities, colleges, and technical institutes, to cater to the various needs and interests of students (Robbins Report, 1963). Deem (2004) explored the change in HE sector managerialism from the 1960s onwards, beginning with 1960 when the number of UK universities were in expansion mode, <doubled from 25 to 45 by 1969= and mainly publicly funded by the central government. Additionally, the local technical institutes and colleges established a second sector of UK HE which was called <polytechnics;= funded by the local authorities and controlled by a central council for national academic awards (Radice, 2013).

In addition, the report highlighted the importance of academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and self-governance in higher education, recommending that universities have the independence to set their academic priorities, manage their resources, and make decisions about their internal affairs. Recognizing the significance of research and innovation in higher education, the Robbins Report recommended increased investment in research funding, facilities, and collaborations between universities and industry (Robbins Report, 1963). Furthermore, the report's focus was not on funding issues but paid much attention to the <pool of ability= which means the number of graduates needed by the economy, whether there were enough academics for them, and the institutions' right of self-governance and freedom (Tight, 2006).

2.3.7 Introduction of PMSs in UK universities-the era of NPM

1970s

During the 1970s, a combination of financial crisis, budget deficits, and dwindling public trust prompted the UK and other nations to overhaul their public sectors in the midst of political, social, and economic transformations (Ter Bogt and Scapens, 2009). Several lines of evidence suggest that these reforms aimed to enhance the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of public institutions, as well as meet the expectations of the citizens <customers= (Broucker, De and Leisyte, 2015; Radice, 2013). The desire for such changes seems to have its origin in a rise in accountability to public sector stakeholders, a focus on managerialism, modernization, and a results-driven approach to the public sector known as "NPM" (Ter Bogt and Scapens, 2009; Broucker, De and Leisyte, 2015). There is a large volume of published studies describing NPM as the introduction of private-sector mechanisms in public-sector institutions (Ter Bogt and Scapens, 2009; Dobija et al., 2019).

The rise of NPM was associated with Thatcher's government as she led the UK economy change from statism to liberalism; calling for privatization, financialization, deregulation, free market, and capitalism (Radice, 2013). Neoliberal thoughts in UK HE stemmed from HE's key roles within capitalism, such as: providing future entrepreneurs, professionals, and managers with high-level skills; shaping the society9s culture and the ruling elites9 actions, and developing the education at all levels (Radice, 2013, p.411). Additionally, the push for individualism and efficiency, instead of collectivism and equity, has driven the growing focus on 'economic' values and a more individualistic, utilitarian model of society and the public sector (Poole et al., 2006).

Neo-liberalism is an economic and political ideology that gained prominence in the late 20th century, particularly between 1979 and 1992 (Levin and Greenwood, 2016). It is based on the principles of free-market capitalism, limited government intervention, deregulation, privatization, and individual responsibility. Neoliberalism advocates for a free-market economy, where market

forces determine prices, production, and distribution of goods and services, believing that this leads to efficiency, innovation, and economic growth (Mathieu, 2022). The ideology emphasizes minimal government involvement, favouring laissez-faire policies over state intervention. Governments are encouraged to reduce regulations, lower taxes, and limit public spending to create a business-friendly environment. Neoliberal policies involve the deregulation of industries and markets to promote competition and increase efficiency, prioritize fiscal austerity to balance budgets and limit government spending, and value competition, entrepreneurship, and meritocracy.

By the dawning of the 1970s, PMSs emerged from the government and stakeholders' interest in costs, accountability, outputs and quality measurement of university research and teaching. As a result, business schools have gradually adopted performance indicators to evaluate output and quality (Ter Bogt and Scapens, 2009). Furthermore, Carpentier (2012) analysed the change in the UK HE funding system and public-private income structure and its connection to the economic cycle from the 1970s onwards. He concluded that university financial resources are vital to expand enrolment and ensure high-quality education as well as social justice. Neoliberalism post-1970s crisis period had led to cut wages, a reduction in public funding to 43%, and reversed Fordism, which affected the income structure of the UK HE. Consequently, business schools responded by seeking private funding as a substitute for public one through the rise of international students' tuition fees in 1967, followed by full-cost fees for non-European international students in 1980.

In 1976, the ramifications of implementing NPM in HE started to be recognized as the labour government replaced the five-year plan with annual settlements and this required universities to negotiate continuously with the central government in a period of inflation, deindustrialization and budget deficit. These changes eroded university autonomy and forced academics to face pay freeze, real income and status decline; leading to the creation of the Association of University Teachers in 1979 protesting in the House of Commons with the slogan <rectify the anomaly in our pay= (Radice, 2013, p.411).

1980s

The transformation to a welfare state took place in the UK during the 1980s following the neoliberal political and economic thoughts from the USA in the 1970s (Naidoo and Williams, 2015). That was reflected in the state's attempt to shift the burden of student tuition fees from the government to the students as customer beneficiaries (Nixon, Scullion and Hearn, 2018a). In addition, these neoliberalism ideologies caused quasi-market mechanisms, intensified competition, and increased control by outside stakeholders, which consequently reshaped the governance structure and reconstructed the concept of HE as a private vs. public good.

Up to the 1980s, academics enjoyed a great level of autonomy, freedom, low workload, time for research, reasonable salaries, self/collegial governance and tenure. The University grants committee was the channel between the state and the autonomous university (Harley, 2002). In 1981, the new government set a lot of restrictions for the sector, such as restrictions on new courses, a cut in 15% of public funding, establishing market rules in the HE sector, and introducing corporate governance in the form of administrators (Ter Bogt and Scapens, 2009). Indeed, it allowed to lay governors share the decision-making with academics which is called 8new managerialism9, and chancellors as chief executives rather than academics (Deem, 2004). Deem (2004, p.109) defines new managerialism as <a set of ideologies about managerial practices used to bring radical shifts in the organization, finances and cultures of public services=. The 8block grants9 system was replaced by 8formula funding9, following the government's movement toward spending cuts in the late 1980s (Ter Bogt and Scapens, 2009). The new system emphasized the 8value for money9 concept and accountability of what the funds are provided for, which was the root of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE).

In 1986, the first RAE took place in order to make research funding more competitive by based funding on research quality (Deem, 2004; Harley, 2002). The exercise requires each department to submit their research outputs to a panel of experienced members who evaluate the quality of research on a five-point Likert scale. In 1992, ex-polytechnics joined the competition race for research funds with traditional academics (Court, 1998). Notably, the exercise process kept evolving into different versions in 1989, 1992, 1996 and 2001, as was the scale, to reflect changes in the academic environment and to treat academics9 gaming behaviours. The literature on RAE has highlighted some differences between the versions of the exercise (Broadbent, 2010; Torrance, 2020). For instance, RAE 1996 has introduced a 5* rating which represents considerable international excellence. Moreover, it introduced a differentiation between 3A and 3B ratings on the five-point Likert scale.

Critiques of the RAE are well established in the academic literature, which showed the thrive toward mass production of research at the expense of what is being produced (Lee & Harley, 1998; Harley, 2002). Additionally, the control over the panel composition and the right to feedback as the basis of their decision were shallow at that time. A growing body of knowledge has shown the restrictions on academics9 freedom; lists of journals that count toward the exercise were circulated among departments (Parker et al., 1998; Harley 2002). Moreover, university management was involved in a transfer market of academics through the hunting for 8research stars9 before submission times.

Quality assurance in higher education gained prominence in the late 1980s. The publication of the Reynolds Reports in 1986 guaranteed standards of teaching quality and syllabus of

universities9 degree programs. The report recommends voluntary procedures, such as external examiners and appeals procedures to enhance the quality of the education process (Berger and Wild, 2017). That was reinforced by the issuance of the Education Reform Act of 1988, which brought about changes to curriculum, funding, and evaluation. As a result, the Universities Funding Council replaced the University Grant Committee.

1990s

Over the last few decades, UK HE has transformed from an elite to a mass system. In the early 1990s, a dramatic expansion occurred in the UK higher education sector (Barkas et al., 2019). The Labour government aimed at providing 50% of school leavers to proceed to HE. As a result, former polytechnics (universities post-1992) were guaranteed a university status by acquiring a degree awarding power (Richardson, Slater and Wilson, 2007a). The enactment of the Higher Education Act of 1992 protected the new universities by abolishing the binary divide between them and the old ones. Consequently, PMSs were introduced to the system, such as NSS, RAE and later on the TEF to evaluate the quality of both teaching and research (Adisa *et al.*, 2023a). In 1992, the HE Act established a new framework that allowed all HE institutions to submit to regulatory mechanisms (Marginson, 2011). The HE Quality Council was responsible for the audit of these arrangements as well as teaching and learning regular evaluations.

Moreover, quality assurance procedures were being externally audited instead of internally and voluntary implementation (Barkas et al., 2019). League tables and universities9 ranking were introduced in 1993, followed by the Teacher Training Agency which was established in 1994 to oversee academic training and its related syllabus. The Office for Standards in Education was also involved in inspecting university departments, representing the state's exercise of power over academic work. Additionally, The establishment of the Quality Assurance Agency in 1997 further reinforced the push towards quality assurance in the education process that began in the late 1980s (Forstenzer, 2018).

Additionally, the issuance of the second RAE, which was updated to the third version in 1996, requires higher grades to receive research funds (Deem, 2004). In 1997, Prime Minister Tony Blair's Labour government aimed to raise the percentage of young individuals in the UK enrolled in university to 50% by 2010 (OFS, 2016). This objective was created as a component of the government's wider educational strategy to widen access to higher education and enhance the prospects for young people to pursue university qualifications. The decision to set a target of 50% increased participation in higher education was driven by the growing recognition of the importance of a highly skilled and educated workforce, the aim to address social inequality and improve social mobility, and the belief that increasing university participation would lead to a more educated and skilled workforce.

The issuance of the Dearing Report in the same year revealed some funding issues related to the HE system, showing that the number of students over the last 20 years had more than doubled, public spending had increased by 45%, however spending per student had fallen by 40% (Tight, 2006). Figure 2.2 below illustrates a comprehensive series of data pertaining to full-time students in the UK. The UK experienced phases of significant expansion, notably during the late 1960s and from 1988 to 1993, interspersed with an extended period of stagnation throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. Consequently, the higher education system has grown substantially since the publication of the Robbins Committee report.

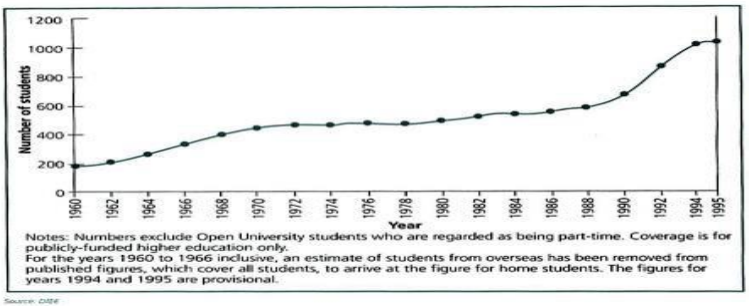


Figure 2.2 Full-time UK students in higher education in the UK (000s) (Source: Dearing report, 1997).

Figure 2.3 illustrates the real increase of approximately 45 per cent in public expenditure on higher education by education departments and Research Councils since 1976. In 1995-96, total expenditure by higher education institutions exceeded £10 billion, equating to around 1.4 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Dearing Committee was established in 1997 due to concerns about funding, particularly in higher education institutions (Dearing Report, 1997). Although there has been an increase in student numbers and total public expenditure on higher education, the public funding per student has decreased since 1976. Figure 2.4 illustrates that public funding per student in higher education institutions has decreased by over 40% since 1976.

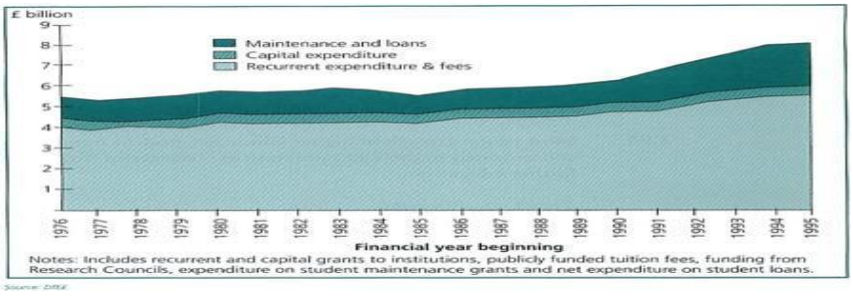


Figure 2.3 Public expenditure on higher education in the UK (1995-96 prices) (Source: Dearing report, 1997).

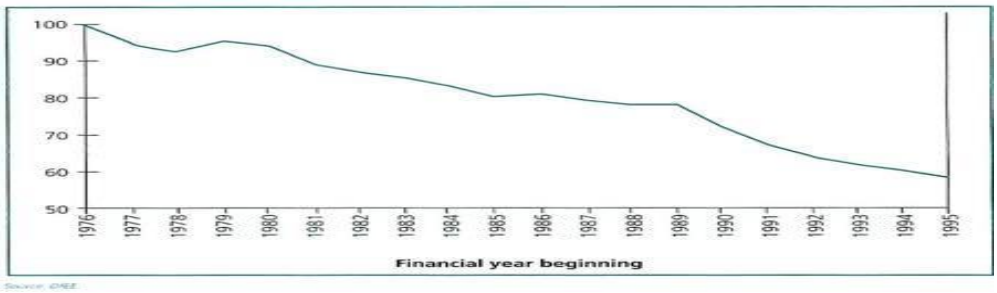


Figure 2.4 Index of public funding per student for higher education 1976-7 to 1995-6 (Source: Dearing report, 1997).

Moreover, the report showed that HE cost is shared between the taxpayers who provide grants to universities and colleges, the students who pay part of full tuition fees, and commercial bodies who pay for services provided by HE, such as consultancy and contract research. Also, it showed the importance of private funds as it constituted a third of the income for HE, upon which universities should demonstrate that it is a good investment for individuals, institutions, and the community (Carpentier, 2012; Deem, 2004). Finally, the report called for a full shift of the HE cost to the students considering them the first beneficiaries of the universities as it qualifies them for employment opportunities so <the receiver of the private rate of return should pay more= (Tight, 2006, p.251). In fact, tuition fees were initially implemented in UK higher education in 1998 during the tenure of Prime Minister Tony Blair and the Labour government (Hubble, 2018). This decision enabled universities to impose tuition fees of up to £1,000 per year.

A large and growing body of literature has illuminated the effects of NPM on the restructuring of UK business schools (Broucker, De and Leisyte, 2015; Radice, 2013; Naidoo and Williams, 2015). The corporatization reform of HE is evident in the promotion of commercial activities in an "entrepreneurial university". This led to heightened competition for funds, resulting in tuition fees based on a full-cost pricing model (Filippakou and Tapper, 2019). The accountability measures taken, including target setting, performance-based funding, auditing, and control, have created a complex and hybrid education system (Mai and Hoque, 2022). Moreover, quality rankings, student satisfaction surveys, and managerialism have placed additional pressure on academics and weakened collegial power (Deem and Baird, 2020). Knowledge is now viewed as a commodity that can be sold through "pay as you go" transactions, and students have become customers. business schools have shifted their focus to financial management, while academic goals have taken a back seat, and departments/schools are considered cost centres (Deem, Hillyard and Reed, 2007).

2.3.8 Development of PMSs in UK universities-the Era of Post-NPM

2000s

In the early 2000s, the management of higher education institutions in the UK involved government oversight, funding bodies, institutional governance, academic leadership, quality assurance and sector association (Renfrew, 2021). The government played a significant role through agencies like the Department for Education (DfE), which was responsible for setting policies, regulations, and funding priorities for higher education. Funding bodies like Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFCs) allocated public funding and ensured quality assurance. Institutional governance was carried out by boards of governors, councils, or senates, who were responsible for the strategic direction, financial management, and oversight of the institution (Scott, 2021).

Vice-chancellors, or university presidents, served as the chief executive officers of higher education institutions. They were responsible for the overall leadership, management, and administration of the institution. Quality assurance agencies, such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), monitored and assessed the quality and standards of higher education provision in the UK (Atherton, 2023). Sector associations like Universities UK (UUK) represented the interests of higher education institutions, advocating for policy changes, funding support, and sector-wide initiatives.

There is a growing body of literature that recognises the importance of RAE for the state, universities, business schools and academics (Broadbent, 2010; Rebora and Turri, 2013). The state uses the exercises as one tool of control and accountability of research quality in the UK. It allocates research funds based on this assessment (Amyar, 2016). Business schools partially depend on this exercise to seek financial resources as well as reputational gains (Antipova, 2021). Academics confer their esteem by being 8referable9, it also marketed them in academic labour which in turn might achieve academic mobility and salary increase (Pianezzi, N0rreklit and Cinquini, 2020). In both RAE 2001 and 2008, four outputs were required from each submitted professional. RAE 2001 was similar to previous RAEs in its five-point rating scale (from 1 to 5*), while RAE 2008 gave only 70% of its weight to research outputs, 20% to the environment and 10% to esteem (Broadbent, 2010). Each category was rated on a four-point scale instead of five (ranging from 1 to 4*), and the final result was related to the Unit of Analysis (UOA) not the individual academic.

Many scholars hold the view that such research exercises divert the sector's attention away from teaching (Cashmore et al 2013; Locke 2014; Berger and Wild, 2017). Academics have become more focused on research as it is related to evaluation metrics, while teaching has become more

and more degraded (Gunn, 2018a). As a result, initiatives to address this perceived imbalance started in 2000; it is aim was to evaluate and improve teaching quality. Indeed, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has agreed with the UK government that the sector will publish key information on quality matters to help prospective students choose their university and to contribute to the accountability of the sector (Richardson, Slater and Wilson, 2007a). In 2001, the need for external evaluation was agreed upon, using the published data with a focus on students' feedback to assess modules9 quality (HEFCE, 2001). Furthermore, HEFCE conducted pilot studies in 2003 and 2004 to introduce a uniform national survey run by an independent agency (Richardson, Slater and Wilson, 2007a).

In early 2005, the National Student Survey (NSS) was launched and administered by the Office for Students (OfS) (Thiel, 2019; Arthur, 2020). The survey targets third-year students; asking them 25 questions related to seven aspects of their university experience (OfS, 2024). The aspects capture students' satisfaction on a five-point Likert scale, and they are teaching on my course, learning opportunities, assessment and feedback, academic support, organisation and management, learning resources, and student voice. The aim of NSS is to assess the quality of teaching and improve student satisfaction (Adisa *et al.*, 2023b). The importance of NSS for universities is indisputable (Thiel, 2019; Arthur, 2020). The survey is a competitive advantage, as it is a main instrument in recruiting prospective students. Additionally, the results of the NSS not only position the university ranking in the league table but also go through the TEF ratings which will launch later in the 2010s. The TEF rating, in return, controls whether the university is able to increase its tuition fee (Forstenzer, 2018). Critics question the validity of the NSS in assessing teaching quality (Thiel, 2019; Arthur, 2020). For example, Adisa et al. (2023, p 453) argued that the results of the survey could be biased, as <students are not competent to make such judgements or ratings are influenced by teachers9 popularity rather than their effectiveness=. Moreover, the survey questions capture the extent to which the teaching and learning met the students' expectations not how they could be enhanced.

2010s

A growing body of published work provides evidence of gaming the PMSs in academia (Radnor, 2008; Aboubichr and Conway, 2023). That9s why the REF replaced the RAE and kept developing to confront these behaviours. For instance, REF 2014 gave each UOA the ability to choose 8referable9 members, while REF 2021 required all staff with 8significant responsibility for research9 to submit (REF, 2021). Secondly, REF 2021 provides more flexibility, as the output requirement became a minimum of one and a maximum of five per referable member, instead of four for all submitted staff (HEFCE, 2021). Furthermore, universities became able to claim outputs

produced by ex-staff were made publicly available during employment (REF 2021). Lastly, more emphasis was given to 8impact9 (e.g. impact case studies); its weight increased from 20% to 25%.

In the UK, the government regulates domestic tuition fees, which were capped at £9000 in 2012 and are included in the public system of student finance (student loans) (Gunn, 2018a). The real income of universities was diminished by inflation, prompting UK universities to petition the government for increased funding. In 2015, the HM Treasury and Chancellor announced lifting the tuition fee cap only by inflation and for universities which demonstrate excellence in teaching (Forstenzer, 2018). That creates the need for an evaluation metric to assess teaching quality and excellence. In the following year, the TEF was introduced (Barkas *et al.*, 2019a). The TEF ranks universities based on employment percentage, highly skilled employment positions, and NSS score. Universities are awarded Gold, Silver or Bronze according to their level of excellence and innovation in the teaching process. As a result, universities which demonstrated <excellence= in teaching raised their domestic tuition fees from £9000 in 2016-17 to £9250 in 2017-18 (Forstenzer, 2018). The validity of the TEF as a quality measurement has been questioned; the framework does not capture the fundamental aspects of teaching quality (Gunn, 2018a; Barkas *et al.*, 2019a).

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the evolution of PMSs in UK business schools is examined within the context of NPM and neoliberal ideology. The chapter traces the transformation of UK higher education from a largely autonomous, government-funded system to one dominated by market-driven metrics and accountability measures such as the REF, NSS, and TEF. These frameworks, rooted in neoliberal principles, have redefined the academic workplace, shifting focus from intellectual autonomy to performance metrics based on financial efficiency and competition.

The chapter also highlights how these changes have significantly impacted academics, whose roles have shifted from being largely self-governed to heavily monitored by external accountability measures. The increased focus on outputs such as research publications and student satisfaction has resulted in a complex, stressful work environment that often forces academics to engage in gaming strategies to meet institutional goals. This adaptation to performance measures, however, leads to a conflict between maintaining academic integrity and meeting institutional demands.

Overall, the chapter provides a critical analysis of how the introduction of PMSs has intensified pressures within the academic workplace, reshaping the nature of academic work and undermining traditional values of collegiality and intellectual freedom. It also demonstrates the

emotional and professional toll these systems take on academics, as they navigate the increasing demands of market-oriented policies and accountability frameworks.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I delve into the review of related literature in relation to the scope of my research. The aim is to gain a comprehensive understanding of how academics have responded to the widespread use of PMSs in business schools across the UK. Specifically, the chapter will focus on two key areas of academic response. Firstly, I will explore the emotional responses of academics towards the PMSs. Secondly, I will examine how PMSs can potentially lead to gaming behaviours as a means of coping with the system.

The chapter commences with a conceptual overview of PMSs and their unintended consequences. The review will examine and categorize the unintended consequences associated with PMSs, drawing on relevant literature to spotlight issues such as emotional ill-being and gaming behaviors. Subsequently, the chapter will delve into the emotional and psychological impacts of PMSs on academics, with a specific focus on anxiety, stress, and feelings of frustration. Lastly, the review will investigate how PMSs might incentivize unethical behaviors, such as data manipulation and gaming the PMSs.

3.2 PMSs in UK business schools and their unintended consequences

PMSs can broadly be defined as a set of management control mechanisms used by management to convey key objectives, assist the strategic process, manage performance, and facilitate organizational learning and change (Ferreira and Otley 2009; Malmi and Brown 2008). The performance of UK business schools is evaluated using both internal and external metrics to gauge student satisfaction, teaching and research quality (Adisa *et al.*, 2023a). External metrics include rankings and league tables, REF, NSS, TEF, external quality assurance by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), and risk assessment of business schools.

The first RAE took place in 1986 with the aim of making research funding more competitive by allocating funds based on research quality (Deem, 2004; Harley, 2002). This exercise continued to evolve through different versions in 1989, 1992, 1996, and 2001, to adapt to changes in the academic environment and address gaming behaviours among academics (Chenhall and Euske 2007; Chenhall 2003). The REF was introduced in 2014 as an extension of the previous RAEs, serving as an accountability tool for allocating research funds based on research quality. Business schools rely on this framework to secure financial resources and enhance their reputation (Antipova, 2021).

The National Student Survey (NSS) was introduced in early 2005 and is overseen by the Office for Students (OfS) (Thiel, 2019; Arthur, 2020). This survey assesses student satisfaction with various aspects of their university experience, including teaching quality, learning opportunities, assessment and feedback, academic support, organization and management, learning resources, and student involvement. The primary goal of the NSS is to evaluate teaching quality and enhance student contentment (Adisa *et al.*, 2023b). The significance of NSS for universities is undeniable (Thiel, 2019; Arthur, 2020). Not only is the survey a competitive advantage, serving as a key tool in recruiting potential students, but its results also influence the university's ranking in league tables and are taken into account in the TEF ratings (Barkas *et al.*, 2019a). Subsequently, the TEF ratings determine whether a university is allowed to raise its tuition fees (Forstenzer, 2018). These ratings evaluate universities based on employment rates, proportion of highly skilled jobs, and NSS scores. Universities are awarded Gold, Silver, or Bronze classifications based on their level of excellence and innovation in the teaching process.

3.3 Definition and Types of PMSs' Unintended Consequences

Literature has shown that unintended consequences are inherited in PMSs. According to Franco-Santos and Otley (2018), 8unintended consequences9 can be defined as the unforeseen adverse impacts of PMSs, which implies that the assessment of unintended positive outcomes has generally been neglected. A growing body of literature has identified several unintended consequences associated with the usage of PMSs (Radnor, 2008; Kallio et al., 2016, 2021; Franco-Santos and Otley, 2018; Martin-Sardesai et al., 2019). I categorize these unintended consequences into five groups.

First, PMSs tend to create selective attention, which I refer to as 'instrumentalism'. Selective attention occurs in terms of both 'what' is measured and 'when' it is measured (Franco-Santos and Otley, 2018). This aligns with what Smith (1995) termed 'tunnel vision', which happens when managers, confronted with numerous targets, opt for the easiest ones to measure and disregard the others. Managers often become overly fixated on performance measures and targets that can be quantified or formally included in PMSs. This causes them to overlook aspects of organizational goals that are not measurable (Hood 2006; Kerpershoek et al. 2016; Mannion and Braithwaite 2012). This tendency, known as "measure fixation," is described by Smith (1995) as a natural response when outcomes are hard to measure, leading to a focus on measurable outputs. Additionally, managers may exhibit "short-termism" or "myopia," concentrating on short-term goals and actions, as discussed in the literature by various authors (Merchant 1990; Smith 1995; Styhre and Lind 2010).

Second, studies have shown some unintended consequences of PMSs on academic scholarship. For example, Michael Day (2004) pointed out that RAE has unintended effects such as discouraging collaborative research and diminishing the significance of teaching. While it may promote the concentration of research resources, it can also distort the nature of research and increase transaction costs. Extensive use of external accountability structures has been found to facilitate the creation of methodologically sophisticated publications specific to disciplines, but with minimal practical relevance (Michailova, 2011). Third, studies suggest that PMSs harm academics9 emotional well-being (Chandler et al., 2002; Henkel, 2005; Parker and Jary, 1995). Many academics experience anxiety and uncertainty (McCarthy et al., 2017; Martin and Whitley, 2010; Yokoyama, 2006), due to the pressure to increase their publication output and tailor it to fit the preferred publication types (Parker, 2008). This has resulted in discontent among academics and has led to transactional relationships, decreased trust, and generated inequalities (Willmott, 1995; Ylijoki, 2005; Chwastiak, 2006).

Fourth, PMSs have been found to be linked to various forms of data manipulation (Cardinaels and Yin 2015; Hood 2006; Jensen 2003; Kalgin 2016; Smith 1995). This includes misrepresentation, misinterpretation, reclassification, or fabrication to meet performance standards (Franco-Santos and Otley, 2018; Smith, 1995). Finally, PMSs have been observed to produce gaming behaviors, as employees adjust their behavior to meet performance expectations (Berliner 1956; Hood 2006; Jensen 2003). The literature has identified gaming as a significant unintended consequence of widespread PMS use (Michael Day, 2004; Smith 1995).

3.4 The Extensive Use of PMSs and Academics' Emotional Ill-being

A growing body of literature has linked PMSs to employees9 anxiety, depression and stress (Jensen, Patel and Messersmith, 2013; Ismail and Gali, 2017; Martin-Sardesai and Guthrie, 2018).

PMSs and Anxiety

Anxiety could be conceptualized as a state of emotional apprehension and heightened arousal (Spector, Dwyer, & Jex, 1988; Spielberger, 1966). Scholars have linked higher levels of employee anxiety to the extensive use of PMSs whenever coupled with low levels of job control (Martin-Sardesai and Guthrie, 2018a; Roos *et al.*, 2023). Increased anxiety often occurs in situations where an individual perceives achievement to be highly important and experiences a loss of control over the outcome (Pekrun, 2006). Studies have shown that a perceived lack of control is closely linked to increased anxiety (Frenzel et al., 2007; Goetz et al., 2006). Moreover, the level of control an employee has over their job tasks and conduct throughout the workday can impact their ability to cope with job demands and experience less mental strain (Karasek, 1979). This

suggests that workplaces in which PMSs are extensively used, coupled with low job control, can lead to greater levels of anxiety and role overload among employees (Jensen, Patel and Messersmith, 2013).

In the academic environment, there is a perception that the implementation of research PMSs has fostered an atmosphere of fear and intimidation among Australian academics (Martin-Sardesai and Guthrie, 2018a). Individuals feel pressured to meet research goals and experience a general sense of anxiety due to the research assessment exercise, which hampers genuine engagement with ideas and others' research. Academics have expressed that while securing Research Council grants elevates their discipline's status, the considerable time invested in crafting grant applications and managing grants has significantly encroached on their personal time, including weekends and family time.

PMSs and Jealousy

Several definitions of Jealousy have been proposed in the literature. Jealousy is characterized as a negative attitude that arises when someone perceives superiority or believes that a loved one may be interested in someone else, leading to feelings of envy or frustration. In the workplace, jealousy is defined as an amalgamation of emotions and behaviours stemming from a perceived sense of inadequacy and inferiority when comparing oneself to others in relation to their work (Bayar and Koca, 2021). It is the expression of fear of losing something that is already possessed. Furthermore, jealousy can be defined as the array of emotions, thoughts, and behaviours that manifest when an employee experiences a loss of self-esteem and/or a decrease in the benefits derived from their relationships with colleagues (Vecchio, 2000).

The ongoing jealousy in the workplace may arise from anxiety about losing positive positions or authority, leading to a competitive environment (Bayar and Koca, 2021). This feeling stems from social comparisons and a desire for higher status. The sense of competition that comes with jealousy causes people to compare themselves to others, which can lead to a sense of threat and hinder collaboration at work (Dogan &Vecchio, 2001; Vecchio, 2000). Jealousy can lead to inhibition of collaborative work and affect relationships with colleagues (Bani-Melhem *et al.*, 2023a). Research indicates that employee jealousy is linked to the reward system (Vecchio, 2000). By means of organizational procedures, like PMSs and rewards, employees can assess their own performance and compare it against that of their peers. They engage in social comparisons to evaluate their colleagues' relative strengths (Bani-Melhem *et al.*, 2023a).

PMSs, feelings of frustration and loss of social belonging

Studies have shown that employees experience feelings of frustration due to poor communication and lack of direction from their managers (Sarrico and Melo, 2012; Gillespie et al., 2001). Indeed, UK academics expressed feelings of confusion about the neoliberal reforms and frustration with performance assessment regulations (Raaper, 2016a). Certain forms of PMSs have the potential to foster unhealthy competition among employees. Additionally, subjective managerial decisions can result in unfair ratings, leading to negative experiences and reactions from employees (Brown, Haytt, & Benson, 2010). Conversely, employees themselves may possess a skewed perception of their own performance and abilities, often seeking greater rewards than merited, which can give rise to tension and conflict between employees and managers (Ismail and Gali, 2017).

PMSs and stress

Psychological stress arises from the interaction of system variables and processes and is contingent upon an individual's appraisal that the person-environment relationship at any given moment constitutes a situation of harm, threat, or challenge (Lazarus, 1990). A considerable amount of literature has linked stress to work overload, induced by PMSs (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001a; Jensen, Patel and Messersmith, 2013; Shin and Jung, 2014; Su and Baird, 2017; Martin-Sardesai and Guthrie, 2018a). For instance, Martin-Sardesai and Guthrie (2018) reported that the relentless pressure to excel in various aspects required by research PMSs was driving some Australian academics to contemplate leaving the field. They expressed concerns about their ability to maintain research excellence given their present working conditions. Additionally, the significant administrative burden placed on senior academics during the research excellence data collection process was negatively affecting their work-life balance. Many of them reported feeling overwhelmed by excessive administrative tasks, teaching and learning responsibilities, as well as community and professional engagement, leading them to conduct research outside of regular working hours.

The burgeoning workloads of academics have become a pressing concern, as the balance between academic responsibilities and familial obligations has emerged as a critical issue (Kinman and Jones 2008; Olsen 1993). Scholars have claimed that women in academia often face heightened pressure, stress, and increased workloads due to their caregiving responsibilities, which complicates achieving a healthy work-life balance (Broadbent, 2016; Sian, 2021; Galizzi et al., 2024). As the primary carers in most households, women are responsible for tasks such as house management, child-rearing, and caring for elderly family members, which leaves them with less time and flexibility for academic duties (Sian, 2021). This situation limits their participation

in key career-enhancing activities like attending conferences or networking events, where men are often more visible and connected (Galizzi et al., 2024). The lack of available social services to alleviate these responsibilities, along with insufficient support from partners, exacerbates the challenge, pushing women to take on teaching and administrative tasks that are less valued in academic institutions (Haynes & Fearfull, 2008; Galizzi et al., 2024). Anderson-Gough and Brown (2008) discuss how men in academia tend to prioritize "measurable" activities like research and international networking for career advancement, while women are less likely to use performance metrics that often favour men (Perray-Redslob and Younes, 2021).

The workloads of academics are on the rise, particularly due to significant managerial reforms (Bryson 2004; Lyons and Ingersoll 2010). These reforms necessitate academics to handle more paperwork, increase their teaching hours, and engage in more entrepreneurial activities and community service to meet the demands of their managers and external stakeholders (Anderson 2008; Reed 2002). Furthermore, their job security is diminishing as a result of reforms aimed at enhancing efficiency and implementing budget cuts. As an example, the shift towards employing part-time academics instead of full-time ones and offering contract-based employment in place of tenured positions has caused fragmentation within the academic workforce (Bentley et al. 2013; El-Khawas 2008). The decline in job security is a major source of job-related stress in the UK (e.g., Tytherleigh et al. 2005). The decline in tenured positions in academia has placed academics under increasing pressure to secure external funds and adhere to the 8publish or perish9 mindset (Becker and Lukka, 2022;Fisher, 1994).

3.5 The Extensive Use of PMSs and Academics' Gaming Behaviour

The use of quantitative measurements creates a 8publish or perish9 regime in academia, where quantifiable metrics control the researcher's community, guiding them to 8play it safe9 by spotting gaps in the literature, choosing granted methodologies and theoretical assumptions and publishing skilfully crafted meaningless research for the sake of career advancement (Aboubichr and Conway, 2021). In order for academics to cope, survive or even flourish in these circumstances; they adopt what Becker and Lukka (2022) called instrumentalism, which means that researchers are using research as a tool to hit the targets of PMSs, not for the value of the innovative research itself. They define it as <the degree to which researchers perceive the quantifiable features of publications as the sole concern of a research project from the very beginning of developing the research interest and conceptualization= (p.8).

The intensified implementation of PMSs in business schools may lead to unethical behaviour, which is called the <Gaming behaviour= of employees in order to overpass the PMSs and achieve their targets (positive outcomes). However, research into gaming, how it arises and its linkage to

PMSs still young (Aboubichr and Conway, 2021). Academics start to play the game when they choose career advancement, concentrate their efforts on increasing their capital and secure the most advantageous position through bonding the rules and responding to targets at a superficial level (symbolic compliance) where overt resistance is not an option. Consequently, neglect or silence could be more common (Kalfa, Wilkinson and Gollan, 2018).

3.5.1 The definition of gaming behaviour

There are multiple definitions of gaming behaviour (Bevan & Hood, 2006; Courty & Marschke, 2007; Gao, 2015; Radnor, 2008; Smith, 1995). Terman and Yang (2016) define gaming as an unintended response to accountability systems, meant to create the appearance of increased policy implementation intent. On the contrary, Graf et al. (2019) argue that gaming is a voluntary form of negative deviant workplace behaviour displayed by employees, which negatively impacts organizational performance. Similarly, Hood (2007) defines "gaming" as the deliberate massaging or fabrication of data with the intention of enhancing the position of an individual or organization (Hood, 2007a: 100).

In the study by Smith (1995), gaming the PMSs was described as the act of modifying behaviour to achieve a competitive edge. In a more recent work by Aboubichr and Conway (2023), gaming refers to employees taking advantage of the deficiencies and loopholes in PMSs to advance their careers, although the concept is often ambiguous and wide-ranging. Bevan and Hood (2006b) defined gaming as a form of reactive subversion, characterized by "hitting the target and missing the point" or deliberately reducing performance in situations where prescribed targets are not applicable. Similarly, Pollitt (2013) describes gaming as the act of "bending the rules."

Jaworski (1988) asserts that gaming refers to situations in which employees exhibit behaviour that aligns with the control system measures but is dysfunctional for the institution. Scholars have concurred that gaming behaviour violates non-measured ethical values and codes of conduct that are not formally measured and, if exposed, could jeopardize the reputation of employees and the organization, posing a threat to their well-being (Aboubichr and Conway, 2021;Robinson and Bennett, 1995, p. 565). Additionally, in some instances, gaming is perceived to potentially result in both positive and negative outcomes for the individuals engaging in these behaviours and their organizations (Graf *et al.*, 2019).

While a variety of definitions of the term 8gaming behaviour9 have been suggested, I define 8gaming behaviour9 as an opportunistic unethical behaviour that aligns with the measures of PMSs and aims at achieving a competitive advantage.

3.5.2 The types of gaming behaviour

Gaming tactics could be adapted by academics or actors at a higher level. Bevan & Hood (2006), Hood (2006) and Pollitt (2013) categorizes gaming behaviours resulting from PMS goals in the public sector into three types. *Ratchet effects* happen when next year's targets are set according to the current year's performance. Consequently, decision-makers or employees may be incentivised to underperform in their current year's performance or not to surpass their goals for the current year. *Threshold effects:* This happens when a minimum target is uniformly given to everyone. This may pressurise poor performers to meet their goals but it de-motivates high-performer employees to excel, resulting in crowding performance around the target. *Effort substitution: happens when actors seek to achieve targets at the cost of significance* or non-measured aspects, such as publications in peer-reviewed journals in ways that are favourable to the organization9s reputation or income stream at the expense of other significant unmeasured aspects.

Moreover, Oravec (2019) introduced five new categories to this unethical behaviour in HE, which revolve around the *research* aspects. Firstly, *Gaming the H-index*: happened where the citation culture revolves around the number of publications and the count of citations a paper received as a measure of its quality. For instance, scholars may attempt to manipulate the H-index by merging different versions of the same article to increase the number of citations in their Google Scholar profiles. Secondly, *Coercive Citation* occurs when journal editors or even publishers want to increase their journal impact by extorting and coercing authors to cite some of their journals with no indication that the manuscript was lacking in attribution or in need of a specific body of knowledge review. Thirdly, *Forced Joint Authorship*: This happened when adding the name of a high administrative position person to the list of authors without contributing to the research-creation process. Fourthly, *Ghost-writing of Articles happens* when jobber people sell articles to academics who seek promotion and enhancement in their academic career. This could happen through forgers of fake journals who upload only the title and the abstract and sell the original article, while the plagiarism software cannot detect the original article in this case (P.867). Finally, *the Production of Fake Documents:* This happened in the case of uploading fake documents into Google Scholar or swapping positive reviews by participants (P. 868).

Additionally, Aboubichr & Conway (2023) found that academics could game the system regarding their *research* performance in five different ways. *Gratuitous proliferation*: for example, publishing many articles from the same data (salami slicing/recycling data). *Hoarding performance*: holding information about achievements and revealing it whenever it is advantageous (for instance, not publishing if REF goals have already been met). *Collusive alliances:* arrangements between two or more academics to add each other to their research to

inflate a number of publications and achieve performance targets. *Playing safe*: fitting research to journals and ignoring risky critical topics, and *Cooking the books*: falsifying, fabricating, or manipulating data.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the intricate dynamics and far-reaching consequences of PMSs in UK business schools are thoroughly dissected. The chapter makes it clear that, while PMSs were introduced to improve accountability, efficiency, and strategic management within higher education, their implementation has led to a series of unintended consequences that challenge the foundational values of academic institutions. As PMSs have become central to managing research and teaching quality, they have reshaped not only organizational processes but also the day-to-day realities of academic life.

The chapter delves into the emotional toll that PMSs place on academics. As shown in the literature, PMSs can generate significant stress, anxiety, and feelings of inadequacy (McCarthy et al., 2017; Martin-Sardesai & Guthrie, 2018). These systems, which tie career advancement to performance metrics such as research output, grant acquisition, and student satisfaction scores, foster a high-pressure environment that forces academics to constantly prove their worth. The relentless pressure to publish, as highlighted by Parker (2008), not only diminishes the quality of scholarship but also affects personal well-being. Academics are often caught in a cycle of overwork, sacrificing personal time and well-being to meet institutional targets (Kinman & Jones, 2008). The chapter connects this stress to broader emotional issues such as anxiety, jealousy, and frustration, all of which are exacerbated by competitive metrics-driven environments (Bayar & Koca, 2021; Raaper, 2016).

Moreover, the chapter explores how PMSs drive academics toward unethical behaviors, including gaming the system. The use of gaming tactics4such as manipulating research outputs, hoarding performance, and inflating collaboration through collusive alliances4is a response to the pressures created by PMSs (Bevan & Hood, 2006; Aboubichr & Conway, 2021). Academics may adjust their behaviors to meet performance metrics, sometimes at the expense of academic integrity. As outlined by Jensen (2003), when performance goals are linked exclusively to outcomes rather than ethical conduct, academics may resort to unethical actions to fulfil institutional expectations. This behavior not only distorts academic practice but also undermines trust between colleagues and institutions (Franco-Santos & Otley, 2018).

In conclusion, while PMSs aim to enhance accountability and performance, their impact on UK business schools has led to significant challenges. The emphasis on measurable outcomes has narrowed academic goals, undermined educational quality, and driven academics toward

unethical behaviors like gaming the system. Additionally, the emotional strain and competitive environment fostered by PMSs have fragmented academic communities and heightened stress. To address these issues, higher education institutions must seek a more balanced approach that values academic integrity, well-being, and collaboration alongside performance metrics.

Chapter 4 Theoretical Framework: Managerialism and Workplace Democracy in Business Schools

4.1 Introduction

This theoretical chapter discussed the theoretical framework to interpret the empirical data and to develop insights that reflect the phenomena in the field (Ahrens & Chapman, 2006). This chapter seeks to explore managerialism and workplace democracy in business schools as a frame to explain the primary themes that emerged from the interview data (Ragin & Becker, 1992). This chapter consists of two parts. The first part presents managerialism within the context of the UK business school. It delves into its definitions, concepts, justifications, historical context, ideological underpinnings, and how it has transformed business schools, thereby influencing professionals. The latter part explores how this managerialism ideology hinders workplace democracy in the business school. It shows the core tenets of workplace democracy, including key definitions, concepts, justifications, and historical context, while highlighting the numerous benefits it provides. Most notably, it shed light on how professionals themselves compromise their own workplace democracy and offered a glimpse into the future of workplace democracy within academia.

4.2 The Business School and Managerialism

The ideology of managerialism finds its most fertile breeding ground in modern business schools (Klikauer, 2015). Managers in business schools are equipped with technical skills that are grounded in the ideology of managerialism (Chauviere and Mick, 2013). The managerialist concept was created to portray management as a natural and impartial set of techniques that can be scientifically applied to increase profitability, efficiency, and shareholder value (Jacques and Durepos, 2015). Today, institutions in society, including business schools, have become the primary means of propagating managerialist ideology. Managerialism is a form of class consciousness that is reinforced through business education (McLaren, 2020). Business schools are continuously growing as the institutional centres of this ideology, providing it with the means to achieve its goals: the complete managerialization of society. This ideology places a competing burden of responsibilities on managers to work towards achieving business goals in the shade of providing the common good for society.

The history goes back to the trajectory of the UK universities that have undergone significant changes over the years, which can be attributed to the prevailing neoliberal capitalist ethos (De

Vita and Case, 2016). These changes are interconnected with the privatisation of public assets, deregulation of markets, financial controls, and globalization (Radice, 2013). Universities in the UK have not only been affected by these changes but have also contributed to the propagation of managerialist ideology post-NPM (See Chapter 3, p 30). The rise of managerialism has been closely linked to the transformation of neoliberal capitalism into managerial capitalism in business education and research (Klikauer, 2015; McLaren, 2020). By aligning with managerialism, universities have become the tools for the social control of labour and a means of production of ideology to safeguard capitalism from potential threats and to maintain the power of the business elite while presenting themselves as parts of solutions to crucial societal issues (Guilhot, 2007).

Managerialism in the UK9s universities and other public sector institutions is inseparable from the significant budgetary challenges that took place in the 1970s. These gave rise to the emergence of NPM which led to the popular notion that these institutions should be run like businesses, with a focus on efficiency, accountability, and performance evaluation (Juusola, 2022). As a result, academic and administrative roles have been separated, and managerial controls such as performance monitoring have been introduced (Billsberry, Ambrosini and Thomas, 2023). This trend reflects the rise of neoliberal ideology in society and has firmly entrenched managerialism in universities and their business schools (Sims, 2019). Managerialist controls aim to measure and stimulate employee performance towards organizational goals, using a corporate economic logic that involves quantifying teaching and research performance, revenue generation, cost-cutting, and budgeting (Bobe & Kober, 2020). This emphasis on performance inputs and outcomes has given rise to numerous metrics and performance reviews, with scores and points becoming common parlance (Jones et al., 2020). These changes have given rise to the concept of the managerial university (Klikauer, 2015). In fact, managerialism is an outcome of the Business schools9 modernisation discourse and practices. Despite its widespread usage and significance, the concept of managerialism remains vague and undertheorized (Klikauer, 2015; Shepherd, 2018).

4.3 What is Managerialism?

Managerialism serves as a tool to facilitate the implementation of NPM (Newman 2000). Lynch (2014) characterises this ideology as the operational arm of neoliberalism, which introduces a new management doctrine for public sector administration by adopting the business world's management framework (England & Ward 2011). Interestingly, there has been little agreement on the definition of managerialism (Teelken, 2012; Shepherd, 2018). Some scholars emphasise how these institutions are transformed by adopting 8private sector practices9 into the public sector, notably efficiency, effectiveness and excellence (Deem, 1998; De Vita and Case, 2016). This form

of adoption involves integrating economic market-driven strategies into the public sector and implementing a reformist agenda that supersedes professional expertise and knowledge.

In the context of UK Business schools, this approach prioritizes rational planning over educational values, intending to maximize organizational performance through strict control (De Vita and Case, 2016). While Juusola (2022), Klikauer (2015) and Winter(2017) highlight the entrenchment of 8management tools and knowledge9 in organizations, public institutions and society. Managerialism, which asserts the superiority of its singular approach to management across all domains of work, society, and capitalism, is justified through claims of ideological superiority, expert training, and the exclusive knowledge required to manage both public institutions and society as a whole effectively (Klikauer, 2015). In essence, managerialism is an ideology that perceives all organizations as entities that can be managed using the same set of managerial practices, with the ultimate aim of maximizing profits while minimizing costs (Juusola, 2022). This is achieved through applying control mechanisms such as target setting and PMSs. It tends to downplay the significance of experience, skills, and sensitivity towards an organisation's core business, as it holds the belief that the skills required to run an advertising agency, an oil rig, or a university are fundamentally the same (Klikauer, 2015). Consequently, managerialism maintains the notion that there is no distinction in managing universities that possess distinctive values, traits, goals, resources, and professional knowledge.

Other scholars define managerialism with a focus on the 8dominance of managers9 in various contexts (McLaren, 2020; Shatil, 2020). Edwards (1998) further defines managerialism as an ideology that places trust in managers to tend to the needs of organizations and, in certain cases, society at large by utilizing the tools and methodologies of management science. This ideology is reinforced through business education which holds managers accountable for the success of organizations and assumes that they are automatically working towards the common good of society (McLaren, 2020). In the context of UK business schools, managerialism represents a prevailing corporate social philosophy that regards universities as akin to businesses, with the belief that what works well in managing a business will also work well in managing a university (Joseph, 2015). Indeed, it is a set of beliefs, concepts and values that uphold the notion that management is the foremost and most desirable component of effective administration and governance (Rees and Rodley, 1995).

4.4 Concepts of Managerialism

4.4.1 Unitarism

Styhre (2014) suggests that managerialism is rooted in a desire to control, optimize efficiency, standardize behaviour, minimize conflict, and promote the universalization of sectional managerial interests. The fundamental principles of managerialism centre around the belief in a cohesive and harmonious alignment of goals and values (Joseph, 2015; Winter, 2017). This unitary perspective views universities only deemed to be legitimately governed by a single source of managerial authority in pursuit of common financial objectives: generating revenue and achieving cost efficiency (Parker, 2012). The unitarian principle drives individual actions based on calculative choices to anticipate monetary/materialistic incentives and consequences. At its core, managerialism strives to manage all resources based on cost-effectiveness, strong hierarchy, and consumer-driven values and principles (Carvalho and Santiago, 2010). Key concepts such as KPIs, staff PMSs, and market testing are central to the managerialist ideology (Joseph, 2015).

4.4.2. Individualism and Competitiveness

Organizational decision-making based on utilitarianism treats individuals as self-reliant ends, with different utility profiles, managed uniformly to achieve the greatest results based on a cost-efficiency perspective. Self-reliance as a value system assumes every person has the capacity and rights to exploit skills and competencies for individual benefit (Winter, 2017). It assumes that each individual will be entrepreneurial in advocating their market utility, skills, and potential to current and future employers. Consequently, managerialism places a great value on the pursuit of competitive gains among individuals (Winter, 2017). Neoliberalism views competition as having "moral worth" since it equates competitive and self-reliant behaviour with rational behaviour that is free from government regulation and political interference (Friedman, 2002). In the context of UK higher education, individualism and competitiveness have been on the rise when academics are continuously situated to keep their performance (i.e. resumes, publications, and teaching records) notable and visible on social media to stay in line with competitive pressures (Shatil, 2020; Billsberry, Ambrosini and Thomas, 2023).

4.4.3. Hierarchal Authority

One defining aspect of managerial decision-making in HE is the implementation of a hierarchical structure (Winter, 2017). This allows executive decisions made at higher management levels to bypass slower and more collegial forms of academic governance (Jones *et al.*, 2020). This facilitates the rapid deployment of resources, including academics, to meet the needs of

students and prioritize cost efficiency. This has led to the decline of older, more collegial forms of university administration, being replaced by authoritarian top-down 8professional9 managers who have little or no connection or affinity with academic teaching and research (Parker, 2014). The removal of elected rectors and deans in favour of a direct appointment by the university executive is a form of "hard managerialism" that highlights limitations on collegial power (Trow, 1994 as cited in Winter, 2017; Rhoades and Sporn, 2002).

4.4.4. Competitive Rankings and Status Recognition

With government funding for higher education on the decline in the UK, universities are increasingly demanded to compete in the recruitment of international students generating higher income and more pressure for academics to secure grant income from government bodies and private companies (Winter, 2017). Therefore, business schools in the UK are increasingly valuing and searching for "rainmakers" or star professors who can bring in considerable external income in the form of research contracts, grant monies, and corporate consultancies to enhance existing disciplines and contribute to the university's bottom line (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2009). This has led to an increased use of marketing tactics to affirm the competitive values of the marketplace (Furedi, 2011). Additionally, Jones et al. (2020) noted that there is a strong emphasis on targets in the "*performative university*", which involves aspects of quantification and the ideal of perfect control. National and international league tables and rankings, particularly the UK TEF and REF (see Chapter 3, p 30), are crucial, fuelled by internal performance metrics, benchmarks, KPIs, and ratios that are coercively and instrumentally utilised.

4.4.5. PMSs and Financial Rewards

Incorporating managerialism as a new ideology for change in HEIs involves using PMSs to redirect academics towards student service deliverables and corporate concepts of scholarship (Rolfe, 2013). Academic PMSs define areas of academic work that include specific teaching, research, and service functions, enabling managers to ensure that academics work within the scope of corporate-like work arrangements. They may provide an efficient means of updating education products, but may also turn academics into comparable, classifiable, governable subjects and auditable commodities (Jones *et al.*, 2020). This can diminish teaching, learning, and research to scores in student surveys and abstract publication points (Kallio et al., 2016). PMSs and accountability can become more judgmental and punitive rather than developmental and supportive as senior managers seek reassurance to allay their fears of losing control (Visser, 2016). Moreover, financial incentives based on highly ranked publications and successful acquisition of large external research grants are the primary means of financial rewards management in UK universities (Shatil, 2020). While this policy may encourage uniform research outputs over a shorter period of time, it also links financial rewards to successful publication

outcomes (Winter, 2017). This approach is consistent with managerialism, which employs financial control mechanisms like budgets and PMSs to incentivize work that meets measurable standards of performance and service delivery set by higher administrative levels by creating competition among workers (Parker, 2011).

4.5 Proponents' Justifications of Managerialism

Managerialism is a perspective that focuses on the interests of management in organizations (Shepherd, 2018). It benefits managers by increasing their social status and strengthening their organizational position. As such, managers are the primary advocates and beneficiaries of managerialism (Klikauer, 2015). Managers use the idea of good management practice to justify their own autonomy. Shepherd (2018) presented six justifications supporting the ideology of managerialism being entrenched in public sector institutions and societies. First, the fundamental premise of managerialism is that management is seen as the optimal form of organisational governance and its key to success. Effective management should lead to improved performance, clear objectives, a motivated workforce, and results. It is considered indispensable to economic, technological, and social progress (Deem, Hillyard, and Reed 2007). Second, in the late 19th century, professional managers emerged as a new group responsible for efficiently running an organisation and maximising profits. From which managerialism derives, scientific management was based on increased surveillance by managers to improve worker productivity. This view separates managers from workers and supports the notion of professional management (Flynn 2002). The main purpose of management is to make strategic decisions that enable an organization to achieve its goals. The skills and competencies of managers are viewed as critical to organizational success, creating a management class with real organizational power.

Third, managerialism is a theory that places great faith in planning and objective setting for improving organizational performance. It believes that management practice is technical and value-neutral and that decisions should be made by neutral professionals in the best interests of the organization (England & Ward 2011). Moreover, this decision-making process is perceived as entirely logical and rational: managers define the problem, gather relevant data, develop possible solutions, evaluate them and decide on the best course of action. Fourth, managerialism believes that management is universally applicable and transferable to any sector. It sees management as a generic set of activities common to all organizations, with managers performing fundamentally the same tasks in whatever sector they are in (Klikauer, 2015). This approach minimizes the differences between the public and private sectors. Fifth, Managers must have the right to manage. Managerialism ideology grants managers the freedom to direct the work of others through planning, decision-making, coordination, and monitoring. Managers are seen as

having a superior general knowledge that allows them to control the work of their subordinates (Friedson 2001). The workforce is accountable to managers, and individual managers are believed to make a real difference in organizations (Smith and Hussey 2010). This belief has led to the transformation of the image of managers from "dull organizational time servers" to "entrepreneurial and inspirational change agents=. Lastly, managerialism in the public sector relies on the assumption that management practices in the private sector are superior and should be adopted to improve public service efficiency and performance. This has led to the importation of private sector methods to public sector institutions, which has been described as a "covert form of privatization".

4.6 The History of Transformation of Neo-liberal Capitalism into Managerial Capitalism

The rise of managerialism coincided with the shift from neo-liberal capitalism to managerial capitalism (McLaren, 2020). This required management to evolve into managerialism (Klikauer, 2015). Management became an ideological operation that pervaded almost all parts of human society by creating justifying ideologies like competition, effectiveness, free markets, and the idea that 8greed is good9 (Mueller and Carter, 2007). Management, to put it simply, is dull. However, this dullness extended beyond management and became a full-fledged ideology according to the formula: 8*Management + Ideology + Expansion = Managerialism9* (Klikauer, 2015, p. 1105). This formula reflects how managerialism originated with management as its foundation, added ideology as its second component, and ultimately sought to expand managerial techniques beyond the confines of managerial organizations, infiltrating the broader economic, social, cultural, and political spheres (Chauviere and Mick, 2013).

4.6.1. Managerialism and NPM

Managerialism and neoliberalism are two distinct but related ideologies that underpin NPM (Shepherd, 2018). NPM as a set of public sector reforms that started in the 1980s, has marked a shift away from the traditional form of public administration, aiming to orient the entrenchment of managerialism in public sector organizations. Neoliberalism and managerialism correspond to the two dimensions of NPM: minimizing the state's role concerning society and improving the public sector's performance (De Vries and Nemec, 2013). Therefore, NPM embodies a new paradigm in the provision of public services (Clarke, Gerwitz, and McLaughlin 2000). Managerialism and neo-liberalism are not the same, even though they share certain affinities (Klikauer, 2015). The prime concern of managerialism is the management of capitalism and society in its image, while neo-liberalism has a definite political program consisting of roughly seven policies: deregulation of markets, creating new markets, deregulation of labour and

industrial relations, reduction and destruction of social welfare, privatization of everything (Mandell, 2002), reduction of state regulation, and anti-unionism (Klikauer, 2015). For managerialism, managerial techniques are guiding principles, while for neo-liberalism, it is the free market (Jessop, 2013). Neoliberalism pertains to economics and politics, while managerialism mainly concerns corporations and management (Allen, 2013). Neoliberalism claims to work towards the common good, while managerialism does not.

4.6.2. Manifestation of managerialism

Shatil (2020) presented three waves of the manifestation of managerialism. First-wave managerialism discourse emerged in response to management becoming an integral part of corporate business in the 20th century. It presented management as a serious profession and a science, offering productivity and efficiency to owners. However, it treated employees as a resource and put power and authority in the hands of management, firmly rooted in neoclassical economics and liberal thought. Second-wave managerialism refers to management's expanding control of social organizations in general, relying on the construal of management as scientific and professional expertise (Shepherd, 2018). It justifies management's control as being beneficial, just, and rational, and is felt most strongly in the public sector. Indeed, managerialism is seen as the arm of neoliberalism, reforming public sector institutions according to the latter economic principles. The success of this ideology is evident in the unquestioning acceptance of the necessity of management for running all major organizations (Diefenbach, 2009). Management has become more powerful and pervasive than ever, using ongoing change as a mode of control. The third wave presents management as the foundation of social existence and justifies giving it control over all major social institutions and goals (Parker, 2002). It defines what is good and just from the manager9s rationales that are aimed to facilitate managers' social dominance. In such a context, management9s claim of an ethical, fair and democratic approach might contradict or represent a totally different picture of the democratic aspects of organizational operations.

4.7 How Managerialism Operates as an Ideology?

Ideology is action-oriented, aiming to influence opinions and legitimize a course of action (Shepherd, 2018). Managerialism, as an ideology, is comparable to professionalism in that both are normative systems that define what knowledge is valuable, who possesses it, and who has the authority to act accordingly (Clarke, Gerwitz, and McLaughlin 2000). Ideologies are non-coercive means of shaping the social order (Shatil, 2020). They operate as discourse and include concepts, values, and modes of conduct that are consciously adopted. Interpellation takes place through institutional apparatuses, such as family or education systems, responsible for

socialisation and identity formation. Ideologies are materially instantiated by social institutions and structures that shape social action. As an ideology gains control of major apparatuses, it achieves greater influence on people9s conduct, values, and goals.

In the context of UK business schools, managerialism is accomplished through the application of control technologies, such as target setting, PMSs, propaganda, and persuasion designed to effect cultural change (Deem, Hillyard, and Reed 2007). Managerial capitalism has (re)shaped the perceptions of individuals in business, including students and faculty members, to the point where managerialism is seen as natural and unchangeable (Lukes, 2005). This exercise of managerial power prevents the questioning of business school norms and expectations (McLaren, 2020). The more an ideology becomes embedded, the less people question it. Over time, people accept their way of doing things as the best way, constructing their histories to support their current social reality and excluding histories that might lead to questioning the status quo.

McLaren (2020) explains how different facets of power constitute ideologies in society. For instance, domination and subjectification are hidden and systemic forms of power that construct ideological values and shape our sense of self. Domination builds power by constructing ideological values that become unquestioned assumptions leading to a specific set of behaviours. Subjectification goes one step further as the discourses that structure and order people9s lives act on an individual9s identity, shaping and constituting their sense of self such that a particular way of being is normalised (Fleming and Spicer, 2007). Power over meaning can take the form of domination or subjectification. When power is exercised over meaning, it not only dictates people's actions or thoughts but also restricts them from exploring alternative actions or thoughts (O9Mahoney, 2015). As managerialism takes hold, it moulds the entirety of discourse and action, affecting intellectual and social culture (Klikauer, 2015). Technology, ideology, culture, politics, and the economy are fused together into a pervasive system under managerialism, absorbing and rejecting any alternative approaches. According to Habermas's (1997) description, this is a 8colonisation of the lifeworld9!

4.8 How Has Managerialism (Re)Shaped Academics in the Business School?

There is a growing body of literature that recognises the changes introduced by managerialism have not transformed the managers in business schools but also the conduct of academics (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016; Billsberry et al., 2023; Jones et al., 2020; Joseph, 2015; Klikauer, 2015; Webster, 1995; Winter, 2017). Managerialism places a one-dimensional approach, 8thinking inside the box,9 at the heart of academic behaviours (Klikauer, 2015). It limits intellectual and

scientific progress, favouring conformist academics and research output over quality and career prospects. It tends to eliminate dialectical thinking in favour of one-dimensional thinking and ditching their collegial "management" structures for senior management teams (Billsberry, Ambrosini and Thomas, 2023). Business schools have become similar to over-managed organisations with professional bureaucracies that promise upward mobility through compliance with ranking systems (Magala, 2009). Three aspects of performativity seen in academia are quantification, the pursuit of control, strategic initiatives, such as branding, marketing or often fabrication in communications around quality control systems and PMSs (Jones et al., 2020, Alvesson & Spicer, 2016).

Quantification refers to the use of PMSs, data, and numbers to measure employee productivity (Taberner, 2018). The pursuit of control of quality control systems and PMSs stems from the replacement of older, more collegial forms of university administration with authoritarian, top-down management (Parker, 2014). These often involve fabrication or the creation of artificial representations for accountability, even if they are not truthful, which can lead to both resistance and capitulation to surveillance (Ball, 2003). These emerge from the growing emphasis on the commercialisation of business school that has led to a surge of conflicting identities which induces further pressures for academics from managerial focus to increase income generation and cost minimisation (Winter, 2017). Managerialism aims to operationalise academic work in financial terms, prioritising efficiency, effectiveness, value-for-money, competition, benchmarking, PMSs, rewards and accountability (Parker, 2012). This has led to students being treated as consumers, professional communities being redefined as strategic partners and education being reshaped as products (Parker, 2013).

University places business school managers to establish a corporate culture based on customer service, entrepreneurship, and revenue generation to meet research and teaching goals (Deem, 2004). Such managerialist approach marginalizes academic staff's autonomy and involvement in university decision-making (Joseph, 2015). It reinforces management's right to manage, reduce, and often shrink the status of academic staff into boxes of hierarchical structures. University governance procedures now tend to favour top-down, chain-of-command control, suppressing the more democratic aspects of collegiality (Hedley, 2023). Loyalty is demanded from academic staff, and consequently, cases of bullying or legal action arise as managers start to take business-like and risky decisions, removing uncooperative staff by sacking them, sometimes with tragic outcomes (Colquhoun, 2015). Academics are increasingly facing pressure and limited autonomy due to overt control, which can cause stress, anxiety, and reduced job satisfaction (Deasy & Mannix-McNamara, 2017). With the rise of managerialism, academics must become more flexible, multi-skilled, and impactful to keep their jobs (Billsberry, Ambrosini and Thomas, 2023).

Some academics embraced this culture and became self-interested individuals working to reap personal rewards, taking on the gaming mentality by prioritizing metrics over substance (Jones et al., 2020). Compliance and cooperation are rewarded in this system, and impression-management skills are becoming increasingly important (Ball, 2012). Academics in contemporary business schools are under immense pressure to produce publications and meet performance metrics. This has resulted in a soulless existence with passive resistance, submissiveness, and risk aversion becoming the norm (Billsberry, Ambrosini and Thomas, 2023). They sanitize their teaching, inflate marks, and avoid challenging students for fear of not meeting institutional requirements (Stroebe, 2016). The workload could be high or sometimes beyond reasonable, leaving academics overworked and exhausted. Academics are now working in professional bureaucracies that promise upward mobility through compliance with ranking systems (Alvesson and Spicer, 2016). The relationship between academics and university managers has been reconfigured in a way that defines them as employees rather than colleagues (Webster, 1995). Academics are situated to <play the game" in order to secure the most publications, grants, and awards, in order to climb the publication ladder and reshape the profit-oriented model of higher education (Winter, 2017).

4.9 Managerialism and Workplace Democracy

4.9.1. The History of Workplace Democracy

The origin of the term <democracy= can be traced back to the Greek word <demokratia= (Han and Garg, 2018). The term was formed by combining <demo=, which means <people=, and <kratia=, which means <rule of the people= (Powley et al., 2004). Democracy identified a governance structure that allows citizens to participate in political decision-making (Levin & Greenwood, 2016). In ancient Greece, citizens used to gather in a common meeting place called the agora to discuss and resolve political issues. However, only a small group of men were allowed to participate in this form of democracy, as women and slaves were not given the right to participate. The success of democracy is also influenced by factors such as who has the power to decide which issues are put on the political agenda, who has the resources to gain knowledge about public interest issues, and which societal institutions have an impact on the political agenda. Despite the development of democratic polis by ancient Athenian citizens, their slave economy highlighted the contradictions between political rights and certain modes of production (Holmer Nadesan and Cheney, 2017).

Democracy has always been associated with communication, and reasoned debate among citizens played a crucial role in Athenian democratic processes. The goodness of the polis was determined by the goodness of its citizens, who were free from corporeal enslavement owing to

self-mastery but were also indispensable for the welfare of the polis. The communicative practices of argument and persuasion, referred to as rhetoric by Aristotle, allowed citizens to publicly deliberate on the values and policies adopted and applied by the democratic polis. The democratic spirit of the polis was achieved through the virtue of its constituents and the institutionalisation and rigour of their communicative practices. Greek ideas about democracy influenced the enlightenment political doctrines, which were then enshrined in Western constitutions in the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Holmer Nadesan and Cheney, 2017). Early liberal philosophers, such as John Locke (162331704), believed in individual self-determination based on natural rights. This idea was incorporated into legal and governmental systems, resulting in the expansion of rights, including representative democracies and the voting franchise. This trend is visible in major documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the United Nations Global Compact (1999).

In the 19th century, farmers turned wage earners and formed trade unions to combat poverty and exploitation (Pausch, 2013). The trade union movement split into two camps: moderate and radical. Moderates aimed to enhance workers' influence and give them organizational power in the existing capitalist economy. Radicals wanted to dissolve capitalism through revolution. Trade unions promoted workers' rights and workplace democracy through collective bargaining. This ensured participation in managerial processes through negotiations and enforceable agreements. In the 20th century, some European countries adopted Workers9 Democracy. Workers had more authority within enterprises, managing themselves in councils that elected the board of management. The socialist tradition of workers9 democracy was significant in the creation of welfare and social security systems in some Western democracies (Esping Anderson 1990). The goal was to liberate workers from capitalist oppression. During the Cold War, Western trade unions and political parties accepted capitalism and negotiated for social partnership (Pausch, 2013). Eastern collectivist economies failed to fulfil promises resulting in oppression and dictatorship. Workplace democracy became less important in the late 1980s and 1990s, and participatory methods were adopted by managers. This coincided with the rise of neoliberalism and the loss of power for nation-states. Institutional support for workplace democracy ended with Reaganism and Thatcherism in the 1980s and Yugoslavia's descent into war in the early 1990s (van der Vliet, 2012).

4.9.2 Definition of Workplace Democracy

Scholars have shown an increased interest in workplace democracy (Frega, 2021; Carr and Mellizo, 2015). However, there is little consensus about what it means. Han & Garg (2018), Pausch (2013), and Petersson and Spang (2005) emphasise the theme of applying democratic practices, such as voting and participatory decision-making, to the workplace. It treats

enterprises as political communities, where everyone has the same right to participate in decision-making and hold management accountable (Cradden, 2007). This includes the right to say 8no9 and to insist that certain things are done in a particular way. Definitions of workplace democracy vary but share common themes, such as industrial democracy and employee participation.

Workplace democracy encompasses a range of interpersonal and structural arrangements that connect organisational decision-making to the interests and influence of employees across different levels (van der Vliet, 2012; Petersson and Spangs, 2006). This approach fosters equality, active participation, and collaborative decision-making among all organisation members. In essence, it refers to institutional features aimed at granting workers self-government by allowing them to participate in decision-making (Frega, 2021; Carr and Mellizo ,2015). The principle <one person, one vote= captures the underlying intuition. According to this view, the political community, which is the subject of democratization, is composed of the employees of a given firm, who are sometimes called <citizens of the firm= (Dahl, 1986). Workers9 councils and mixed supervisory boards represent the most diffused instantiations of this view (Rogers & Streeck, 1995). There are differences in the interpretation of what is meant by <sharing in the decision-making process= that determine the form, function, and consequences of workplace democracy.

According to Frega et al. (2019) workplace democracy refers to the implementation of power by workers or their representatives. This approach encompasses a wide range of objectives, such as self-organization of work and making strategic decisions regarding hiring policies, service development, or commitment to social and environmental values (Weber, 1999). There are various ways to democratize the workplace, ranging from mild organizational reform of hierarchical structures to delegation systems based on employees' representation to more comprehensive forms of employees' direct participation through works councils.

Notably philosophers have shown great support for the notion of workplace democracy (Frega et al., 2019; Mayer, 2000; Pausch, 2013; van der Vliet, 2012). They provided their justifications for that argument. I categorised these justifications into three main categories: Political, Ethical, and Positive consequences arguments.

First: Political Arguments

Justifications based on State-Firm Analogy: The argument by analogy employs similarities to establish that there are further similarities (Frega, Herzog and Neuhauser, 2019). As a result, if a normative requirement has already been accepted as valid for one institution, the argument by analogy permits its extension to other institutions without necessitating independent grounds to justify why the use of that particular norm for that specific institution is legitimate (Frega, 2021).

For instance, if democracy is a legitimate form of governance for the state, it must also be legitimate for governing economic enterprises (Dahl, 1985). This is because the right to autonomy that all individuals possess is instantiated in having a voice in the firm. The political concept at the core of the firm-state analogy is that individuals who live together under conditions of strong equality have an inherent right to be governed democratically (Foley and Polanyi, 2006). If one can demonstrate that firms are similar to political governments in relevant ways, then it is reasonable to assert that members of firms have an inherent right to govern themselves democratically. However, this argument is primarily applicable to the political community, where equality is more important than private property, and it may not be applicable at the level of the various associations that exist within the democratically organised polity itself.

Justifications based on promoting political participation: Another argument in favour of workplace democracy, is that it can serve as a platform for promoting public participation in the wider democratic political process (Foley and Polanyi, 2006). Supporters of this perspective argue that being involved in decision-making and having a sense of control within the workplace is crucial for cultivating the values and skills necessary for good citizenship, which in turn are the foundations of a well-functioning democracy (Bachrach, 1967; Macpherson, 1977). It is believed that participating in democratic decision-making can help develop a concern for the common good, an appreciation for the balance of powers, and an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Furthermore, since individuals spend a significant amount of their lives at work, the workplace is seen as the ideal setting for developing the individual attitudes and psychological qualities needed for broader and more authentic political democracy (Pateman, 1970).

Justifications based on the right to Autonomy, Liberty and Equality: Scholars emphasize the link between meaningful work and individual autonomy, connecting it to democracy (Pausch, 2013; Yeoman, 2014). Autonomy is defined as the ability and opportunity to set one's own goals, choose the means to achieve them, and adjust them based on experience (Frega, Herzog and Neuhauser, 2019). It is considered a prerequisite for meaningful work, and workplace democracy is seen as the institutional conditions necessary to achieve autonomy. Liberal democratic thinkers like John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau linked this autonomy to the liberation and emancipation of the individual (Pausch, 2013). They believed that all humans are naturally equal and free, and democracy should encompass more than just the right to vote. As Rousseau (2008) said, The greatest good of all, which should be the end of every system of legislation, consists of two main objects, liberty and equality - liberty, because all particular dependence means so much force taken from the body of the State, and equality, because liberty cannot exist without it. Arguments for workplace democracy can be based on the ideas of neo-republican freedom and relational equality (Frega, Herzog and Neuhauser, 2019). Neo-republican freedom emphasizes the

importance of avoiding arbitrary interference (Pettit, 2012). This can be achieved by granting individuals certain rights or by holding those in positions of authority accountable to those they have authority over. Relational egalitarianism focuses on creating a community in which people stand in relations of equality to others (Anderson, 1999). Both approaches reject certain forms of hierarchy. Hierarchical workplaces are problematic because employees may be at the mercy of their employers, at risk of being dismissed and losing their income (Anderson, 2017). As a result, they are unable to develop egalitarian relationships with each other, and are dominated by those above them in the hierarchy. These hierarchical relationships violate the "eyeball test" developed by Philip Pettit (2014), which states that members of a society should be able to encounter each other as moral equals without fear or submissiveness.

Second: Ethical Arguments

A democratic workplace is a moral imperative and a basic right of every employee (Holtzhausen, 2002). There are four ethical arguments for workplace democracy: the first argues that the same reasons in favour of democracy and against tyranny in the political sphere also apply to the economic sphere, while the second demonstrates that it is possible to run a company more successfully in a participatory fashion and that running a company in a non-participatory fashion is harmful to employees (van der Vliet, 2012). Indeed, employees have a moral right to a humane, non-alienating work environment and must have a say in what goes on at work as they are the most negatively affected by the decisions made (Foley and Polanyi, 2006). The third argument for the existence of a moral right to workplace democracy can be deduced from the right to autonomy (Mayer, 2000). The logic is that if individuals have a right to autonomy, then they cannot be subject to authoritarian power in the workplace. Autonomy is said to be compromised by subjection to rules in which employees have no say. This claim is twofold: first, that the moral right to autonomy is violated when employees must obey rules they have not collectively imposed upon themselves, and second, that obedience to rules in which employees have a binding say is consistent with their fundamental right to autonomy. The fourth argument for workplace democracy suggests that power should be equally shared among competent individuals (Mayer, 2000). This argument is based on the norm of distributive justice. Similar to democratic rights in territorial organizations, employees have the right to formulate rules for economic associations if they are equals in relevant aspects. The right to an equal share of power can be deduced from the premise that equals should be treated equally.

Third: Positive Consequences Arguments

The argument in favour of workplace democracy often centres around the benefits that come from democratizing work: increased efficiency, reduced employee alienation, better relations between labour and management, more equitable pay structures, greater job security, and a

stronger sense of social responsibility within the business (Mayer, 2000). The claim that workplace democracy improves work quality has been both empirically and theoretically studied, with a long tradition of work studies providing evidence for the positive correlation between work quality, physical and mental health, and the development of intellectual, moral, and other capacities (Frega, Herzog and Neuhauser, 2019). A key justification for workplace democracy is that democratic workplaces contribute to employee health, while unhealthy workplaces impose high costs on employees, employers, and taxpayers (Foley and Polanyi, 2006). Economic costs associated with a lack of workplace democracy are already clear, and potentially social costs as well in the form of lower citizenship behaviour and loss of community.

4.9.3 Various Concepts and Definitions Around Workplace Democracy

Workplace democracy has been reported to encompass a number of concepts, such as industrial democracy, employee involvement, employee empowerment, participative management, self-management, and relational parity. However, the academic literature on this subject has failed to provide a clear consensus on the precise meaning of these terms (Han and Garg, 2018). Scholars define workplace democracy through various concepts or elements as outlined in the following discussions.

Industrial Democracy: was originally used to describe workplace democracy, and the two terms are often used interchangeably (van der Vliet, 2012). This phrase was most commonly used in Europe to refer to workplaces that were managed directly by workers. However, due to the word "industry" in the term, it became heavily associated with traditional manufacturing industries. To better represent the broader range of sectors and ideas, the term "workplace democracy" was adopted instead. The organizational model for workplace democracy includes committees and consultative bodies that facilitate communication between management, union, and staff, and make decisions in a fair and authoritative manner (Han & Garg, 2018).

Employee involvement: means treating each employee as a unique individual, not just a cog in a machine (Apostolou, 2000). Each employee is encouraged to contribute to the organization's goals, and their input is highly valued by management. This approach recognizes that every employee plays a vital role in running the business. In essence, workplace democracy requires the inclusion of all employees in decision-making (van der Vliet, 2012). Entrepreneurial strategy should be a continuous process, with inputs from all stakeholders (Pausch, 2013). Especially during times of uncertainty, employees can provide creative solutions to management challenges.

Employee empowerment: involves involving employees in running the business and recognising that employees may be able to identify and solve problems or obstacles to achieving

organisational goals (Pausch, 2013). With employee empowerment, management provides employees with the tools and authority required to continuously improve their performance, as well as stating its expectations about employees recognising and solving problems (Apostolou, 2000). According to Howard Doughty (2003), employee empowerment may represent a cunning strategy by management to gull workers into acquiescing in their own oppression and finding clever new methods of intensifying it. However, when strategies for employee empowerment are implemented seriously, it may be a step in building more flexible and efficient entities and evolving organisational psychology.

Participative management encourages the involvement of stakeholders at all levels of an organisation to solve problems, develop strategies, and implement solutions (van der Vliet, 2012). It includes different activities such as setting goals, determining work schedules, making suggestions, and forming self-managed teams, quality circles, or quality-of-work-life committees (Frega, 2021). Participative management involves more than allowing employees to make decisions, it also involves management treating employees' ideas and suggestions with respect (Helms & Cengage, 2006). Under participative management, employees can participate in four broad areas: setting goals, making decisions, solving problems, and making changes in the organisation (Pausch, 2013). Workplace democracy requires employees to have real control over organizational goal-setting and strategic planning to ensure that their own goals and objectives can be met (Foley and Polanyi, 2006). Participation alone is not enough, as it only allows employees to give input into decisions that have already been made. Participative democracy involves direct involvement in corporate decisions, enabling stakeholders to have a say in organizational decisions that impact their lives (Hielscher, Beckmann and Pies, 2014). It centres on the idea that stakeholders have the right to control and change the immediate lifeworld variables in their environment (Levin & Greenwood,2016).

Self-management refers to decision-making that involves all members of a group or organization in making decisions that affect them. (Pausch, 2013). In the workplace, this means that employees work together to determine what needs to be done, how it should be done, and where it should be done, rather than simply following orders from a manager or owner. This concept extends beyond just politics and applies to all aspects of society where individuals act and live. It is crucial for workplaces to be democratized in modern society, as individual autonomy and freedom are central to democratic thinking (Pateman, 1970). In a democratized workplace, all participants are legally responsible for their joint activities and are self-governing members and partners in the organization, with the rights of citizens (Pateman, 2002). The core of organizational democracy and political democracy is the same: allowing people to self-govern and determine their own destiny. The only difference is the context in which it occurs, one being in the political arena and the other in the realm of organizations.

Relational Parity pertains to the status of individuals in social interactions (Frega, 2021). It is achieved when all individuals in a relationship are treated without regard to their social status. This requires that social markers such as religion, gender, race, ethnicity, class, and others do not affect an individual's status in social interactions and that stigma and disadvantages are not imposed based on status. This aspect of democracy's normative core is effectively represented by relational egalitarianism. Unlike theories of redistributive justice, relational egalitarianism asserts that in an egalitarian society, people should enjoy the same fundamental status (and possibly the same rank and power), or should relate to each other as equals (Arneson, 2013). As a result, the objective of egalitarian justice is to build a community in which people stand in relation to equality with others (Anderson, 1999).

Based on the above concepts, this study defines workplace democracy as the application of democratic practices in workplaces, that range from voting and committees to a participative and self-management of employees. This includes involving and empowering employees in setting goals, strategies, solving problems, running the organization and influencing the decision-making that affects them. Workplace democracy is based on the concept that different actors in the society are free and equals.

4.9.4 How Did Managerialism Hinder Workplace Democracy?

Scholars have argued that the attack on academic self-governance and freedom is linked to the rise of managerialism, which is seen as the operational arm of neoliberalism (Misse & Martel, 2024; Lynch, 2014). Organizations that are controlled by managerial ideology consider workers as lazy, unproductive, and incapable of managing themselves, and thus require micro-management by top-level administrators who surveil to ensure productivity. Management control is deemed essential for labour to function, which is represented in the rise of managerial administrators in the early 20th century (Barrow, 1990). This institutionalisation of overpaid and powerful layers of top administrators reproduces the class, race, and gender relations of hierarchical capitalism (Misse and Martel, 2024). The idea of workplace solidarity and collegiality, which is essential to social democratic traditions, is gradually diminishing, and resulting in a more unequal and anti-democratic workplace (Boggs, 2019).

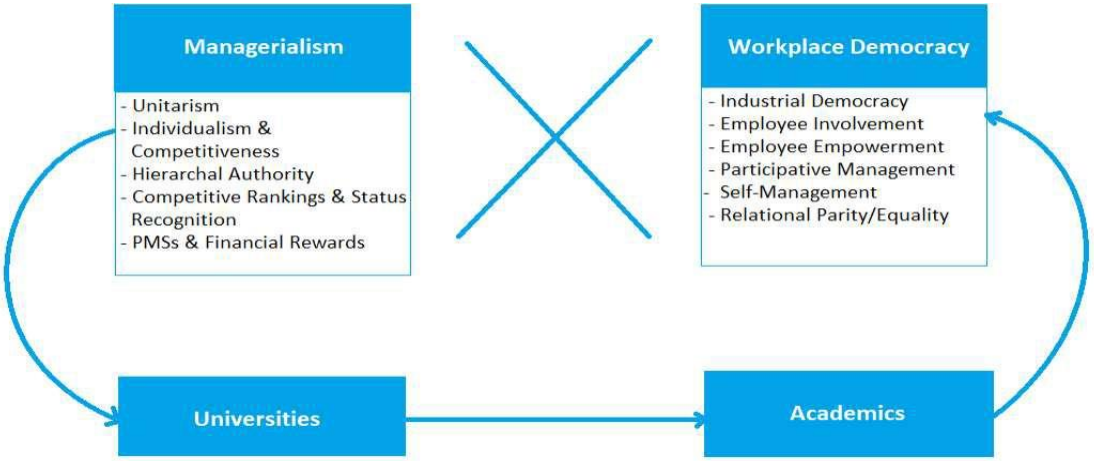


Figure 4.1 Theoretical Framework of the Research

As illustrated in Figure 4, the feature of managerialism contradicts and hinders workplace democracy. Both ideologies if operated in any workplace setting may lead to contradictory references for organizational actors. In the context of a university, degradations of workplace democracy could be seen in the corporatized process of deans, provosts, and chancellors9 recruitment (Misse and Martel, 2024). There is an increasing trend of new anti-democratic hiring processes, which involves a lack of transparency/ staff involvement discrimination, the creation of labour structures[1], and the alienation[2] of marginalised groups of individuals (Levin & Greenwood, 2016).

Managerialism induced by powerful economic interests distorts individuals' understanding of their freedom. These interests shape how work is structured, legal systems, and the dominant cultural beliefs (Marx,1887 as cited in Holmer Nadesan and Cheney, 2017). In the 20th century, critical inquiry extended this analysis to address diverse forms of alienation caused by bureaucratization (Webb & Cheney, 2014). The rise of modern corporations was viewed with suspicion due to the control they exerted over resources, labour, daily life, and democracy. High-performance expectations (driven by managerialism) and poor job design cause employee anxiety, and frustration (Han and Garg, 2018). Employees are treated as disposable based on contractual fee-for-service labour arrangements that seem to have a lack of voice and are detached from the oversight of governance functions (Levin & Greenwood, 2016). In a

[1] Labor structure refers to the organization and composition of the workforce. For instance, the composition of temporary vs permanent contracts (Santiago and Carvalho, 2008; Loveday, 2018)
[2] Alienation is the feeling of being disconnected, estranged, disengaged, or detached that individuals experience within the academic setting (Webster, 1995).

managerialist organization, the working class tends to be exploited which undermines the principles of a democratic workplace (Pausch, 2013).

Such an authoritarian view of workplace structure is apparent in both universities and business schools9 governance. The working model of academic staff tends to situate them on fixed-term contracts, creates a quasi-feudal relationship of dependency and undermines the basic preconditions for sustainable industrial action (Schmitt, 2023). This clashes with the idea of democratic participation and equal/just employment schemes. The rise in part-time academics has led to a decrease in free speech rights for employees (Misse & Martel, 2024). Administrators and managers have been seen as increasingly limiting free speech and civil discourse on campus to manage their institution's image. A clear example of that is the case of redundancies at the University of Leicester in 2020 (Harvie, 2024), which sparked worries about the absence of academic freedom, workplace democracy and substantial consultation in the decision-making procedures (UCU, 2021b). The decision-making process regarding the redundancies at the University of Leicester was primarily driven by the university administration, with limited staff involvement or meaningful consultation. Staff criticized the lack of transparency and the top-down approach in the decision-making process (UCU, 2021a). They also claimed for unfair dismissal and highlighted concerns about limited accountability and the potential impact on academic freedom (Williams, 2024).

Unpaid internships for undergraduate and graduate peer teachers are another form of labour exploitation, as noted by Kezar et al. in 2019. They also argued that post-doctorate fellowships before faculty positions add another level of labour exploitation due to poor pay, lack of benefits, and no long-term contracts. This has resulted in a casualization of the workforce in academia, with a new employment structure characterized by a fragmented and misclassified workforce, disaggregated, deprofessionalized, and individualized roles, mandatory micro-entrepreneurship, managerial control over labour supply and demand, approaches to reduce labour costs, and a rise in structural discrimination. In the end, academics are pushed to trade in their shared public missions for individual careers, prestige, and profits which leads to cause of the creation of capitalistic academic individualism. The creation of a privileged class of tenured professors and an underprivileged class of lecturer faculty are the classic examples of divide-and-conquer tactics deployed by managerialist in business schools (Misse and Martel, 2024).

This division creates a sense of privilege among the tenured professors, who may not realize that their own future is being shaped without their consent, while leaving the lecturer faculty feeling disempowered and marginalized. Since its inception, higher education has been marked by a history of exploitation, racism, and misogyny, as well as resistance and zones of democracy. At the turn of the twentieth century, many university presidents adopted the ideology of

management. According to Barrows, this shift in focus brought them more prestige, higher salaries, offers for better positions, and directorships at foundations or corporations. As a result, university presidents have become more focused on accumulating educational capital through benefactions and appropriations. This has led to a growing layer of highly paid administrators, which has widened the gap between presidents and faculties in terms of social status and hierarchy. Many full-time professional administrators see management as an end in itself. They may have no faculty experience and prioritize expanding their own administrative domains over promoting teaching and research. Moreover, university presidents are sometimes referred to as CEOs. During the last 40 years of neoliberalism, faculty self-governance declined sharply, partly due to the agenda to deprofessionalize faculty members by reducing their authority (Kezar et al., 2019). Indeed, decision-making authority among faculty has decreased as administrators have taken over. Even areas that were previously controlled by faculty, such as curriculum planning, are now being centralized. As a result, faculty have become less involved in shaping a university's mission and are now seen more as workers rather than educators serving to generate profit rather than provide knowledge. Professors unbundled their own profession by separating teaching and service from research (Kezar et al., 2019). They are focusing on government-funded research. This trend stems from the concept of "scientific management". The idea is to break down complex work processes into simpler components that can be standardized and delivered more cheaply by low- to middle-skilled labour. This approach has led to the displacement of academic faculty and the use of more contingent hires in universities. Tenure was originally meant to protect a public good, but it was perverted by tenured professors who prioritized their own careers. They became self-interested and relied on others to do their work. Tenured professors rely on graduate students to teach their courses and work in their labs. This leads to exploitation and privatization of higher education.

Furthermore, professionals have surrendered their autonomy to managerial change agendas, including academics who comply with instrumental rewards (Alvesson and Spicer, 2016). This compliance starkly contrasts traditional understandings of academics as difficult to manage. The pursuit of upward mobility leads to passive disdain, yet most academics remain complicit with the process and are willing to 8play the game9. Academics often choose cynical complicity over protest, believing it won't make a difference or will hinder their career (Newfield, 2023). Academics prioritize commitment to the discipline and the journal system over traditional academic values, leading to a system of control enforced by academics on each other (Barker, 1993). The focus on journal lists has been enforced both from above by university managers and below by the academics themselves. Academics surrender their autonomy by embracing rankings, performance measurement, and similar systems (Newfield, 2023). This entails changes in how academics see themselves. They criticize these techniques but also measure their own

self-worth in terms of them. This creates a strange doublethink whereby they outsource their meaning to what is being evaluated and rewarded by others (Magala, 2009).

4.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored 8managerialism9 and 8workplace democracy9 and their relevance to the study of academics9 emotional and behavioural responses to the intensified usage of PMSs in UK business schools. Managerialism emphasizes efficiency, control, and hierarchical authority, often implemented through PMS and financial incentives (Bobe & Kober 2020; Winter 2017). It prioritizes managerial techniques and standardization across diverse sectors, including academia, under the justification of maximizing profitability and minimizing costs (Juusola 2022; Klikauer 2015). Conversely, workplace democracy advocates for employee participation in decision-making processes, emphasizing autonomy, equality, and shared governance (Frega et al. 2019; Pausch 2013).

The chosen frameworks provide an appropriate lens for examining the dynamics within business schools, as they highlight the tension between control-oriented managerial practices and the more participatory, inclusive approaches promoted by workplace democracy (Levin & Greenwood 2016). Managerialism, entrenched through neoliberal capitalism, fosters an environment where hierarchy, competition, and performance metrics overshadow collegiality, autonomy, and democratic governance (Jones et al. 2020; Shatil 2020). This dynamic resonates deeply with the experiences of professionals in academic settings, where pressures to meet quantifiable targets often suppress meaningful engagement and innovation (Billsberry, Ambrosini, & Thomas 2023).

Despite the appropriateness of these theories, there are notable limitations. Managerialism, for instance, tends to be overly focused on control, often at the expense of acknowledging the complexities of human behaviour and organizational context (Parker, 2014). It risks alienating employees, as seen in how academics experience stress, burnout, and a lack of autonomy (Deasy & Mannix-McNamara, 2017). Workplace democracy, while offering a more equitable approach, faces practical challenges in implementation, particularly within the hierarchical and performance-driven structures of modern institutions like business schools (Petersson & Spang, 2006). Furthermore, the democratization of decision-making can be time-consuming and may conflict with the fast-paced demands of academic and corporate environments (Han & Garg, 2018).

In reflection, while these theories expose key dynamics in business schools, they must be adapted to account for real-world complexities. The limitations of managerialism highlight the importance of integrating more flexible, humane approaches to accountability, while the

challenges of workplace democracy suggest a need for balancing participatory ideals with organizational efficiency. Together, these theories offer a robust framework to understand and critically assess the competing demands and pressures of managerial control and democratic participation in UK academia (Misse & Martel 2024).

Chapter 5 Methodology and Methods

5.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to introduce and outline key aspects of research design, research strategy, and empirical techniques applied based on the philosophical assumptions underpinning my thesis. This chapter starts with exploring the research approach. Explanation of participant selection criteria and data collection techniques are further explored. Next, strategies for coding and data analysis are explored to show the novelty of the research process. Lastly, the researcher's efforts to maintain plausibility, credibility and ethical preservation are explained to build trust in the research process conducted, as well as the findings and the conceptualisation being offered.

5.2 Research Strategy

This research adopts a qualitative approach (Martin-Sardesai *et al.*, 2017; Kalfa, Wilkinson and Gollan, 2018; Gebreiter and Hidayah, 2019; Gebreiter, 2021b; Nguyen and Hiebl, 2021), framed around a triangulation of interviews, social media and document analysis. Academics are used as the unit of analysis as they are the most affected recipients of the PMSs (Aboubichr and Conway, 2021). This inductive research strategy is used to deepen understanding of the phenomenon in its context through collecting empirical evidence from people in contemporary real-life situations with no control of the researcher (Myers, 2020). Moreover, this research strategy is suitable for searching the constitutive nature of accounting in its social and organizational context, discovering what is beyond the numbers and the economic technicality of accounting (Hoque, 2017).

5.3 Explanation of Participant Selection Criteria and Data Collection

For the purposes of this study, I adopt a triangulation of data collection techniques (Nguyen and Hiebl, 2021) as combining field interviews with social media analysis and documents corroborates the data collected from the interviews, allowing for a more contextual analysis of the interview data and ongoing refinement of the interview questions as more insight about the phenomenon and its context is gained from participants9 experiences (Hoque, 2017, p.323).

5.3.1 Interviews

This study adopts qualitative interviews as the primary technique of data collection. It was aimed at developing a deep understanding of academics' views, opinions, experiences, and responses

to the extensive use of PMSs in UK HE (Gebreiter and Hidayah, 2019; Pilonato and Monfardini, 2022). Interviews are conversational practices used to gather primary data from people, understand their world, thoughts, perceptions and experiences to go beyond measurable and/observable accounting practices, also, use their own language, not the qualitative researcher's language although she is the research instrument (Hoque, 2017; Myers, 2020).

I selected a random sample of 18 business schools from the top quartile of the REF 2021 ranking table. As mentioned by Mingers and Willmott (2013), business schools have evolved into some of the largest departments in universities, and the faculty members within them frequently face significant levels of pressure. Moreover, prior research suggests that academics engage in gaming behaviours within business schools (Alvesson and Spicer, 2016; Clarke and Knights, 2015; Tourish and Craig, 2020). The sample combined Russell and non-Russell group universities and includes research and teaching-intensive universities to cover all the aspects of PMSs and identify any significant differences in their impact between these categories.

Participant selection criteria were being a full-time middle-to-mature academic in a UK business school. However, early career researchers (ECRs) and well-established academics were included to explore a wide panorama of academics9 opinions. Participants were on balanced contracts, teaching-only or research-only contracts. Their recruitment occurred via emails and snowball technique. In each university, two to seven academics were interviewed depending on the size of their business schools and their willingness and availability to participate as well. In total, 52 academics were interviewed, with a response rate of 54% (52 out of 94). The total number of interviews was determined upon reaching saturation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Table 5.1 Demographics of Interviewees

		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	27	52%
	Female	25	48%
Seniority	Lecturers (L1-L8)	8	15%
	Senior Lecturers (SL1-SL7)	7	33%
	Associate Professors (AP1-AP10)	10	
	Professors (P1-P14)	14	27%
	Teaching Fellow (TF1-TF7)	7	13%
	Senior Teaching Fellow (STF1-STF6)	6	12%
Position	Dean	3	6%
	Head of Department	3	6%
	Research Lead	4	8%
	Teaching Lead	5	9%
	REF Panel Member	2	4%
	Journal Editor	4	8%
	Not applicable	31	59%
University Type	Research-Intensive	28	54%
	Teaching-Intensive	24	46%
	Russel Group	27	51%
	Non-Russell / Post 1992	25	49%
Contract Type	Balanced contract	31	60%
	Research contract	11	21%
	Teaching contract	10	19%

The interview lasted between 30 minutes to 2 hours and 45 minutes. The demographics of my research participants are illustrated in Table 5.1 above. Out of the 52 interviews, 20 were face-to-face and 32 were via Microsoft Teams. Semi-structured interviews were adopted (Martin-Sardesai *et al.*, 2017; Kalfa, Wilkinson and Gollan, 2018) in order to ensure a balance between flexibility and consistency (Hoque, 2017). The interview questions were open-ended questions adopted from (Aboubichr and Conway, 2021) and modified by me according to the research questions (see Appendix A). Interviews were recorded using audiotaping upon the consent of the participants while full disclosure would be practised prior to recording including the purpose of the study, ensuring privacy, confidentiality and confirming compliance with research ethical standards (Kalfa, Wilkinson and Gollan, 2018).

The data collection process started at the beginning of November 2022 by conducting a pilot study by interviewing 6 academics in Southampton Business School that I had been contacted with, and they expressed interest in participating. The pilot study aims to provide guidance for a substantive study, preparing researchers to face challenges and be confident in data collection (Malmqvist *et al.*, 2019). Proper analysis can identify weaknesses to address, and results can inform subsequent research. It is regarded as an essential requirement to ensure trustworthiness and research quality (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Conducting a pilot study increases the reliability and validity of the research, making it a crucial part of the research design(Gudmundsdottir & Brock-Utne, 2010). The focus should be on identifying the need to modify questions or procedures to obtain rich data (Kim, 2010).

Further, a second phase of interviews consisted of 24 interviews, followed by the last phase consisting of 22 interviews. The interviews ended by the end of July 2023, upon reaching saturation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

5.3.2 Document Analysis

Document analysis is a qualitative research method that involves systematically examining and interpreting the content of documents to extract meaningful information relevant to a research question. This method allows researchers to analyze both the text and the context of the documents, enabling them to uncover themes, patterns, and insights that contribute to understanding social phenomena (Bowen, 2009; O'Leary, 2017).

In this research, I conducted a comprehensive document analysis of various sources to explore the key research themes. The aim is to answer the first research question: how managerialism (re) shapes the UK business schools9 academic workplace and the intensification of PMSs? I collected a diverse range of documents from university websites, including the "Research Strategy 202032025," "Research Impact and Knowledge Exchange," and the "Learning & Teaching

Strategy 2021-25," which provided insights into institutional priorities and frameworks guiding research initiatives (Bowen, 2009; O'Leary, 2017). Additionally, I analyzed materials from the REF website, such as the "REF 2014 Impact Case Studies" and "REF 2021 Code of Practice," which were instrumental in understanding assessment criteria and expectations in the UK academic landscape (Woods et al., 2020). I also included pertinent external sources like the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and reports from UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) that contribute to discussions on research quality and equity (Hicks et al., 2015).

Each document was meticulously examined for content, key messages, and underlying themes, with a particular focus on coding relevant passages and categorizing them according to the identified themes (Flick, 2018). This systematic approach allowed me to triangulate findings across different documents, ultimately enhancing the credibility of my analysis (Kuckartz, 2014), and providing a nuanced understanding of how managerialism (re) shapes the UK business schools9 academic workplace and the intensification of PMSs. A list of the documents that have been reviewed and included in the empirics analysis is shown in Table 5.2 below. This analysis indicated the universities9 mission, goals, and research/teaching directions (Martin-Sardesai *et al.*, 2017; Nguyen and Hiebl, 2021; Pilonato and Monfardini, 2022). Documents could be of different types (see Myers, 2020, p.188) and their quality could be assessed by Scott9s (1990) criteria of authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning.

Table 5.2 A list of documents included in the empirics analysis

Document Source	**Document Name**	**No. of Pages**
University website and magazine (No. of pages are for each university)	Research Strategy 202032025	9
	Research Centre/office	1-2
	Research impact and knowledge exchange	19
	Research features	6
	Impact Case Studies	2
	Understanding the REF	35
	Strategy 2025	1
	Learning & teaching Strategy 2021-25	1
REF Website	REF 2014 impact case studies	4
	REF 2021 code of practice	17
	RAE 2008	1
San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)		1
Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS)		3

Wikipedia	Higher education accreditation in the United Kingdom	1
	Rankings of universities in the United Kingdom	1
UK Research & Innovation (UKRI)	How Research England Supports Research Excellence (REF)	2
	Future Research Assessment Programme Provisional Equality Impact Assessment	61
National Student Survey (NSS)		1
Office for Students (OfS)		5
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)		1

5.3.3 Social Media Analysis

Another additional method of data gathering is the analysis of academics/universities' social media platforms, whether LinkedIn or X (previously known as Twitter). I followed the steps outlined by Masiero, Leoni and Bagnoli (2023) to conduct a social media analysis. This approach involves digital ethnography to observe and immerse oneself in a specific online environment, gather and analyze digital data, posts, comments, and reactions to gain insights into a specific phenomenon. This methodology is particularly pertinent to my study on how managerialism has transformed business schools and its impact on the emotional well-being of academics. Additionally, as this methodology allows for the collection of comprehensive data that encompasses a broad audience of users (Jeacle, 2021), it can provide further insights into the role of social media disclosure in a context where managerialism dominates the business school and influences its work environment. In practice, social media analysis enables the collection of abundant data by naturally and economically observing digital users' behaviour without being intrusive (Kozinets, 2002).

Throughout my research, I utilized social media analysis to gather and examine data by observing the activities of academics and their respective universities. I opted for a passive non-participatory approach to prevent any potential interference with users' online behavior following (Masiero, Leoni and Bagnoli, 2023). Furthermore, the social media platforms (LinkedIn and X) I utilized were public, and all posts, comments, and reactions were publicly accessible. However, I ensured the academics and their universities remained anonymous. From November 2022 to July 2023, I regularly accessed the LinkedIn and X pages of the participants and their universities, collecting all posts containing keywords such as "research," "publication," "REF," "NSS," "pressure," and "stress." I then coded the data to uncover the main themes present in the contents of the online postings.

A list of the reviewed profiles is indicated below in Table 5.3. It was crucial to identify how academics express their responses and emotions through their social media platforms. This analysis contributes to the originality of my research as analysing academics' reactions through their social media platforms is still an underdeveloped area of research (Masiero, Leoni and Bagnoli, 2023; Veletsianos, 2016; Chugh et al., 2020).

Table 5.3 A list of reviewed social media profiles of participants and their universities.

Social Media Platform	Reviewed Profiles
LinkedIn	52 academics9 profiles (participants) 18 university profiles
X (previously known as Twitter)	52 academics9 profiles (participants)
	18 university profiles

5.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis process started after the first few interviews as the overlap between collection and analysis of data helps in the latter while capitalizing flexibility in the data gathering process (Eisenhardt, 1989). Sensitized by the theoretical and methodological foundations of this research and considering what others have approached similar topics of research (Martin-Sardesai *et al.*, 2017), the data was subjected to thematic analysis (Aronson, 1994; Braun and Clarke, 2016; Guest et al., 2012). Thematic analysis is concerned with identifying, examining and recording themes[3] within data, while themes are developed from coding (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Miles and Huberman, 1994). This thematic research was an iterative process of bottom-up (inductive) (Braun and Clarke, 2012; Frith and Gleeson, 2004), and top-down (deductive) analysis of the data (Boyatzis, 1998; Hayes, 1997).

In conducting the thematic analysis, I utilized the Gioia methodology (GM) to elucidate the codes, themes, and aggregate concepts (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2013; Magnani and Gioia, 2023; Jimenez-Partearroyo, Medina-Lopez and Rana, 2024). GM is a qualitative research approach known for its ability to bring "qualitative rigour" to inductive research (Kaspar, 2024, Akbobi, 2017, 2021). It aims to systematically develop new concepts and theories while maintaining a disciplined approach to data interpretation (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2013; Magnani and Gioia, 2023). The methodology involves developing data analysis through three key stages (Corley

[3] Themes: <patterns explaining certain phenomenon= (Myers, 2020, p.210).

and Gioia, 2004): creating analytic two layers of codes and categories, developing an inductive research model, and presenting the study's findings through a detailed, data-based narrative. This approach is designed to meet rigorous standards of trustworthy research and provides greater rigour by employing a systematic and holistic approach to concept development. Tables 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6 below show how codes were extracted from the data and then categorized into themes. Indeed, the data analysis process using GM involved five stages:

First-Order Coding: In the initial phase of my data analysis, I commenced by discerning <1st-order Concepts= within the dataset (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2013; Magnani and Gioia, 2023). The approach involved categorizing the data and predominantly employing the language intrinsic to the dataset. This process led to the identification of 57 distinct concepts.

Second-Order Themes: I sifted through the 1st-order Concepts logically and identified patterns to consolidate them into 20 more abstract categories (Ewald, 2023). Using these abstract categories, I crafted themes using my own language, distancing myself from the exact wording of

Table 5.4 Managerial gaming strategies in response to PMSs and data supporting the themes.

First-order codes	Second-order themes	Definition of Second-order themes	Representative quotes
▪ Lack of Clarity in Evaluation Feedback ▪ Moving Performance Targets	Setting ambiguous PMSs	University managers play with the rules through the lack of system transparency or even keep changing targets.	<There is no clarity [regarding feedback on their performance]. They ask you a few questions, and you are not clear what is the outcome of the evaluation, what has happened, and how they evaluated you. Are you eligible for more or not? What is going to happen next? Are you doing right or not?= (female lecturer, teaching-focused university, non-Russel group}. <You can sometimes feel that you are not quite sure what the rules are in your institution because they keep moving every time they move the reforms= (female professor, ex-REF panel assessor, teaching-focused university, non-Russel group}.
▪ Inappropriate change of Contracts ▪ Fractional Recruitment ▪ Managing REF Submission	Appropriating of contracts, recruitment, and promotion	University managers game the quantitative metrics by changing balanced contracts into teaching, fractional recruiting of well-established professors, or even managing the REF submissions.	"The main way of gaming the system is to move people off teaching and research contracts onto teaching only. So I think that part of the gaming of having people not count is already done, and I would observe that as people are adding new stuff, a lot of colleagues are starting off on teaching-only contracts and then might move to teach and research and that's quite a tough task= (female professor, research centre director, non-Russel Group university}. <Fractional contracts. So let's say an American professor, we've four top American Economic Review or top four-star journals. Who is in the US, but you give this person a 20% contract, and then this person's papers are counted in the REF. But the person actually never turns up at the university. It's basically buying a star player but not playing. It's just for the REF. So they're sort of mechanisms by which universities have been trying to up the ranking, up the scores in the REF= (Female Professor, previous dean, research-focused university, Russel Group}.
▪ Purposeful Social Events for Students ▪ Students' Feedback game	Treating students as customers	University managers try to please the customers through creating social events, or manipulating feedback in order to manage the NSS ratings.	<&they can play the game where they spoil students at a certain time. Maybe they do social events, they try to attract them...some institutions one day do certain events. The purpose is just to help with the NSS. But at the same time, students get an advantage. For instance, one day, invite potential employers to speak to students at a social event that will add value to students because students manage to get a job through that. So, I don't wanna say the university played the game, but the university tries to adhere to the regulations. They try to make everything fit with the full picture= {male teaching fellow, teaching-focused university, non-Russel Group}.

Table 5.5 Academics9 gaming strategies in response to PMSs and data supporting the themes.

First-order codes	Second-order themes	Definition of Second-order themes	Representative quotes
▪ Boxing Academics ▪ Data Slicing ▪ shifting toward Quantitative methods	Publication Game	Academics play it safe regarding choosing the right journal, methodology, or even theory. Gaming also include using the same data set to produce multiple publications.	<If it's in the wrong journal, it doesn't count. So that was my previous senior manager's view, which is not the view you'd hope the individual would take. So, the type of journal is important, and there can be problems interpreting that because we use the ABS list; there are journals on the ABS list that won't take the research from the business community, but they're still on the list for some reason. So the problem is it's that execution= (Male lecturer, Research intensive, Russel Group University). <Some scholars do things such as salami slicing in publication. So when they publish, they try to publish four papers using the same data with pretty much incremental contribution&= (female lecturer, editor of a Journal, research-intensive university-Russel Group}.
Academics Promotion Game	Academics Promotion Game	Academics blackmail their institutions by using their publications/fund power to get promoted or leave.	<Often, if a person wants to apply for promotion, it's much easier to go for promotion elsewhere rather than being internally promoted. A really good bargaining chip is to have an offer from elsewhere and then go to your boss and say 8Do you want to match that?9 Basically, they blackmail the institution because they say, 8If you don't Give me a promotion, I'll leave9. And if the institution is under pressure, it can't lose any more staff, or the boss thinks that's a key person got to keep them, and it' s imperative so they get a promotion without an interview, without having to go through the regular promotion process. So that's what KPIs can do. They can lead to unintended consequences in terms of behaviour= (Male associate professor, research -intensive university-Russel Group}.
Using PhD students	ECR & PhD Students Grooming	Senior academics use their PhD students as a publications machine. They also push ECR to work on their own papers or even add their names to their papers.	<Supervisors, if you've got PhD students, supervisors will put their names on papers written by their students. And the argument for doing that is that, well, the supervisors guided the student. But I think that's wrong. You should if the PhD student is doing the work, then it's their paper. The fact that you're supervising them is irrelevant < (male senior lecturer at a research-intensive university, Russel Group}. <Senior academics are grooming not only their PhD students but also early career researchers. They are asking them to work on their own papers and will never put their name on them. As I was not playing their game, they rejected my promotion. Even if I met all the criteria, they told me I did not go to enough conferences!= (female lecturer, research-intensive university, Russel Group}.
▪ Gaming the Feedback ▪ NSS Manipulation	TEF & NSS Manipulation {Teaching Aspect}	Academics game the teaching metrics by gaming the feedback or even sending informal questionnaires to the students.	<I think there were some cases where people were changing the evaluation. I think somebody in the school mentioned that they caught somebody doing this= (male lecturer, research-intensive university, Russel Group}. <I think most universities try to play the game with TEF, where they try to, for instance, back in days when they released the NSS. They used the word feedback, and then they started to use it instead of office hours. They start to use feedback hours just to tell students that this is the feedback they're getting because students say, <Ohh, we didn't get any feedback.= even if you ask a lecturer a question and the lecturer answers that question, that's feedback itself. So students didn't define feedback, so they tried to use feedback all over the place, I would say= (Male teaching fellow, teaching university, non-Russel Group}.

Table 5.7 academics' emotional responses to PMSs and data supporting the themes.

Anxiety	Anxiety	The feeling of anxiety is extremely developing among UK academics due to the fear of losing their job, and uncertainty about the PMSs or their possible outcomes.	<REF, it discourages a lot. It creates anxiety because I can see, for example, my peers publishing and I can see them discussing that they have done a certain amount of publications already, that they're collaborating with someone else, like people from different universities and everything. And then you look at yourself and like, I haven't done anything of it&I complain, I say I cry, It makes me sad. That I cannot accomplish what I have planned. It makes me anxious because the topics that I'm working very time-sensitive and if I don't get it out now, someone else will get it. Sometimes I lose my willingness to do anything= (female lecturer, Teaching-focused university, non-Russel Group}.
Social/Personal life	Social Belonging	Academics suffer from social isolation due to lack of peer support, and work-life balance issues.	<You might have a personal life, and if I9m working the weekend when my partner wants to go out shopping or watch a film or something and I want to sit on a computer and do something so it's a social cost. It affected my social life, it affected my networks because I've been too much involved with this one. I'm not able to give them time ever, take them out. If I have family and children, their education might be affected. Their life experience might be affected. If the children don't go to school, and don't study, they become delinquent. What's the point of my research if I have neglected them? my wife left me!= (male professor, research lead, teaching-focused university, non-Russel Group}.
Frustration	Depression	Frustration occurs in academia due to the high rejection rate of publication, lack of recognition from the university side, or the complexity of multiple PMSs.	<I feel quite disappointed. Rejection rate in academia exceeds 95%= (Male Lecturer, research university, Russell Group}.
Disrespect Mistrust	Dis-respect	Extensive PMSs in academia have brought feelings of disrespect and mistrust to the table. In addition, academics perceive a decrease in social status due to changes in the power balance in students-academics relationships, and academics-universities relationships.	<I feel like not getting recognised for the sort of who I am, but just what I produce, I do think we've lost that, you know, gone are the days of sort of returning to walk through some campus like Oxford or Cambridge with classical music playing and you are having a position status as an academic, that's gone, though I think we're just managed employees. It is a shame and these things contribute to it=.
Narcissism vs Jealousy	Narcissism vs Jealousy	PMSs reshape the academic self toward a narcissistic pride and induce comparisons between peers which in turn creates jealousy among them.	<There is jealousy. There is a competition and some see me as a role model and they aspire to replicate me= (Male Professor, Research lead, teaching-focused, non-Russel Group}.
Pressure Fatigue and Health Consequences	Pressure, Fatigue and Its Health Consequences	Academics face a lot of pressures due to the race for publications, promotion, REF, the competition for funds or even impact.	<People do feel pressure, particularly newer researchers, and the problem is Deans and others tend to put pressure on people to have 3/4 star papers. So you can put undue pressure on new researchers and others to put all their effort and getting everything into top journals= (female professor, journal board editor, non russel group university). <My colleague at [University Name] was marking exam scripts in his room, and from the stress he committed a suicide and hung up himself!= (Male professor, deputy dean, research university, non-Russell group}.

the data. I then identified the relationship between 2nd-order Themes and sketched that out. Finally, I gathered some fresh data.

Aggregated Dimensions: After finishing the data collection and coding, I revisited my second-order concepts (Jimenez-Partearroyo, Medina-Lopez and Rana, 2024; Gioia, 2021). This yielded 13 second-order themes and 3 theoretical dimensions: university managers gaming the PMSs, academics gaming the PMSs, and their emotional response to it. These dimensions are original and accurately depict the observed phenomenon.

Form a Data Structure: Upon analysing the formed 1st-order Concepts, 2nd-order Themes, and aggregated dimensions, a data structure has been developed (Gioia, 2019; 2021), as illustrated in Figure 5.1 below. This diagram accurately portrays the emergence of 2nd-order Themes from the 1st-order Concepts and the subsequent development of aggregated dimensions from the 2nd-order Theme.

Develop a Research Model: I have incorporated the observed dynamics and processes from my qualitative data and focused on examining the interrelationships between the concepts. The aggregated dimensions and the reappearance of 2nd-order Concepts in the inductive model (see Figure 6.1) illustrate their interconnectedness.

Moreover, I used NVivo Software as a helpful tool in supporting complex data management, enhancing the rigour of data analysis, improving the manual coding (Martin-Sardesai *et al.*, 2017; Kalfa, Wilkinson and Gollan, 2018), and pushing at the boundaries of what the researcher is normally inquire into (Hoque, 2017). To ensure the privacy of my participants, a coding system of fictional names was used (Martin-Sardesai *et al.*, 2017).

5.5 Maintaining Plausibility and Credibility

I applied Hammersley9s (1990) criteria of plausibility and credibility to maintain and assess the quality of this qualitative research. To begin with, I utilized a triangulation of data collection methods to validate the research findings across different sources and ensure that the results are not influenced by a single perspective (Nguyen and Hiebl, 2021). Furthermore, the research depended on the accounts of the informants (first-hand report) with no involvement or observation from the researcher's side. Additionally, the research made use of transcripts from audio recordings, which provide a more accurate and comprehensive reporting of what was said compared to handwritten notes. This was done to minimize the likelihood of error, considering the nature of the phenomenon and the potential for error due to the researcher's character (Hammersley, 1990).

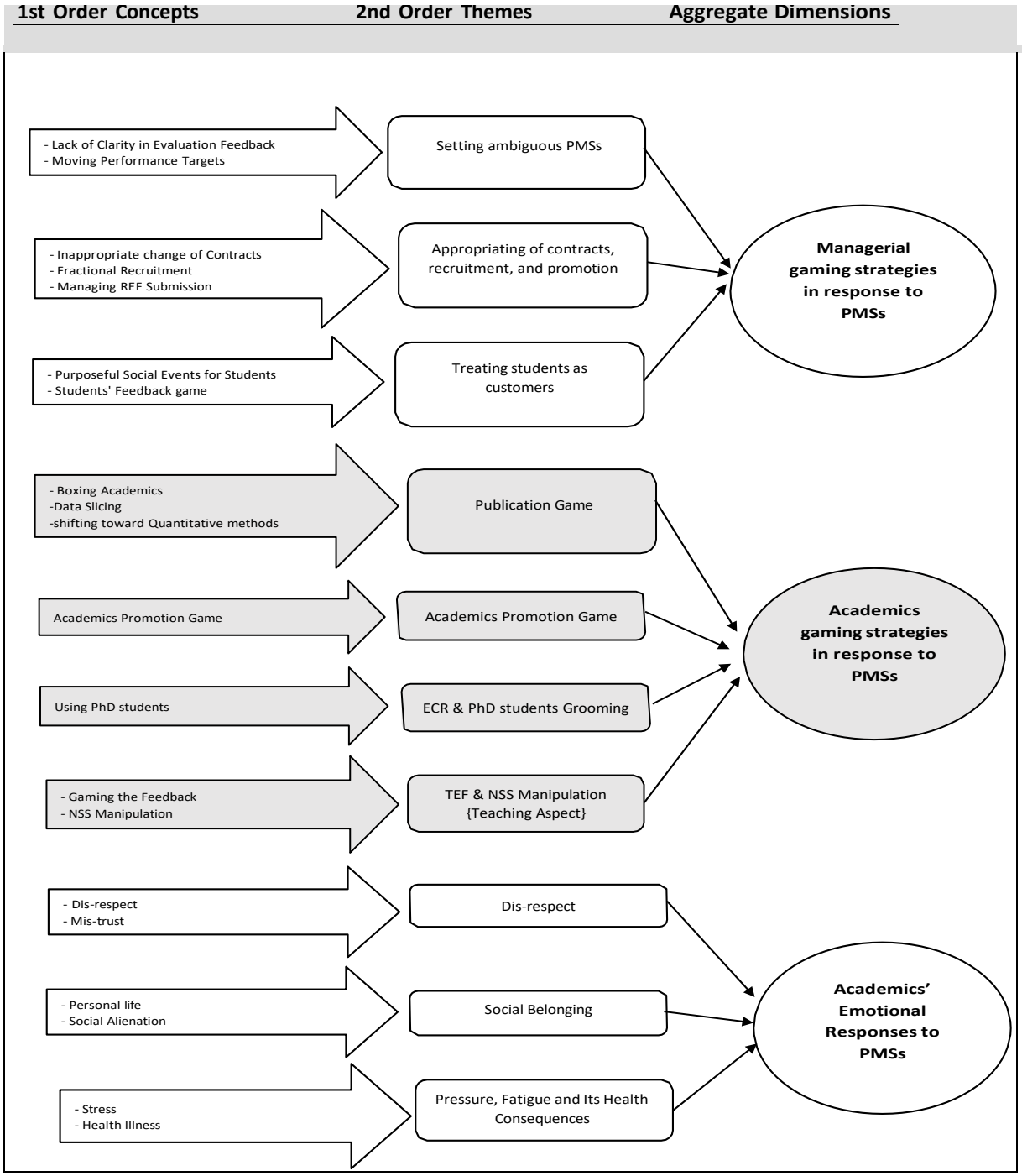


Figure 5.1 Data structure adopted from Corley and Gioia (2004) and modified according to this research data.

The validation process involved engaging research participants by sharing the findings with them and seeking their feedback (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Stenfors et al., 2020). This approach confirmed the accuracy of interpretations and ensured that they resonated with the participants' experiences. Additionally, the research findings underwent cross-checking against relevant literature review and theory to support the research claims and assess their plausibility based on existing knowledge (Hammersley, 1990). Furthermore, validity was reinforced by providing a

substantial amount of evidence to support the research claims. Additionally, a detailed record of all research decisions, data collection, and analysis processes was maintained to promote transparency. This transparency enables other researchers to follow the research steps and verify the credibility of the findings, as it has been argued by Hammersley (1990) that assessing credibility involves considering the process by which the evidential claims have been produced.

5.6 Ethical Consideration

I have attached a participant information sheet (see Appendix B) and a consent form (see Appendix C) to the invitation email sent to each participant. The former summarised information about the research, the confidentiality of the data, their rights, the output intentions and contact details. A written consent form was signed by all participants before conducting the interview. With regard to public documents/ profiles; no consent is necessary for their use. The data was encrypted and stored electronically in a separate password-protected file that is only accessible to me. To ensure the privacy of my participants, a coding system of fictional names was used (Martin-Sardesai *et al.*, 2017).

5.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has provided a detailed account of the research methodology and methods, demonstrating a comprehensive and rigorous approach to understanding the impact of PMSs on UK academics9 emotional and behavioural responses. The qualitative nature of the study, combining interviews, social media analysis, and document review, allowed for a triangulated perspective that enhanced the validity and depth of the findings. The selection of participants, representing a diverse range of institutions, roles, and contract types, ensured that the research captured a broad spectrum of experiences, from early-career researchers to well-established professors. This variety was essential in identifying the nuanced ways PMSs affect different academic groups.

The research strategy, rooted in thematic analysis and supported by the Gioia methodology, provided a robust framework for exploring the complexities of PMSs. The iterative process of coding and categorization revealed three primary dimensions: managerial gaming, academics gaming, and the emotional toll on academics. These findings are crucial for understanding the unintended consequences of PMSs, including the strategic manipulation by both university managers and academics to meet performance metrics, often at the cost of academic integrity and personal well-being.

Through the methodological rigour applied4such as participant feedback, cross-referencing with literature, and ethical transparency4the research maintains a high degree of plausibility and

credibility. The use of NVivo software further supported data management and analysis, ensuring a systematic and reliable process. The chapter has thus laid a strong foundation for the subsequent discussion of findings, offering a well-rounded exploration of how PMSs impact the emotional and behavioural aspects of UK academics.

Chapter 6 PMSs and Managerial Gaming Strategies

6.1 Introduction

The trajectory changes in UK Higher Education after implementing NPM have been described as <in crisis= (Brown and Carasso, 2013). Indeed, neoliberal ideologies pursue the use of PMSs to account public institutions for <value for money.= One of the negative consequences of the intensified adoption of PMSs in UK business schools was the emergence of unethical behaviour, which is called <Gaming behaviour= (Aboubichr and Conway, 2021). University managers face great pressure to meet the targets of REF, NSS, TEF and other accountability metrics. Indeed, these metrics hold the power to allocate research funds and the capability to increase tuition fees, following the cut on government fund (Martin-Sardesai *et al.*, 2017). This chapter explores different gaming strategies that university managers employ to cope with various measures and elements of PMSs. It focuses on the way university managers set rules of the game/norms that (re)shape individual interactions related to PMSs and different gaming techniques that university managers use to manage PMSs. The findings from my qualitative data analysis, discussed in Chapters 6, 7, and 8, are summarised in Diagram 6.1 below.

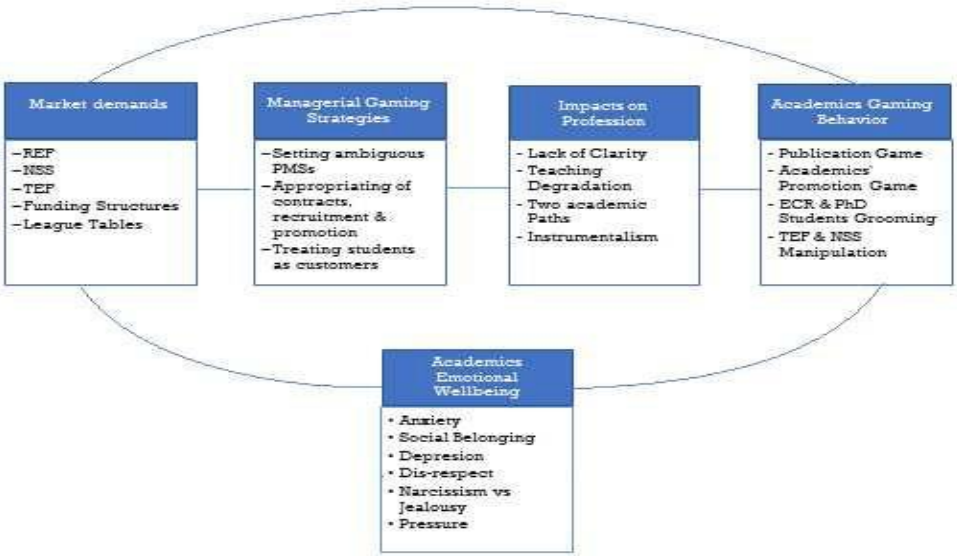


Figure 6.1 Research Model: Academics' behavioural and emotional responses to PMSs

The summarised findings in Diagram 6.1 above will be discussed in three chapters. This chapter identifies three gaming techniques in the analysis: 8setting ambiguous PMSs9, 8Appropriating contracts, recruitment and promotion9, and 8treating students as customers9. The next chapter will explore four individual academics9 gaming tactics, followed by an emotional aspect analysis in chapter 8.

6.2 Setting Ambiguous PMSs

The managerialist model is represented in different forms of calculative mechanisms that are translated into different PMSs to control, direct and reward academics9 works to meet various targets or measurable standards (Parker, 2011). The PMSs on academic works are somewhat unclear. Academics express their frustration with the lack of communication from the management or their line managers regarding the detailed elements or what is being measured. Salter (2010) argues that managers often pursue rule-making gaming strategies to influence the evaluation procedures and environment with loopholes, exclusions, and ambiguous language that allow opportunities to work around or circumvent the rules or to create ambiguities within the performance control system. Salter (2010) explores how managerial corruption can emerge through the manipulation of performance systems, often through "gaming" strategies that take advantage of ambiguities in evaluation criteria. This is particularly relevant in academia, where frequent adjustments to performance metrics, such as the REF, have led to confusion and strategic behaviour by both academics and managers. Recent changes in REF criteria, like the limitation on the transfer of publications between universities, reflect attempts to curb this behavior, but they also add complexity to the system. These rapid shifts in criteria contribute to a moving target for academics, creating pressure and uncertainty about how to meet the evolving standards of excellence.

> *<There is no clarity [regarding feedback on their performance]. They ask you a few questions, and you are not clear what is the outcome of the evaluation, what has happened, and how they evaluated you. Are you eligible for more or not? What is going to happen next? Are you doing right or not? I was evaluated in October. However, a research allowance was given in September, even though I was a lecturer from February of last year. The research allowance was allocated only in September. Then, they evaluated me in October for this coming year. Then they said, I have nothing because everything that I have published cannot be counted towards me, and I did not have my third paper even then= (L5, female lecturer, a teaching-focused university, non-Russell group).*

As expressed above, academics are left with ambiguous PMS evaluation criteria. She felt that there was a lack of clarity on how her works were evaluated and further rewarded. In fact, her first

publication was during her PhD journey and the second was while working as a teaching fellow. REF criteria exclude PhD students and teaching fellows from being 8referable9 (REF, accessed 2023), which is why her first two publications do not count towards her, and that was not communicated clearly. In her case, her main responsibilities in a teaching-focused university teaching and research are left in a grey area without a clear workload allocation or proper documentation and communication. Academics in such institutions often contend with substantial teaching responsibilities stemming from large student populations without proper appreciation of any research achievements. These also represent what Salter (2010) argues as rule-following gaming strategies, where the balanced research contract that the above academic is somewhat violated, as divisions of workload between research and teaching were made ambiguous. This represents a part of the picture in which managerialism controls the UK business schools that use social labour to maintain the production of the capitalistic ideology of the business elites and their interests from potential threats 8while presenting themselves as solutions to societal issues (Guilhot, 2007).

In such a case, workplace democratic practices are questionable, as academic staff9s involvement or the opportunity to have a say in the decision-making process (Battilana & Casciaro, 2021), and PMSs are made hierarchical and exercised under non-democratic processes with limited information provided for preserving employee interests (Goncharenko, 2023). This means that the most valuable and sensitive information is often only accessible to a privileged group of managers, while others are restricted by confidentiality arrangements and non-disclosure agreements (Bol, Kramer, & Maas, 2016). In essence, the level of transparency in a workplace is a crucial factor in establishing a democratic workplace (Han and Garg, 2018). A democratic workplace should allow employees to have access to complete information about the organization they work with and be involved in making informed decisions (Schnackenberg and Tomlinson, 2016; Linley and Joseph, 2004). A female senior academic who is also a deputy director of a research centre and a journal editor in a research-intensive university shares her experience with the PMSs and how the ambiguities of the system cause confusion and reduce motivation.

> *<The thing that I really dislike is the lack of transparency, so I do not mind being evaluated. But tell me what the evaluation framework is. tell me I want to contribute to the school9s performance, so let's have discussions about how we work together. And the absence of that, the silence, I find very unnerving in terms of motivation to do the work&It's anonymous [workload allocation model]. So you get a lecturer, senior lecturer, and professor, and there is a number of hours. And then there's a top-up. So it's very little transparency as to the breakdown=* (SL2).

As expressed above, she believed that the PMS works in an opaque way. The allocation of research, teaching, and other task hours is unclear, which results in demotivation from doing the job tasks. A point worth noting is the potential distortion in the application of criteria, particularly concerning the roles of teaching fellows. Despite teaching fellows being ineligible for REF submission, there have been reports of confusion among participants regarding the evaluation process. A male lecturer in a teaching-focused university, non-Russell Group, complained about his personal experience with unclear criteria.

> *<&they're trying to increase the supervisory capacity; they are trying to increase the number of people involved in research. So they are encouraging, for example, teaching fellows even to do research. We have applied for the project that has all the values that they have highlighted, increasing the supervisory capacity, increasing the research capacity, and involving teaching fellows. We got rejected right on the point that we have involved the teaching fellow. So that was the point that they had rejected us before because we were trying to have a teaching fellow in our research team. So the university says that they are encouraging, but they're not. It is not clear to us what we should exactly do. If you are a teaching fellow and you publish, you have to do it in your own time=* (L7).

In the aforementioned case, the participant expressed considerable confusion regarding the evaluation criteria. Their research project was turned down due to its involvement of teaching fellows. Since teaching fellows are not tasked with conducting research, it appears that there was a lack of clear communication regarding the evaluation criteria between the staff and their managers. This underscores the significance of effectively managing staff expectations.

Another male senior teaching fellow at a research-intensive Russel Group University raised concerns about the lack of clarity surrounding the evaluation metrics. He said:

> *<I found appraisals at university are jokes. They smashed freedom; I can9t do what I want to do. For example, I went to an internal review recently because I requested a pay rise. They asked me about research, although I am on a teaching-only contract. I don9t really understand what they value. I did a lot of citizenship activities for this university, but they did not consider it in the evaluation. It was an uncomfortable experience. I have self-doubt and I am quite confused about the evaluation criterion=* (STF3).

Furthermore, moving targets were readily noticeable within research-intensive universities, prompting the institution to adjust its expectations each time an academic met the target. This led to significant confusion amid the shifting landscape. On the other flip, modifying PMSs criteria represents the institution's adaptation to external environmental changes (Posen and Levinthal,

2012). A male professor in a research-intensive university, non-Russell Group, has explained how changing the performance targets increases its vagueness:

> *<If you're an academic, you follow, you're trying to catch up with this, and you say, oh, you need three stars. OK. Yeah, I'll get three stars. Then you get three stars. Then they tell you that it is not good enough. You need it four. OK, next time, I will get it four. So next time I work in, I get it four. Yeah. But you don't have an impact. And then you know. So basically, every time there is a moving target situation, the impact is an example of a moving target now. Criteria keep changing, which is not quite clear! =* (P1).

As expressed above, this male professor has expressed his frustration with the rapid changes in academic PMS criteria. Indeed, academics feel confused about the system targets. The continuous changes in the metrics criteria have put significant pressure on academics, especially in research-intensive universities.

In addition, a female professor and an ex-REF panel assessor in a teaching-focused university, a non-Russell group, have confirmed that continuous changes in criteria and numerous metrics have confused the academics and university managers in applying the PMSs. She illustrated:

> *<You can sometimes feel that you're not quite sure what the rules are in your institution because they keep moving every time they move the reforms=* (P10).

The ambiguity surrounding PMSs in academia can be attributed to various factors. The coexistence of multiple logics may lead to confusion among university managers regarding the simultaneous application of different metrics, whether external or internal. This confusion can cascade down to individual academics, potentially impacting their motivation towards their work. A female professor from a research-intensive university, Russell Group, has expressed her feelings towards her managers and said:

> *<I feel as if a lot of the performance indicators are selected by people who do not understand what it is to be an academic and do not value what it is to be an academic=* (P12).

As expressed above, academics felt that they are overly measured in different aspects of their jobs. Their research and teaching works are surrounded by complex demands/ pressures that represent the terms 'zombie university' and 'toxic university' to characterize the lack of transparency in the changes implemented by universities (Smyth, 2017; Murphy, 2017). The neoliberalism ideology shapes the UK business schools9 political elites (Adisa et al., 2023; Downs, 2017). Managers, on the one hand, might choose to have some ambiguities within the

PMSs to be able to game it. On the other hand, the system itself is structured by conflicted ideologies (public vs private), which consequently leads to inherited complexity and vagueness.

6.3 Appropriating of Contracts, Recruitment, and Promotion: How University Managers Manage the REF Submission (Research Aspect)

> *<Our REF leader at [University name] has said to me I want your best six on the list because I might have to use them all. Because I think there might be some staff whose best one or two, are not actually very good, so they'll be counted in the number of staff submitting for REF, but I'll use yours. I might have to use your whole 6 to get my one-per-staff average so you can see the gaming. Every risk has gaming going on by the people, the senior managers that are putting the submissions together and by the most junior staff who are trying to second guess how the system's gonna work and how they're going to look in terms of their own tenure and promotion, they don't wanna be seen to have no publications that are included in the REF at all. That's not a good look=* (P5).

In a managerialist model, business schools vie for the tuition of international students as well as grants from government entities and private corporations (Kauppinen, 2012). Managerialism has empowered university managers to exercise agency and ensure academics work within the scope of corporate-like work arrangements (Winter, 2017). A Professor in a research-intensive university, Russell Group above suggests that a strategic management of REF submissions is essential for the long-term viability of universities, and various strategies are implemented to achieve this goal. It goes on at the managerial level, where university managers try to manipulate the contracts and structures to ensure they have the best number of academics going into the REF.

One approach highlighted by him details how university managers selectively choose top-tier publications authored by senior academics for submission to the REF, while disregarding outputs from other members of the academic staff.

Another strategy for managing the REF submission is manipulating academics9 contracts. This strategy is explained below by two of my participants:

> *<There was pressure from the school on each department because, at that time, each staff member should have some kind of certain level of output in terms of how many research papers they produce by 2014. The whole school was in a panic at that point because they weren't really confident about the whole exercise. So they start to engage in some changes*

to make the picture that they are reporting more interesting or more in their favour, basically. So what they sought to do, anybody who didn't produce enough output, they moved their contracts from a balanced contract where you have almost half of your time to do research, a little bit less than that 40% of your time to do research. They moved their contracts from balanced contract to teaching only contract without their knowledge= (L2, male lecturer in a research-intensive university-Russell Group).

<The main way of gaming the system is to move people off teaching and research contracts onto teaching only. So I think that part of the gaming of having people not count is already done, and I would observe that as people are adding new stuff, many colleagues are starting off on teaching-only contracts and then might move to teach and research, and that's quite a tough task= (P6, female professor and research centre director at a non-Russell Group university).

Managerialism creates an environment controlled by opportunism, instrumentalism and competitiveness (Klikauer, 2015). As expressed above, my participants illustrated how university managers manage the quantitative metrics by changing balanced contracts to teaching-only or even appointing academics on teaching-only contracts. Some academics claimed that this change of contracts was invalid as it was done without their consent. This demonstrates how the widespread influence of managerialism in business schools has eroded workplace democracy. The purpose of moving staff from balanced contracts to teaching-only contracts is to hide them from the REF. By doing so, university managers seek to exclude them from the equation due to the quantitative nature of the metric, especially if they are not generating sufficient research.

As a consequence, academia has seen the emergence of various paths. Academics are nowadays appointed in a very limited role, which stands in opposition to the traditional "Humboldtian vision" of teaching and research being integrated. This narrow approach fails to acknowledge the holistic nature of the academic profession, which encompasses teaching and research. This undermines the fundamental purpose of higher education institutions, which is to advance and disseminate knowledge. This has resulted in a casualization of the workforce in managerial business school, with a new employment structure characterized by a fragmented and misclassified workforce, disaggregated, deprofessionalized, and individualized roles, mandatory micro-entrepreneurship, managerial control over labour supply and demand, managerial approaches to reduce labour costs, and a rise in structural discrimination (Foley and Polanyi, 2006). A Male Senior Lecturer at a research-intensive university, Russell Group, have explained complainingly:

<I think the idea is that they do not want new emerging researchers to lower the REF score of an institution or the Department or School. So that's probably the idea that let's start

hiring them on a teaching-only contract. And you know, after a few years, maybe once we have seen what they publish, we can, like, switch that contract to research and teaching. It is a gaming of these frameworks, and that's, I think, what happens when there are so many frameworks. You know the REF, the TEF, the KEF and of course, University Rankings= (SL4).

He continued:

<You know, universities then start being much more strategic, and they start playing the game or gaming the system, and they have all these like tactics because they're not strategies. They're like tactics to try and have a better position or show themselves in the best possible light, even if that means giving rubbish contracts to staff members or diminishing whatever opportunities they could have to develop. If I put a manager's hat on, you know I can see how it all makes sense to rationalise the workforce that way. And you know, fragment it, well, we'll just hire that person on a .5 contract, and they'll just do teaching, and then we'll hire to compensate that someone else on a .5 research-only contract. And therefore, you know, we have a bit of both, and it's split that way= (SL4).

Additionally, prior to 2008, the RAE regulations allowed university managers to strategically recruit highly qualified academics with publications records to bolster their institution's research performance for the purpose of the RAE. For instance, if a university had not been engaged in research activities leading up to the RAE in 2008, but then hired five academics with exceptional research profiles in 2007, they could significantly enhance their submission to the RAE in 2008. This practice represents a form of gaming the control system at the managerial level, as it emphasizes recruiting academics with strong profiles solely to improve the institution's research submission, rather than prioritizing genuine research quality. Consequently, RAE 2008 implemented a requirement for a minimum of 20% full-time contracts for academic recruitment to curb such gaming behaviours. A male professor and a dean of a business school at research-intensive Russell Group University illustrated:

<There were a number of schools at the last ref [2021] that in the last 12 months hired Herman Aguinis to be on their books for 12 months, or some other kind of superstar academics. No authentic relationship with those individuals, no real involvement with those individuals in the school? It was pure gaming. I strongly think that over time, that doesn't do those schools very much good. You know, last time, maybe they got away with it. Next time, will they get away with it? I'm not so sure they will. Do they look like a really good international beacon of business and management research for having done that? No, because the impact is very transient. It doesn't impact their research metrics in the round. So, I don't think anybody respects schools that are not building organic, long-run research capacity. And that's what I think the best schools do. Therefore, as a dean of a school about

> *the nature of the game that you're playing and how things like hiring fractional professors from around the world to contribute to your research environment, I think you need to be really confident that they are contributing something and that they are really embedded and involved and active. Otherwise, I think it's not really building capacity=* (P9).

Also, a female professor and research centre director at a non-Russell Group university stated:

> *<&in the one way, you had to have, a number of people at everyone had to put 4IN. You could easily see some institutions that were appointing people on appoint two or three, whatever the minimum was, so they could claim four of their papers. people used to game things by buying people and at the last minute=* (P3).

Purchasing publications with fractional recruitment could potentially lead to significant identity drift within departments, as it may result in the recruitment of individuals who do not align well with the departments. This insight was shared by a female professor and former dean at a research-focused university within the Russell Group. She said:

> *<Fractional contracts. So let's say an American professor, we've four top American Economic Review or top four-star journals. Who is in the US, but you give this person a 20% contract, and then this person's papers are counted in the REF. But the person actually never turns up at the university. It's basically buying a star player but not playing. It's just for the REF. So they're sort of mechanisms by which universities have been trying to up the ranking, up the scores in the REF= (P8).*

Furthermore, the institution's focus on recruiting academics with funding rather than seeking out the best minds or individuals who would synergize well with the team reflects another gaming approach. Early Career Researchers (ECR) are the victims of this game; if they don't get a three-star publication, the institution will not give them a job. Consequently, this approach risks the rejection of high-calibre talent. A male associate Professor at research-Russell Group University has shared his experience in the recruitment process and said:

> *<I watched appointment committees in top 20 universities reject applicants who within 3-6 months had senior posts offered to them in universities outside the top 20. So, I think there are conscious differences that are applied to performance metrics by senior management depending on where they see their university ranked. This means that they often fail to recruit or they lose existing talent which is actually very high performing and extremely talented=* (AP9).

Furthermore, the adoption of managerialism has impeded workplace democracy in UK business schools. This is evident in the way that the hiring process for deans, provosts, and presidents has

become increasingly corporate (Misse and Martel, 2024). This trend has resulted in a rise in anti-democratic appointments, academic detachment, and a lack of independence and liberty. Consequently, anti-democratic practices are becoming more widespread, such as the appointment of rectors or department chairs at public universities without any input from faculty members (Levin & Greenwood, 2016). To achieve genuine workplace democracy at the departmental level, it is crucial that chairs are elected by faculty members rather than simply appointed by the college dean. This issue is becoming more prevalent among higher education institutions.

Another strategy of gaming the REF involves managing the submission process. In the REF Rules 2014, each UOA was given the authority to select 8referable9 members (REF 2014). As a result, university managers only submitted academics who had performed well enough to achieve high scores on their outputs. However, in the latest 2021 draft, this was modified, and now every academic with a significant responsibility for research must be submitted (REF 2021). According to the REF criteria for 2021, each person must have a minimum of one publication and a maximum of five, averaging at 2.5 per person (HEFCE, 2021). The maximum number of publications or outputs that can be submitted for a unit is 2.5 times the number of staff members. Each staff member must contribute at least one submission, requiring universities to include all staff members. However, exceptions can be made for ECR with special considerations, relieving them from the obligation to submit any outputs. A male associate Professor at a teaching university, non-Russell group explained:

> *<Before the previous REF [2021]. Obviously, you didn't have to include all staff, so it's like the equivalent of saying you want to assess the quality of my hospital. Just look at the operating theatre. Don't look at anything else in the hospital. So basically, the university would say, I'll take those academics, put them in front and say these are my academic selected academics for the REF. And we'll take the best one and exclude every other one. All right, so basically, you are hiding the not-so-good news, perhaps and putting all the best news in front, and that has been severely dampened because of new rules [2021] that you have to submit to everyone in the system. So this has gone down a bit=* (AP5).

The REF organizers have implemented these changes to prevent universities from simply nominating a few individuals from each department instead of a more representative and diverse group of individuals from their institution. Some of my research participants claimed that there were cases where their universities would submit a couple of high publishing professors who got lots of four-star papers, and nobody else, and the department might be full of people who had not really published anything, and so that completely gamed the system. Although the rules were

updated in the last REF cycle in 2021 to address this issue, university managers still found ways to game the system by manipulating the criteria related to significant responsibility for research.

6.4 Treating Students as Customers (Teaching Aspect)

> *<&they can play the game where they spoil students at a certain time. Maybe they do social events; they try to attract them...some institutions one day do certain events. The purpose is just to help with the NSS. But at the same time, students get an advantage. For instance, one day, invite potential employers to speak to students at a social event that will add value to students because students manage to get a job through that. So, I don't wanna say the university played the game, but the university tries to adhere to the regulations. They try to make everything fit with the full picture=* (TF2, male teaching fellow, teaching-focused university, non-Russell Group).

Managerialism aims to operationalise academic work in financial terms, with a focus on efficiency, value-for-money, PMS, benchmarking, rewards and accountability, among other factors (Winter, 2017). As a result, students are being treated as customers, professional communities are redefined as strategic partners, and education is viewed as a product (Parker, 2013). The NSS has become the most critical tool for evaluating teaching performance (Clayson, 2009). To maintain control, teaching has become more standardized and homogeneous, with students viewed as customers to be exploited or clients to be served (Billsberry, Ambrosini and Thomas, 2023) . The NSS score is essential for the survival of universities (Adisa *et al.*, 2023b), as it helps attract potential students and shapes the institution's reputation and image. This is why a male teaching fellow at a teaching-focused university outside the Russell Group suggested that university managers strive to enhance the NSS score by arranging events to engage students and by inviting prospective employers to address these occasions. This strategy is intended to be mutually beneficial, allowing students to gain an advantage through networking opportunities with potential employers. This approach is designed to benefit both parties, as students gain an advantage by networking with potential employers. A male senior lecturer and a Programme Director for BSc at a teaching-focused university, a non-Russell group have explained:

> *<Some universities might actually, maybe during the NSS survey, find ways to engage with the students because we're all human beings. So, for example, if I were to buy you a bar of chocolate now and you have a bar of chocolate, and then soon afterwards, I would ask your question. There's every likelihood that you will do it...They've been able to study when to ask the students to complete such studies, and we might have to learn from that so that we can also. remember There's a difference between an internal metric used for improvement and a metric that shows your university to the world=* (SL5).

As expressed above, academics perceive the importance of performance metrics such as NSS for the reputation and resilience of their university. A male senior lecturer in a teaching-focused university suggested that establishing a positive rapport with students, particularly those in their final year of study who are eligible to participate in the NSS exercise, is a crucial aspect of an institution's preparation for the NSS. He explained that some university managers take extra measures to ensure that the period leading up to the survey's release is incident-free and utilise this time to connect more closely with students and provide guidance using the survey's language. That might explain why universities engage in social events and other activities which please their customers. According to Beech and Wolstencroft (2022), a significant portion of relationship-building efforts involves simply satisfying students' needs through a "you said, we did" approach. However, this approach has been criticised for potentially leading to a compromise in academic standards and rigour in order to appease students (Adisa *et al.*, 2023b).

As government funding for higher education declines, business schools are duty-bound under a managerialist model to compete for the fee income of international students (Winter, 2017). To increase student satisfaction, university managers need to listen to their concerns and needs. Academics9 evaluation surveys can provide valuable information for improving education services. Students can be strategically placed in university marketing materials, graduation ceremonies and open days to enhance the customer experience (Naidoo et al., 2014). Universities are shifting towards a more customer-centred approach, aiming to fulfil students' expectations of branding, high-quality facilities and services, and value for money (Baldwin, 2009).

Pedagogy management systems rely on student feedback to assess the quality of the learning process. Students provide ratings for the teaching methods and the adequacy and promptness of the feedback provided on their work (Richardson, Slater and Wilson, 2007b). Consequently, feedback on students' work is vital to the educational process. In a managerialist business school, academics are anticipated to be highly receptive to students' needs, considering them as valued customers (Webster, 1995). A male teaching fellow in a teaching-focused university, non-Russell Group, shed light on the importance of feedback and how his managers play around it. He said:

> *<I think most universities try to play the game with TEF, where they try to, for instance, back in days when they released the US The National Student Survey. They used the word feedback, and then they started to use it instead. For instance, office hours. They start to use feedback hours just to tell students that this is the feedback they're getting because students, surprisingly, answered: <Ohh, we didn't get any feedback,= because even if you ask a lecturer a question and the lecturer answers that question, that's feedback itself. So,*

students didn't think to define feedback, so they tried to use feedback all over the place= (TF5).

He explained more and said:

<It's the same, but just the one to get the students. Ohh, this is a feedback. So, you are giving feedback when you go to your lecture. During this time, you are giving the feedback&so if you like, come to me and say, oh [his name], so I need to ask you about that. I'll tell you to come during my office hours, then you just come back during my office hours. But if I tell you to come during my feedback hours, then I can give you feedback. So I'm just trying to put it in your mind that it's feedback. So you, when you will be asked later on or have been given any feedback, you say yes, I was giving feedback during the feedback hours, and that's how clicks= (TF6).

As he argued above, university managers entrench the word <feedback= in many of the student activities within the university. The aim is that when the students answer the NSS regarding providing them with feedback, they tick the box, and that is the soft way of gaming the system! Additionally, a male lecturer from a research-intensive university, Russell Group, expressed his frustration with his business school policy regarding giving feedback to students:

<I can give you an example of one of the problems that illustrates what we deal with. There was an issue with feedback. And so the school decided, okay, the issue is with feedback. The students were saying it was not clear, and they were not getting enough feedback. And so that what was read into that was, well, it needs to be electronic. So we give electronic feedback. That didn't improve the situation because what people then did was cut and paste generic comments throughout the documents, and the students could see that...But there you have the organisation, the university, the business school takes the view that this is what we must do, and it actually makes things worse. Instead of gaming feedback, they're gaming the electronic submission and the electronic feedback when actually the problem is that they're not getting the specific feedback that they need, which you get from hand annotation of scripts= (L3).

He continued in anger:

< None of the people making these decisions have any skin in the game. They're not marking 6516-page reports in three weeks. They don't have to do that. So they're making decisions at this high level that impact what we do. They don't have experience of what we do. That's the biggest problem. It's not the TEF per se. It's the people making the decisions have no idea what they're talking about. The problem is that a lot of these decisions are made by people at a higher level who don't teach or, if they do teach, in small numbers= (L3).

The aforementioned remarks were made by a male lecturer at a research-intensive university affiliated with the Russell Group. He expressed criticism of his manager's approach to handling the feedback matter, specifically addressing the lack of clear feedback provided by lecturers to their students. The university manager's decision to transition from handwritten feedback to an electronic system exacerbated the situation, leading to academics resorting to generic cut-and-paste comments within the electronic submissions rather than providing genuine feedback. The treatment of students as customers emerged as a prominent theme in my research data. In essence, the concept of consumption was redefined to cater to ultra-individuals, moving away from the neoclassical economics model of HE as a "sovereign consumer," where rational choice is a crucial factor in market efficiency (Shatil, 2020). It's unfortunate that students often judge teaching quality and academic standards based on their module grades (Adisa et al. (2023). This reciprocal relationship between students and universities aligns with Thibaut and Kelley's argument (1959) that economic principles play a role in relationship evaluations and analyses, consciously or subconsciously. The core purpose of higher education's focus on students is evident in policy discourse and reflected in institutional structures and the cultural practices of staff and students (Gunn, 2018b).

Indeed, several participants have asserted that evaluation systems primarily focused on students are deceptive. These systems have led to a decline in academic standards and a shift in managerial focus towards grade inflation to cater to student preferences. This sentiment was echoed by two male associate professors, who elaborated:

> *<&, while I'm trying to remember all the TEF metrics and you know one I think is about added value and that's about where you have students coming in with certain characteristics or attainment levels from their A levels or from their school. And then there's a measure of value-added so you know what degree classification do they come out with at the end of their degree program and that's the kind of measure of to what element? To what degree have you supported through the education process, their attainment and their development that they've had through education and that's partly based on the numbers of classifications that they have in the degrees. So you know, are we awarding a lot of first-class degrees,2:1 degrees et cetera and I think that kind of measure can influence behaviours in the organization of program leaders or of individual academics because we've seen, you know, what we keep hearing about grade inflation, universities awarding pick 50% of their students 2:1 or first class degrees=* (AP2, male associate professor, teaching non-Russel Group university).

> *<Teaching is evaluated by the students mostly. Yeah. Which is an issue by itself. Because if I want all my students to give me higher marks, I will tell them I will give you all the top grade.*

> *Yeah. So it is there is nothing is perfect. But because the students are in my class and not my boss and not my colleagues, they are in the best position to evaluate my work. And this is what the university is using...So for example, if all my students will pass with top grades, then I don't know. To distinguish if all of them will fail, I fail because I didn't teach them well&=* (AP7, male associate professor, research-intensive Russel Group University).

On the contrary, the proposal by the UK government to mandate universities to provide more detailed information about courses highlights the fact that students are also rational economic actors (Nixon et al., 2018). However, this creates an increasingly disproportionate power balance, with regulations that may appear "fair" to students, boosted exam grades, and acceptance of grade inflation. It is worth considering the similarities between the use of student evaluations in higher education and customer ratings (Kezar et al., 2019). In both cases, employers outsource their role in assessing the effectiveness of their employees and rely on unqualified evaluators who may be biased. Additionally, the anonymity of student evaluations can lead to problems similar to those found in online discussions and comment sections. It is concerning that universities and colleges have been both innovators in undermining workplace democracy through anonymous student evaluations of faculty and in technologies that harm social equality by allowing anonymity in discussion forums.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has identified three critical gaming strategies employed by UK university managers: the creation of ambiguous PMSs, the manipulation of contracts, recruitment, and promotion practices, and the treatment of students as customers.

Firstly, ambiguous PMSs are used by university managers to obscure performance criteria, which fosters confusion and frustration among academic staff. This vagueness allows management to selectively interpret or modify the evaluation standards, which in turn creates opportunities for gaming the system. Academics often feel demotivated and excluded from decision-making processes, undermining workplace democracy and transparency.

Secondly, contract manipulation and selective recruitment are common strategies aimed at improving institutional research performance for submissions like the REF. University managers strategically shift academics from research contracts to teaching-only roles, often without their consent, to avoid low research output from affecting their overall REF submissions. Additionally, hiring practices prioritize academics with high research output over genuine long-term research collaboration, further illustrating how managerialism has deprofessionalized and fragmented the academic workforce.

Lastly, the treatment of students as customers highlights the commodification of education under neoliberal policies. Managerial strategies focus on enhancing NSS scores by engaging students in ways that resemble customer service practices, sometimes at the expense of academic rigour. The focus on student satisfaction leads to gaming tactics like strategically timed social events or rebranding regular academic interactions as <feedback= to inflate NSS responses.

In conclusion, the chapter underscores how managerialism in higher education, driven by performance metrics, has fostered unethical gaming behaviors, distorted academic roles, and jeopardized educational integrity. These practices reflect broader neoliberal ideologies that prioritize institutional reputation and financial efficiency over genuine academic and democratic values.

Chapter 7 PMSs and academics' gaming behaviour

7.1 Introduction

The UK business schools have gone through trajectory changes after implementing NPM techniques as a response to the government's failure to manage its public institutions (Brown and Carasso, 2013). NPM has fostered a new identity known as the "academic performer," who prioritizes publications, journal rankings, and career advancement, often displaying tendencies toward individualism, competitiveness, symbolic compliance, opportunism, and manipulation (Aboubichr and Conway, 2021). The widespread use of PMSs has ingrained the achievement of targets as a key value and normative standard in the mindset of academics, shaping this new identity. This emphasis on numeracy has encouraged instrumental behaviours, ultimately elevating what can be measured and compared (Pianezzi et al., 2020). Academics started to see their profession as a game that must be played, and by accepting to play the game, they accepted the rules and game the system!

The objective of this chapter is to elucidate and examine four distinct forms of gaming behaviour exhibited by academics in response to the increased utilization of PMSs. These findings have addressed the pertinent research inquiries related to the tactics employed by academics to cope with the change in PMSs and whether they employ gaming tactics. This section delves into the ways in which academics manipulate the research metric by tailoring their research topics and methodologies to suit specific journals, gaming the promotion process, or leveraging their PhD students. Additionally, it illuminates how they engage in gaming the teaching metric by manipulating the NSS and feedback system.

7.2 Publication Game

> *<If it's in the wrong journal, it doesn't count. So that was my previous senior manager's view, which is not the view you'd hope the individual would take. So, the type of journal is important, and there can be problems interpreting that because we use the ABS list; there are journals on the ABS list that won't take the research from the business community, but they're still on the list for some reason. So the problem is it's that execution=* (L1, Male lecturer, Research intensive, Russell Group University).

In the UK business schools, some assertive PMSs tend to prioritize where academics have published over the content of their publications (Broadbent, 2010). As expressed above, this male lecturer at a research Russell-Group University argued that the focus on ABS journal ranking may result in a standardized output that does not necessarily advance research or knowledge. He

noted that Accounting and Business scholarship, in particular, has become increasingly fragmented, with a preponderance of repetitive and disconnected pieces, while the overarching research questions remain largely unaddressed. Furthermore, there appears to be a growing emphasis on short-term publications that serve to boost REF ratings, at the expense of more ambitious scientific pursuits (Harley, 2002). In a managerialist environment, university managers must ensure compliance with set research and teaching targets by establishing a culture of opportunism, competition, individualism, entrepreneurship and revenue generation (Winter, 2017). Academics must play the 8publication game9 and focus on securing outputs such as publications, grants, and awards to climb the ladder of international rankings and REFs (Macdonald and Kam, 2007). Indeed, performance excellence is rewarded with financial incentives and teaching buyouts, while those who do not perform are at risk of sanctions (Alvesson and Spicer, 2016).

In addition, a female professor and a REF panel member from a non-Russell group university have explained below why academics chose the journal before the topic. The culture of journal ranking seems to be dominant in academia. Academics chase 3 or 4* journals to be 8referable9. However, the REF criteria are based on the research's originality, significance, and rigour. Additionally, many academics believe that only journal articles are rewarded, while books and other writings are not considered.

> *<People were chasing journals because they think that's how to have a four-star paper, then they are incorrect. So 4* journals are thought to be the best journals; there will be some papers that are also the best papers, and there will be a variety of other papers. So I kind of think of all journals, if you like, have a quality distribution and the balance of the mean... So, in that respect, I think that colleagues might also be misunderstanding the nature of the REF by getting it conflated with journal lists=* (P6).

It is now well-established that PMSs tend to have a detrimental effect on academic freedom (Harley, 2002; Santiago & Carvalho, 2008; Martin-Sardesai et al., 2017). Broucker et al. (2019) have concluded that the faculty's freedom to choose their own research topic can be significantly impacted by PMSs. Furthermore, an increasing amount of published research suggests that scholars are feeling restricted from producing and disseminating knowledge that has an instantaneous effect on research ratings (Harley, 2002; Guthrie and Parker, 2014; Parker et al., 1998). As a result, it is not uncommon for unofficial and, at times, official lists of journals believed to hold the most weight in the evaluation process to be circulated within university departments (Harley, 2002).

Some of my research participants expressed difficulty in publishing their work in their desired journals. They noted that they had to alter the focus, themes, or even topics of their papers to fit

a particular box. Additionally, some academics have a limited selection of journals in their field that they are permitted to publish in. This creates a situation where academics must conform to certain trends and write only stories that align with the preferred journal. This practice of boxing academics into specific journals bears some similarities to Aboubichr and Conway9s (2021) concept of 8Fitting Research into journals9. In fact, scholars may opt to 8play it safe9 by shaping their research topics and methodologies to fit the desired journal, while disregarding more challenging and critical issues (Aboubichr and Conway, 2021). This was illustrated by a Female senior lecturer in a Research-intensive Russell Group University below. She sadly said:

> *<too many people play it safe in terms of what they write, how they write it and where they publish it. I recognise I could get five 3* papers if I publish in financial, accountability and management. But people play it safe, as well as things like theoretically. You'll be questioned quite stringently if you try to introduce a new theoretical perspective on a phenomenon; just do what the reviewer says, satisfy the reviewer!=* (SL6).

The academic's role has always been centred around notions of professional autonomy, scholarship, and discretion, but the effect of managerialism has diluted these ideals (Franco-Santos & Doherty, 2017). Creativity is encouraged by empowerment and participative management, but unitarism and hierarchal authority do not; they restrict freedom and the expression of individuality (Billsberry, Ambrosini and Thomas, 2023). From a workplace democracy perspective, academic freedom is equally important as the freedom to choose what subjects to research, how and for whom to conduct that research, and how to disseminate the results (Levin and Greenwood, 2016).

Moreover, the arduous nature of the publishing process within the realm of accounting journals has led to a noticeable shift in academic circles towards non-accounting journals as a more feasible target for publication. This phenomenon has been described as a result of the perceived level of difficulty associated with publishing in accounting journals, which has been deemed to be comparatively higher than that of non-accounting journals. A male lecturer in Research intensive Russell Group University explained below:

> *<So, in terms of scholarship, there are lots of papers but very few conclusions in our area of Accounting. So this is why it's not my ambition to publish in accounting journals now. I did publish. But if I can publish in other journals, non-accounting journals about accounting and accountants, it will be easier for me=* (L4).

Furthermore, it has been observed that academics tend to prioritize the selection of journals over the relevance of topics while managing research metrics. This led to papers with minor significant

contributions to knowledge. A male professor in a research-intensive Russell Group University has shared his story:

> *<I managed my metrics, so I used to look very carefully at which journals I was publishing in. What's the current fad amongst business Deans for which journals they like? There was a period when we didn't have journal rankings, so if I published in a North American journal, people would fall about in amazement. It's silly, but that's what they did. So, I thought I'd publish in British, Australian, and North American journals. So that I look truly international=* (P11).

He continued:

> *<I'll give you an example if you're in accounting history. There are specialist accounting history journals, but they don't rank highly because they're specialist journals, which means the ranking systems are so inequitable. So what are you doing? You publish in your specialist journals because you want the senior professors in that field to Pat you on the head and say, yes, you're one of us. You're in our specialist community. But also, you must make sure that you take some of your accounting history work and publish it in the British Accounting Review, Accounting, Auditing, and Accountability Journal. Accounting, Organization and Society. you put yourself into the generalist journals where you get a high score from your dean=* (P11).

It is not enough to simply 8play it safe9 when selecting potential journals for publication. In fact, some academics have been known to utilize the same data set to generate multiple publications, a practice that aligns with Aboubichr and Conway9s concept of 'gratuitous proliferation' (2023). Essentially, this involves publishing numerous articles that stem from the same data set, sometimes referred to as "salami slicing" or "recycling data." As a result, many journals now require authors to disclose their use of the same data set at the time of submission. A male lecturer at a research-intensive university within the Russell Group has elaborated on this issue below:

> *<It's very easy or relatively easy. You've got a nice big data set; it might be from Tesco's, or it might be from the Bank of England, or it might or whatever it is, your field of research, and you run lots of mathematical models, existing mathematical models, you test against data, and there's an audience of journalists out there that will take those quantitative, and then you can churn out. I have a colleague not at [his university], I think, eight papers out of one dataset in two years, and it was five people, I think, working on it=* (L6).

A female senior lecturer and an editor of a Journal at a research-intensive university-Russell Group added:

<Some scholars do things such as salami slicing in publication. So when they publish, they try to publish four papers using the same data with pretty much incremental contribution&So, the term salami-slicing would be applicable only when the researcher uses exactly the same data set. OK, so what people have started doing now is using prolific or some other kind of online platform to collect the data very quickly. You have to pay some money. It's not free, but it's not expensive either. So you can quite quickly collect. I think the journals are now on to this, but it took a while to get to learn about these types of practices. So these metrics, REF Staffs and so on, have impacted scholarship, I believe, in a negative way because we see a lot of very incremental studies, although they might not be salami-slicing types of studies More data and so you don't have exactly the same data set uh anymore as you had before, but salami-slicing would be when you use the same data set. So you use the same data set, and you measure like instead of just five variables, you measure 20 so that you will get. I don't know, five manuscripts out of this. You know, you have so many different variables that you can publish five papers out of this one data set rather than just one= (SL1).

In addition, the demands of publishing and the assertive PMS have influenced the choice of academics when it comes to selecting the research methods (Guthrie & Parker, 2014). Two male lecturers expressed below the shift towards a more positive quantitative approach which has been fuelled by the perception that such research can be executed expeditiously due to the availability of online data. As a result, some academics contend that quantitative research is more time-efficient and advantageous for REF purposes, thereby increasing their likelihood of recruitment and promotion. This trend has not only affected individual academics but also their business schools. This is evidenced by changes in recruitment advertisements (Guthrie & Parker, 2014).

<A case study paper often takes at least three years to write, so within a particular time frame, I can write more quantitative papers than qualitative papers. That has certainly changed the meter of academics. I personally know academics who'd rather do qualitative research, but they do quantitative research because it costs less time. They get those publications quicker; they get the promotion chances quicker, sooner and time earlier in time, etc.&people in their quest for the publication follow the stick. Follow the carrots. Follow the sausage= (SL3, Male senior lecturer, teaching university, Non-Russell Group).

<Here in our school, in our department, we used to be more on the qualitative side, and suddenly, we had changed because, for REF, you need people who can produce more. So, gradually, we skewed towards quantitative staff, which is more convenient for REF purposes. So when we are recruiting, we are recruiting quantitative students. This is the

> *direction because they think this is easier for publication, easier to fill and tick the books=* (AP1, Male associate professor, Research University, Russell Group).

Consequently, the pursuit of publications can have a detrimental impact on an academic's sense of identity (Harley, 2002). As expressed below, academics are grappling with the challenge of navigating complex metrics, selecting appropriate journals, and determining the most effective research methods. The forced trend toward more quantitative research led to some academics losing their identity and excitement in the publishing process, forcing themselves to do research that is out of their interest or using a method that does not belong to their identity.

> *<My colleagues...They are trying to change from qualitative to quantitative. And this is what happened to my colleague now. He thought he could manage with quantitative stuff, but he is not a quantitative person. He understands it, but he is not a quantitative person in any discussion. He thinks about things in a qualitative way, like me. In a way, I did some quantitative stuff. But again, I don't just merely like taking data from a database and trying to find any significant relationship and make a story on top of that. Now, looking at him, he struggled with this. For me, he lost his identity as a researcher=* (AP3, Male Associate professor, Research University, Russell Group).

However, it appears that the rush to publish quantitative research has had a detrimental effect. The sheer volume of articles flooding the system often lacks significant impact, potentially contributing to the high rejection rate in the world of publishing (Broadbent, 2010). A male professor and a joint founding Journal Editor at a research-intensive university-Russell Group have illustrated:

> *<If the business Dean or their group decide that quantitative research will get them better scores. That will influence what type of academic they hire, they will put them under pressure to do quantitative research. They'll put them under pressure to go to particular quantitative journals, and they think it is going to give the best credibility. And it's wrong. In terms of publishing frequency. it's a myth that you can publish more easily because I'm now getting flooded with submissions because the Deans tell all their stuff; you must publish... in my journal, my reviewers are increasingly saying to me it's nicely written up, methods are good, analysis is OK, but it's boring, and it's not saying anything new. It's not really significant. that's, I think, an even worse challenge in quantitative research. Because a lot of quantitative research is like counting the number of angels on the head of a pin, you know, they make minor variations in variables and then try and run the stats again and then say, oh, look, I found something new=* (P2).

The research produced by business schools has been criticized for lacking broader relevance and innovative ideas (Webster, 1995). Many of my participants argue that papers in the highest-ranked journals are generally uninteresting and irrelevant, leading to limited imagination and creativity, predictable products, a bureaucratic writing style, strong sub-specialization, and the exploitation of a limited "competence." Academics tend to 8play it safe9 by imitating what others have done, which limits the chances of unexpected, challenging, and surprising ideas (Alvesson and Spicer, 2016).

7.3 Academics Promotion Game

In a managerialist model, business schools are extensively impacted by metrics such as REF. In previous REFs (before 2021), the rules have created a power game between academics and their universities. A Male associate professor and senior lecturer in two different Russell Group universities noted below that academics with noteworthy publications had a certain level of bargaining power to move from their current university to another. Under the REF rules, an academic could transition to a new institution during a specific time of the year, with their research output being considered a product of the new institution, not the previous one. This gave academics a strong bargaining chip. As a result, every few years, academics who had amassed enough publications would apply for positions elsewhere and either ask their current university to match the offer or leave. This tactic led to promotion within their existing university or a higher position with a higher salary at a different institution.

> *<Often, if a person wants to apply for promotion, it's much easier to go for promotion elsewhere rather than being internally promoted. A really good bargaining chip is to have an offer from elsewhere and then go to your boss and say, 8Do you want to match that?9 Basically, they [academics] blackmail the institution because they say, 8If you don't give me a promotion, I'll leave9. And if the institution is under pressure, it can't lose any more staff, or the boss thinks that's a key person got to keep them, and it's imperative so they get a promotion without an interview, without having to go through the regular promotion process. So that's what KPIs can do. They can lead to unintended consequences in terms of behaviour=* (AP6, male associate professor, research-intensive, Russel-Group).

> *<&They [senior academics] know deep down they can come out with a very high salary by moving jobs because that has value with it because it links to the research funding and also the research ranking and profile of the university. So you are an extremely powerful you're in a very, very powerful position if you've got those papers and you could take them with you now, they stop that with the last one. But it just works with some=* (AP10, Male associate professor, research-intensive, Russel Group).

Additionally, this academics9 gaming technique was further explained by two lecturers at a research-intensive university Russell Group, who illustrated how senior academics blackmail their institutions:

> *<So those who were in the head of departments because they had good publications had some kind of bargaining power to move to a different university. So, at a certain time during the year, it was allowed to use the REF rules [2014]. If you move from one place to another place. Your research can be regarded as the outcome of the new institution, not the old one. So this gave a very good bargaining power for the lecturers and the academics. So they ended up going somewhere else, having a higher salary and like a higher rank somehow. So I will see that lots of people keep moving, moving from one university to another. They stay there for a short period of time. Then they go to the next one, like professors who, in five or six years, became professors like this. So every two or three years, have enough publications and apply for a job somewhere else. Either you get the promotion inside, or you go to the school. I have this offer from another school. If you don't give it to me, I will leave. So they will give it to them, or they will leave to have it somewhere else. So they end up moving a lot, and with each move, there is a promotion=* (L8, male lecturer, research-intensive university, Russell Group).

> *<&every like two years, three years, have enough publications, apply for a job somewhere else. Either you get the promotion inside, so you go to the school. I have this offer from another school. If you don't give it to me, I will leave. So they will give it to them or they will leave to have it somewhere else. So they end up moving a lot. So if you look at LinkedIn of different people, you find some people, they just keep moving. And with each move, there is a promotion. I didn't like to do this because I like to stay in the same place. So yeah, so many people now, they think this is how it is now=* (SL7, female senior lecturer, research-intensive university, Russell Group.

As expressed below by a male lecturer at Russell Group University, the bargaining power of academics lies in not only their publications but also the value and source of grants. He argued that with the commercialisation of higher education, the significance of grant money has escalated to the point where the ability to secure funding often carries more weight than producing high-quality research. Consequently, the most influential academics are those who have been successful in obtaining large grants, as institutions are aware that these individuals could depart and take their funding with them. He has shared a story of academics9 funding power and critically said:

> *<So now I'm sort of some kind of fundraiser rather than an academic. I feel a lot of the time, and if you bring big money in, it talks big. It probably speaks bigger than writing quality*

research now. You know, the powerful professors are the ones with the big grants because institutions know they can leave and think they can take their money with them. You know, this happened with one of my colleagues who went to Ireland and took a load of money away from the institution. So yeah, research income is becoming increasingly important as well...Well, under the old dress [REF2014] used to be able to take your publications with you. They know deep down they can come out with a very high salary by moving jobs because that has value with it because it links to the research funding and also the research ranking and profile of the university. So you're in a very powerful position if you've got those papers, and you could take them with you now; they stop that with the last one [REF 2021]. But it just works the same=.

On the other hand, academics9 gaming behaviour could be faced by changes in PMS criteria, as explained by a male professor and a dean of a non-Russell Group university. This could be seen in the REF 2021 new rules (REF), such as the limitation on the transfer market of papers from one university to another. Additionally, universities are now able to claim outputs produced by former staff during their employment (REF 2021), which were made publicly available. It's worth noting that universities may be hesitant to invest in promoting their staff due to the associated costs and may not always match offers from lower-ranking competitors.

<By playing a little bit with the rules, we've reduced a little bit of pressure. The other thing is you can't carry your papers with you anymore. So before you used to be able to carry the papers to the other one to the other institution, you used to be like a transfer market. So you had four papers, and when you offered yourself to have university and you moved. that's less likely. Now, as far as so we've reduced these ridiculous sort of situations which allow this gaming to happen= (P4, Male professor, Dean, teaching university, non-Russell Group).

This gaming strategy was further noted by a male professor at a research-intensive, Russel Group University:

<But if you can't get the deal, you want if you can't get the recognition you think you deserve, put yourself on the market because somebody else is going to buy you very probably. But yet there are differences and I think the differences are attributable to the universities9 own perception of their own ranking in the status rankings= (P7).

The most obvious finding to emerge from the analysis is that REF rules have changed the power balance between academics and their universities, with the loss of a "star academic" potentially causing a decline in a category's percentage and the institution's overall grade. Indeed, managerialism led to the emergence of a transfer market for academics with good REF submissions, enabling them to negotiate higher salary packages. It also considers most faculty

(not the stars) to be replaceable and transferable resources organized in a way that best meets student service delivery targets (Winter, 2017). This market was very active before the 2001 RAE (Broadbent, 2010). To prevent such a transfer market, the 2008 exercise shifted away from a point-scoring system and instead assessed the quality of research based on originality, significance, and rigour (Morrish, 2017). Additionally, universities were granted the ability to claim publications of their former academics as publicly available during their employment, just after the launch of REF 2021 (REF).

7.4 ECR & PhD Students: Grooming and Factory Production

> *<I am using my PhD students to produce publications, you know, if the research proposal does not achieve a 3-star publication at the end, I reject it= (Male lecturer, Research University, Russell Group).*

The REF metric has induced great pressure on academics. The pressure to promptly publish has led academics to rely on their PhD students9 work. Such exploitation is one of the faces of managerialism in academia. Academics who do not have time to do research because of other commitments in terms of teaching and other stuff will end up depending on other colleagues or their PhD students. This inevitably leads to a loss of control over their professional endeavours, as they are no longer the primary producer of their research. This was further explained by a male lecturer at a research-intensive, Russel Group university. He said:

> *<Now, if you don't have time to do this [research] because of other commitments in terms of teaching and other stuff, you will end up depending on other colleagues or PhD students and you lose control over your career=.*

Additionally, a research project could be rejected if it would not generate a 3* publication, as indicated above. A male senior lecturer at a research-intensive university, Russell Group, has critiqued the situation:

> *<Supervisors, if you've got PhD students, supervisors will put their names on papers written by their students. And the argument for doing that is that, well, the supervisors guided the student. But I think that's wrong. You should if the PhD student is doing the work, then it's their paper. The fact that you're supervising them is irrelevant. So, I've never done that&I think that it's the supervisors. There are supervisors that have not done any work and research themselves for years. But they got really good ref schools because of their PhD students. Yeah, you know, that's gaming the system, you know, putting your name on your students9 work. They're doing that and they're relying on their PhD students to do the work. I think it's wrong. Yeah. And I've never done it=.*

The senior male lecturer contended above that including the name of a PhD supervisor on a student's paper is unjust if the paper has been entirely authored by the student, without substantial input from the supervisor. Merely guiding the student through their PhD journey does not constitute a significant contribution to their paper.

Moreover, a male lecturer from a non-Russell Group university has explained that the pressure has moved forward to the PhD students themselves. It seems like a factory production process to push them to publish a 3-star or above publication. Indeed, this sort of grooming process of the student's work starts from the time they propose his/her project to supervisors. Some supervisors evaluate the research projects based on their probability of having a publication or more.

> *<I think PhD students rather than begin when the time to think and write a PhD. You are in from year one. You got a paper; you need a three-star. So the pressure is up on this, and it's really unfortunate because I think we can still recruit on potential= (Male lecturer, teaching university, non-Russell Group).*

In a capitalist society, the exploitation of the working class undermines democratic principles (Pausch, 2013). The working model of academic staff tends to situate them on fixed-term contracts, creates a quasi-feudal relationship of dependency and undermines the basic preconditions for sustainable industrial action (Schmitt, 2023). This clashes with the idea of democratic participation and equal/just employment schemes. The rise in part-time academics has led to a decrease in free speech rights for employees (Misse & Martel, 2024). Administrators and managers have been seen as increasingly limiting free speech and civil discourse on campus to manage their institution's image. This has resulted in the replacement of full-time jobs with part-time or limited-term contracts, leading to an intensification of work effort and longer hours for those who have retained full-time status (Foley and Polanyi, 2006). This division creates a sense of privilege among the tenured professors, who may not realize that their own future is being shaped without their consent, while leaving the lecturer faculty feeling disempowered and marginalized. Since its inception, higher education has been marked by a history of exploitation, racism, and misogyny, as well as resistance and zones of democracy.

It is now well-established from various studies that early career researchers (ECRs) are under massive pressure to publish and conform with the PMSs (Harley, 2002; Guthrie and Parker, 2014). This is consistent with the perspective of a male lecturer from a research-intensive university Russell Group, below. He elucidated that such managerial pressures made ECRs vulnerable to exploitation by their seniors. Seniors may sometimes involve juniors in their research activities without offering co-authorship, which is a form of coercion. It is indeed the junior academics who bear the brunt of the academic burden, as they are often assigned a heavy teaching workload and

are not always considered research stars (Harley, 2002). He further explained how ECRs are thrown into a high-stakes game:

> *<Senior academics are grooming not only their PhD students but also early career researchers. They are asking them to work on their own papers and will never put their name on them. As I was not playing their game, they rejected my promotion. Even if I met all the criteria, they told me I did not go to enough conferences!=.*

A female associate professor at a research-intensive university, Russell Group, has shared her personal experience with her senior manager, who is exploiting his position of power. She said:

> <I went to the annual evaluation with the head of the department, and he asked me to put his name on my paper even if he didn9t contribute to the work. I refused. He got angry and downgraded my evaluation, saying I had to go for a 4* publication. My 3* papers are not satisfactory anymore!= (AP4).

This view of the academic above is consistent with that of Oravec (2019) who introduced *8forced Joint Authorship9* as an academics9 gaming technique. This happened when adding the name of a person in a high administrative position to the list of authors without contributing to the research-creation process, as mentioned above. These faces of employee exploitation were a result of the penetration of managerialism into the business schools. Such exploitation of PhD students, junior academics, and ECRs by senior academics runs counter to the principles of workplace democracy, which hold that all individuals are inherently equal and free (Pausch, 2013).

7.5 TEF & NSS: The Craft of Teaching Performance Results

UK business schools are currently facing a substantial challenge to remain afloat in an exceedingly competitive environment. As a result, there has been a noticeable increase in the employment of managerial tactics to reinforce the competitive values of the market (Winter, 2017). Attracting students through NSS, TEF, or even league table rankings became a strategic target for universities fuelled by internal performance metrics, benchmarks, KPIs, and managerial strategic mechanisms that are instrumentally utilised (Richardson, Slater and Wilson, 2007b; Jones *et al.*, 2020). Universities that demonstrate teaching excellence through the TEF rating could raise their tuition fees (Forstenzer, 2018). This created incentives to game the TEF metric.

> *<I think most universities try to play the game with TEF, where they try to, for instance, back in days when they released the NSS. They used the word feedback, and then they started to use it instead of office hours. They start to use feedback hours just to tell students that this is the feedback they're getting because students say, <Ohh, we didn't get any feedback.= even if you ask a lecturer a question and the lecturer answers that question, that's feedback*

> *itself. So students didn't define feedback, so they tried to use feedback all over the place=* (TF1, Male teaching fellow, teaching university, non-Russell Group).

As expressed above, feedback is one aspect of Teaching metrics. A male teaching fellow from a teaching-focused university noted that universities use the word 8feedback9 in many activities concerning students, such as lecturers' office hours and feedback during lectures. This gaming technique cascades down from university managers to individual academics. Academics use this tactic to tick the box, thus enabling students to confirm completion when questioned about the feedback.

Additionally, the issue is not only the timing and nature of the feedback but also the manner in which it is delivered. In response to this, there has been a transition away from handwritten feedback to electronic means. However, a male lecturer from a research-intensive Russell Group university has voiced concerns that the electronic feedback may lack depth and constructive criticism, resulting in generic comments being given by lecturers on student essays and assignments. He criticised this approach for not contributing to the development of students' learning abilities but 8ticking the box9. He explained the consequences of the shift towards electronic feedback below:

> *<There was an issue with feedback. And so the school decided, okay, the issue is with feedback. The students were saying it was not clear, and they were not getting enough feedback. And so that what was read into that was, well, it needs to be electronic. So we give electronic feedback. That didn't improve the situation because what people then did was they cut and paste generic comments throughout the documents and the students could see that. Because instead of gaming feedback, they're gaming the electronic submission and the electronic feedback when actually the problem is that they're not getting the specific feedback that they need, which you get from hand annotation of scripts=.*

The issue of gaming teaching metrics is intricately tied to the manner in which university managers implement the framework. It is noteworthy that the root of the problem does not solely lie with the framework itself but rather with the fact that individuals who are not directly involved in the job itself (e.g. teaching, marking scripts&etc.) are tasked with making decisions pertaining to it. This was illustrated by a female teaching fellow at a research-intensive university-Russell group below:

> *<None of the people making these decisions have any skin in the game. They're not marking 6516-page reports in three weeks. They don't have to do that. So they're making decisions at this high level that impact what we do. They don't have experience of what we do. That's*

> *the biggest problem. It's not the TEF per se. It's the people making the decisions who have no idea what they're talking about. The problem is that a lot of these decisions are made by people at a higher level who don't teach or, if they do teach, in small numbers=* (TF6).

It is well known that students become the main source of revenue for business schools (Nixon, Scullion and Hearn, 2018b; Adisa *et al.*, 2023b). As a result, ensuring their satisfaction has become a key strategic objective. However, this focus on "keeping students happy" has led to concerns about academic standards being lowered, with some academics offering easy content and exams, or even sharing exam questions in advance through assignments (Adisa *et al.*, 2023b). While the NSS provides valuable insights into student satisfaction, teaching quality and the overall university experience, a male senior teaching fellow at a research-intensive university, Russell Group have raised concerns about the potential for academics to manipulate these ratings in various ways. He has shared a story from his university below:

> *<There were some cases where people changed the evaluation [NSS]. I think somebody in the school mentioned that they caught somebody doing this=* (STF5).

The significance of NSS lies in its capacity to draw the attention of prospective students and elevate the university's position in the league table (Thiel, 2019; Arthur, 2020). This evaluation also goes through the TEF ratings, which allow universities to increase their tuition fees (Forstenzer, 2018). This elucidates why academics and their respective universities put all the effort into managing this evaluation with utmost diligence.

> *<I could give a questionnaire to my students to see how they engage well. What are the best ways for them to engage in the class? Midway through the module, students will be given an opportunity to fill out a questionnaire, and then when they fill out that questionnaire, they can comment on the model. At that point, they can comment about what is not going well, and the aim of students assessing you for your teaching quality is to enable you to make appropriate amendments so that the students are not disengaged from that model. It's built into the process like I just got an e-mail now, and we're just we're almost midway when week five students have already been told to fill out the questionnaire. And so within that, in a way, engaging with because, without the students, we will not be here. So engaging with those students as key stakeholders and ensuring that their voices are heard=* (TF7, Male teaching fellow, research-intensive, Russell group).

As expressed above, some academics gathered students9 feedback through informal questionnaires. A male lecturer at Russell Group University claimed that this approach is helping him to develop his professional skills and make appropriate amendments to the module, method of teaching, and assessment. These questionnaires have the ability to address students9

complaints before reaching the final year and filling in the NSS (Arthur, 2020). The way the teaching metrics work has changed the power balance in the student-academics relationship. Nowadays, students have the power to influence decision-making, choose among different knowledge products, and complain against their educators. From a workplace democracy perspective, these extensive managerialism practices have reduced relational equality as actors do not enjoy the same power (Frega, 2021).

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter highlights the new gaming techniques that UK academics have adopted to cope with the pressures of the PMSs. These strategies raise significant concerns about the erosion of workplace democracy. The key findings illustrate how managerialism fosters a culture of individualism, opportunism, and symbolic compliance, where metrics such as research outputs and teaching evaluations become the central focus. The study reveals that academics engage in the "publication game," strategically selecting journals to meet institutional expectations rather than to advance knowledge, which diminishes academic freedom. This behaviour aligns with the managerialist ideology that prioritizes measurable performance over substantive intellectual contributions, leading to a focus on quantity over quality in research output (Aboubichr & Conway, 2021).

From the perspective of workplace democracy, these gaming strategies expose significant power imbalances within academic institutions. Academics, especially ECRs and PhD students, often face exploitation, as senior academics leverage their work for personal gain, particularly in research publications. This dynamic undermines the principles of equality and participation that are central to democratic workplaces (Levin & Greenwood, 2016). The findings indicate that academic autonomy and freedom to choose research topics are constrained by institutional pressures, further weakening the democratic values traditionally associated with academia.

Additionally, the study highlights the <promotion game=, where academics use their research output and funding power to negotiate promotions and transfers. This behavior is driven by the managerialist focus on performance metrics, reducing the academic profession to a transactional market, where success is measured by the ability to secure grants and publish in high-ranked journals. This dynamic not only distorts academic motivations but also exacerbates inequalities, as those with access to resources and networks are better positioned to advance their careers.

Finally, the manipulation of teaching metrics, particularly through the NSS and TEF, underscores how metrics pressures led to the prioritization of student satisfaction at the expense of academic rigour. The gaming of teaching evaluations, through tactics such as inflating feedback or

simplifying course content, further demonstrates how managerialism undermines the integrity of education. This shift reflects a broader neoliberal trend in higher education, where students are treated as customers and educational institutions prioritize market performance over scholarly and pedagogical values (Parker, 2013).

In conclusion, the chapter advances the understanding of how managerialism in higher education has led to the adoption of gaming strategies that distort both research and teaching practices. These behaviours are fundamentally at odds with the ideals of workplace democracy, where transparency, participation, and equality are key. The findings highlight the need for a re-evaluation of PMSs and their role in academia, advocating for systems that promote academic freedom, collaboration, and genuine contributions to knowledge, rather than reinforcing the exploitative dynamics of managerialist accountability.

Chapter 8 PMSs and academics' emotional ill-being

8.1 Introduction

UK business schools have undergone significant changes following the implementation of NPM techniques (Brown and Carasso, 2013). One notable change has been the adoption of quantitative metrics. Studies have found a correlation between PMSs and symptoms of employee anxiety and stress. This can be attributed to the extensive control exerted by PMSs, practical challenges, and difficulties in meeting the heightened scrutiny of academic work (Kallio et al., 2016). There are also concerns regarding time management, meeting employer expectations, workload and competition pressures (Loveday, 2018). Moreover, the application of NPM has led to the casualization and marginalization of the academic workforce. Academics on part-time, temporary, teaching-only, or research-only contracts face uncertainties (Santiago and Carvalho, 2008). This uncertainty stems from a lack of financial security, job stability, and future career plans. As a result, academics sense reduced autonomy and freedom, job insecurity, diminished self-worth, and lack of trust (Du and Lapsley, 2019).

The aim of this chapter is to delve into the emotional reactions of academics towards the widespread use of PMSs in UK universities. Emotions are complex psychological states that comprise three interrelated components: subjective experiences, physiological responses, and behavioural reactions (Pekrun, 2006). The first component pertains to how each individual perceives the situation, while the second component relates to how the body reacts to the event (such as the fatigue and health outcomes discussed later in this chapter). The third component focuses on how these emotions are expressed through actions, which were explored in chapters 6 and 7. This chapter will cover a range of emotions, namely anxiety, the need for belonging, depression, self-worth, narcissism, jealousy, and pressure. These findings will provide insight into the reasons and processes that underpin the development of these emotions among UK academics.

8.2 Anxiety

> *<I feel anxious all the time, I have the fear of losing my job=* (STF2, Female senior teaching fellow, research university, Russell Group).

Anxiety is an emotional state characterized by increased arousal and a sense of apprehension (Spector, Dwyer, & Jex, 1988) and role overload which occurs when an employee's work expectations surpass their available resources, time, or personal capability (Dougherty & Pritchard, 1985 as cited in Jensen, Patel and Messersmith, 2013). Job insecurity can lead to

symptoms of anxiety, depression, various diseases and psychological ill-being among employees (Foley and Polanyi, 2006; Wichert, 2002). Institutional restructuring, such as the ones induced by managerialism in the business schools, can cause feelings of anxiety, guilt, apathy, and disengagement in workplaces (Littler, 2000). Valued job features being removed or organizational changes that reduce academics9 control and workplace democracy can also cause job insecurity. Vulnerability is more pronounced when academics lack power in workplace decision-making, and academics in precarious work situations, such as temporary and contract employees, tend to have poorer working conditions and overall well-being (Foley and Polanyi, 2006).

The widespread adoption of managerialism within UK business schools has led to a restructuring that includes performance controls (Du and Lapsley, 2019). The excessive use of PMSs has instilled fear, anxiety, and a sense of intimidation among academics (Martin-Sardesai and Guthrie, 2018b). A female senior lecturer and a research centre co-director at a research-intensive university, Russell Group, illustrated below why PMSs trigger anxiety for both herself and her colleagues. She pointed out that academics feel under threat of not meeting research goals and fear being deemed incapable of carrying out their job tasks. This aligns with Jensen, Patel and Messersmith (2013) explanation of how anxiety is linked to the emergence of PMSs.

> *<So often I've heard things like be critical of the game, play the game, and then push back against the game or seek to change it. So be aware of the mainstream and the expectations. Meet the mainstream and then you can do whatever you like&So there's a degree of pragmatic engagement about it. That doesn't mean to say that at various times, seeing the research assessment cycle, there are not degrees of anxiety around those things and similarly autopsy post assessment, which do I guess change the atmosphere in the school and or varying communities there as well&there are others, and I would include myself, who feel quite anxious about it and then there are others that like, don't question it at all. In fact, it's almost seemed to be like the way things should be managed like the target setting and more quantifiable indicators of performance= (female senior lecturer and a research centre co-director at a research-intensive university, Russell Group).*

The escalation of anxiety felt by the academic above stems from the lack of clarity regarding the regularly evolving evaluation criteria within UK academia, and the potential impact of these metrics on researchers' allowances and job stability. Many of the participants in my research discussed the challenge of facing 8ambiguous targets9, as outlined in Chapter 6. It appears that university managers only provide feedback to academics when they are considering dismissal or expulsion. Moreover, multiple logics within higher education introduce an additional layer of uncertainty, even among university managers themselves (Sarrico and Melo, 2012).

> *<REF, it discourages a lot. It creates anxiety because I can see, for example, my peers publishing and I can see them discussing that they have done a certain amount of publications already, that they're collaborating with someone else, like people from different universities and everything. And then you look at yourself and like, I haven't done anything of it&I complain, I say I cry, It makes me sad. That I cannot accomplish what I have planned. It makes me anxious because the topics that I'm working very time-sensitive, and if I don't get it out now, someone else will get it. Sometimes, I lose my willingness to do anything=.*

As expressed above, the fast-paced changes in academia and heightened competition contribute to increased anxiety among academics. There is a pervasive concern about publishing work quickly to avoid being overtaken by others (Loveday, 2018; Boncori, Bizjak and Sicca, 2020). This concern was apparent in the tears of a female lecturer from a Teaching-focused university, non-Russell Group, who stated above that REF caused her anxiety as she cannot keep up with the pace of her colleagues' achievements <Publications=!

In addition, a male lecturer from a research-intensive university, Russell Group, have also reported that the ambiguity around the way the PMSs work and the unclear outcome of it have caused him anxiety. He said:

> *<how they're going to evaluate how much research allowance you're going to get is quite unclear. The university does not really communicate in that sense. First of all, that increases the anxiety=.*

The anxiety of failure is a common prospective feeling that arises from uncertainty about whether success is possible or whether failure can be prevented (Perkrun, 2009). Whereas the shame felt after receiving feedback from an evaluation is a form of retrospective emotion. Both of these emotions are part of the overall outcome emotions. It's worth noting that anxiety can lead to avoidance behaviours, which may explain why many academics lose their motivation to pursue their career goals. Furthermore, anxiety is thought to be influenced by an individual's subjective perception of the importance of the outcome (Roos *et al.*, 2023). For instance, if academics perceive their job as survival, anything that might impact their job security would induce anxiety and fear (Du and Lapsley, 2019).

On the contrary, few participants view the evaluation metrics as a catalyst for excellence. A male senior teaching fellow at a research university, Russell Group argued below that the metrics have prompted the field to adhere to the highest standards of both teaching and research.

> *<We became aware of NSS requirements. We follow the best practices of teaching and feedback. I don9t feel that my job causes any anxiety or stress compared to other*

professions. We have flexibility. It isn9t a 9-5 job, no need for physical presence all the time= (STF1, Male senior teaching fellow, research university, Russell Group).

The findings align with Hall and Bowles' argument (2016) that anxiety can serve as a catalyst for achieving excellence, enhancing productivity, and facilitating capital accumulation. This catalyst is reshaping the contemporary entrepreneurial academic, emphasizing the pursuit of competitive objectives. While it has been established that anxiety may have adverse effects on performance and physiological arousal, such as increased heart rate and elevated blood pressure (Roos *et al.*, 2023).

8.3 Feeling Discriminated and Burnout

The corporatization of UK business schools affected the relationships between peers. Under the prevailing neoliberal ideology, every setting is viewed as a free market in which makes the academic participants often feel discriminated (Alawattage and Wickramasinghe, 2022b). As a result, the sense of collegiality has been replaced by individualism and competitiveness (Feldman and Sandoval, 2018). A female lecturer in a research-intensive university reported below a dearth of support from her seniors. The pervasive individualistic culture has induced a competitive ethos, leading to conflicts of interest and a lack of support among colleagues (Welch, 2021). She felt that seniors who had the ability to help her with her research were not willing to do so. She also believed that this lack of cooperation among academic peers was due to her race.

<I feel also really angry because there are people who could have really contributed and helped to make this project much better. But they're not willing to. Let's say because some of them see it as a competition. Some of them see it as not worthy&These few people are the good people in a position that they have experience, they have knowledge, and if they had supported the junior ones, they could have learned more&They are a bit of racist. And because they're [race] and they helped the [same race]. However, they do cut off any communication with [different race]. So this is what I have faced=.

She continued in anger:

<For example, you go with the initial ideas to more senior people when they discourage you saying, Oh, your ideas, well, I'm very sorry for the word, but your idea is bullshit. And then they just don't look into that. It's like, I would really expect to see a little bit more support from the seniors=.

The managerialism ideology in UK business schools emphasizes a social distance between the manager and the managed, resulting in weak relationship bonds between university managers and other academics (Winter, 2017). This approach values positional authority over personal

leadership qualities, leading to transactional relationships based on short-term economic exchanges (e.g. one highly ranked publication equating to a fixed sum of research money) (Shore and Barksdale, 1998). Due to the emphasis on the organization's central financial focus, misunderstandings or necessary compromises may arise in the academic working relationship (Winter and O9Donohue, 2012). Indeed, PMSs derived from this ideology can sometimes lead to unhealthy competition among employees and biased managerial decisions, resulting in negative employee experiences (Brown, Haytt, & Benson, 2010). On the other side, employees may also have a distorted view of their own performance and demand more rewards than they deserve, leading to tension and conflict with managers (Ismail and Gali, 2017).

Academics are human. They need emotional support, social connections, and a sense of fellowship with their colleagues (omodan, 2022). Isolation and loneliness are drivers of burnout, whereas feeling connected to colleagues is a marker of resilience (Hale et al., 2019). Striving for a work-life balance can be a challenge in academia, where career development often requires working weekends, holidays, and longer hours than what is officially expected. This can impact academics9 social life, whether their connection with friends, partners or even their children. A Female senior teaching fellow at a teaching-intensive university, non-Russell Group have complained angrily about her workload. She said:

> *<It pisses me off quite simply and one of the things I'm struggling with at the moment, I work way more than I'm supposed to work 35 hours a week, supposed to get 30 days a year holiday, I work weekends. I've pencilled, I say I'm working Saturday and Sunday morning. I've pencilled them to do some work. I was marking exams this time. Normally, it's research and writing. And it's all because, I mean, at my current institution, they have 10 areas they assess, as I mentioned, the majority of them there, to get promoted. You've gotta be what they call excellent in six. An excellent for me is, I mean, I don't know anyone who's excellent in such things. I am working from 9 to 5 every day and I have two kids! Do the university expect me to work at home too!=* (STF6).

As mentioned above, she felt that her workload negatively impacted her social life, and she could not handle all optimistic managerial targets with her family responsibilities. Additionally, a male lecturer at research-non-Russel Group University has further expressed the pressures of the performance metrics put on him to find a work-life balance. He illustrated:

> *<Maybe I should speak my steps carefully but easily not asking my children that I am not available for them. It's not putting undue pressure on myself where I'm not able to work on my or make progress on my pending commitments. So that is also an example of how these measures to control the system affect us. So, this is how it does=.*

Undoubtedly, conducting research demands a great deal of concentration and mental exertion, which can lead academics to experience isolation. While humans are inherently social creatures, this seclusion can result in burnout and a significant decline in mental and emotional well-being (Welch, 2021). This is particularly true if an academic is coping with the loss of a partner or feeling detached from their children. A well-established male professor and a research lead at a teaching-focused university, non-Russell Group have shared his personal experience:

> *<You might have a personal life, and if I9m working the weekend when my partner wants to go out shopping or watch a film or something and I want to sit on a computer and do something so it's a social cost. It affected my social life, it affected my networks because I've been too much involved with this one. I'm not able to give them time ever, take them out. If I have family and children, their education might be affected. Their life experience might be affected. If the children don't go to school, and don't study, they become delinquent. What's the point of my research if I have neglected them? my wife left me!=* (P13).

Academics pay the social cost of being in academia. A female professor at a research-intensive, non-Russell group university passed through the same experience as well. She stated:

> *<you have to cut off your personal time. you have to sacrifice or compromise with your personal life. I often work on the weekends and I know many of the academics actually do that. My husband is also an academic. He also does that all the time. I have two kids, and my kids are just watching TV while both of us are working on the weekend. And that's not an ideal situation. But we often do that. And we always say that academia, it's a 24/7 job. Some people who are not in academia often do not understand it because they think that, oh, you have only four hours of teaching. That's not much, but they have no idea what these four hours of teaching mean or what other things that we do associate with these four hours of teaching=* (P14).

The social cost of being an academic cannot be overlooked. Many of my research participants have claimed that the workload does not only affect them but also their families and friends. The human need for social belongings is essential for the well-being and survival of academics. This includes their relationships with peers and their personal life. These findings highlight the importance and urgency of implementing workplace democracy practices within academia, and the consequences of its absence. Indeed, Holtzhausen's study (2002) as cited in van der Vliet (2012) on the impact of workplace democracy on employee communication behaviour revealed that democratic workplace practices have an impressive ability to enhance trust levels, information flow, and face-to-face communication, and to some extent, decrease fear of

communicating and improve superior/subordinate communication. These positive outcomes should ultimately lead to increased job satisfaction.

8.4 Depression

> *<I feel quite disappointed. Rejection rate in academia exceeds 95%= (Male Lecturer, research university, Russell Group).*

Academics face a pervasive sense of depression, disappointment and frustration. As expressed by a male lecturer working at a Russell Group university, these emotions appear to be the natural byproduct of the difficulty associated with achieving optimistic targets in academia, such as publishing in 4* or 3* journals. These KPIs became a condition for recruitment, promotion or even recognition of academics within their universities. As a result, many academics are left feeling frustrated and disappointed by the seemingly insurmountable obstacles they face. This is particularly true when it comes to tasks that are perceived as difficult and in which the likelihood of failure is high (Perkrun, 2009). A male Interim Deputy Head of College at a teaching-non-Russell Group university explained:

> *<Our university. Particularly, I won't talk for others. It's the pressure. If an academic is getting maybe bad student feedback. Or even if the academic is not involved in the recruitment but the students have been put in the class, and the students are expected, and maybe there are certain requirements that the student should have to engage with our model, and they don't have it, and then you're struggling to get them to engage and pass. So all that could lead to academic suffering from, I mean, I don't want to use 8depression9. You'd feel bad= (STF1).*

PMSs in this managerialist business school are used as a benchmark for reward or punishment. As mentioned above, this causes a higher level of depression among academics. The emotions experienced after receiving the feedback are referred to as 8Outcomes Emotions9 (Perkrun, 2006). Frustration would be aroused as a result of failure. A good example of that would be getting rejection from a journal, employer or negative feedback from students or line managers. For instance, academics who fail to handle student engagement and their pass rates, then get poor student feedback would feel disheartened. Similarly, receiving a rejection from a coveted journal or experiencing a decrease in publication ranking during REF evaluation can dampen the drive to publish new research. A male professor and deputy dean in a research-intensive university, Non-Russell Group have illustrated:

> *<Multiple rejections. If you are a new member of staff and you haven't got papers in your name yet, you're trying to publish from your PhD. And then you have one rejection, two*

rejection three rejection. So I think this has a very serious impact on the person. It causes depression, causes dissatisfaction and lack of confidence=.

Furthermore, a male lecturer at a Research University, Russell Group, illustrated below why academics experience feelings of disappointment following the REF panel's internal revaluation process. He noted that the criteria utilized by the REF panel differ from those used by the CABS journal ranking system. The panel conducts a reassessment of the research based on its significance and rigour, as highlighted by Marcella et al. (2016). This has resulted in instances where top publications have been downgraded, causing emotional distress for academics.

<I know one of my colleagues, he published a paper in the four-star journal, so it was like the highest ranked. But then during the REF process, because they have different criteria, they don't follow this ranking starting with the ABS. They evaluate the paper, and they put the evaluations themselves. So, even the paper was published in a four-star journal. They consider it as two stars so it was like a frustration for the team who worked on this paper. They spent two or three years working on this paper to improve the quality of the research, and they managed to publish it in this journal, the High Top Rank Journal. So it kind of like put them down, and it makes them frustrated about improving the quality= (Male lecturer, Research University, Russell Group).

Indeed, PMSs that resulted in multiple failures can have a profound impact on individuals' self-perception, leading to feelings of unrecognition, worthlessness, and uncertainty among strugglers. This is consistent with the results of Du and Lapsley9 (2019).

<I feel my institution doesn9t understand me, appraisals undermine the value of what I9m doing, I find appraisals at university are jokes, I9m on teaching contract, my teaching is great, and I9m doing a lot of enterprise stuff to the university for free, in my last internal review they asked me about research and said we don9t really understand what value enterprise stuff you doing brings in. That was very depressing=. (STF4, Male Principal Teaching Fellow, research university, Russell Group).

Academics feel that their universities fail to adequately recognize them when there is a lack of clarity regarding performance targets and the evaluation system. As a result, they experience feelings of disappointment and diminished self-worth. A male senior lecturer at a Research Intensive University within the Russell Group further explained and expressed his sense of being unrecognized, which led to significant emotional distress. He articulated this by saying:

<The school of Management I'm in, it promotes widely people who get their articles into four-star ABS journals, And if a researcher in the school publishes a four-star journal, they'll be like recognition. So there'll be an email sent out to all staff and it will be like, oh, wonderful

news. And that's the only sort of recognition that is given. You know it if you happen to have an article published in a three-star Journal, nobody cares, there'll be no announcement or anything&sometimes it makes me disappointed and unwilling to do any research=.

On the one hand, the difficulty of reaching ambitious goals has led to an atmosphere of frustration, particularly among academics who face high rates of rejection and subsequent feelings of depression. Additionally, the complex evaluation frameworks with multiple logics often result in confusion and uncertainty surrounding outcomes. In fact, universities tend to acknowledge only achievements, disregarding the extensive efforts put in by academics. As a result, many academics experience a heightened sense of disappointment. This result is in line with Raaper (2016) who concludes that UK academics working in research-Russell Group universities suffer from great levels of frustration and confusion about what managerialism has brought to the higher education sector. On the other hand, the absence of workplace democracy within academia appears to elicit sentiments of frustration, disillusionment, and profound cynicism towards the management's motivations (Webster, 1995). It also erodes professional autonomy, diminishes status, and fosters a sense of alienation. Central to this feeling of detachment is a perception of heightened control by management and a pervasive sense of being monitored at all times.

8.5 Feeling Abused and Disrespected

The prevalence of PMSs within the UK Business school has resulted in an issue of excessive control. This has granted university management an unprecedented level of power, often to the detriment of academics' autonomy (Puaca, 2021). As a result of NPM strategies, a new identity has emerged for academics - that of the "academic performer" (Pianezzi, N0rreklit and Cinquini, 2020). This identity prioritizes rankings and publications in top-tier journals above all else, transforming academics into managed employees. Those employees face a lot of criticism from their students <customers= as well as their line managers. Work can be seen as an essential aspect of a person's identity, a way to develop their human potential and contribute to their own sense of self-respect. This viewpoint emphasizes the importance of autonomy in achieving a fulfilling life, and is related to the argument that workplace democracy can enhance the quality of work experience and the sense of self-worth (Frega, Herzog and Neuhauser, 2019).

*<When you don't publish, and you are not promoted, and you are frustrated, it is tough. And the rejection rate could be 90, or 95% in journals. So it is a profession of rejection, and people live under stress, and they can feel that they are disrespected and unappreciated by the profession= (*AP8, male associate professor, research-intensive, Russell Group).

As expressed above, academics sense that their university fails to show them the respect and appreciation they deserve when they fall short of meeting the managerialism targets. A male associate professor articulated above the intense pressure that academics in Russell Group universities face to publish in highly ranked journals, which often have a daunting rejection rate of 95%. The challenging nature of meeting these targets leads to feelings of inadequacy, diminished self-esteem, and a lack of recognition and respect.

Commercialization of Business schools has led to a loss of social status for academics. As a result, a sense of respect has been lost in the process. This was expressed below by a male lecturer at a research university Russell Group, who felt that he became a cog in the machine of publications and sensed ignorance and worthlessness. Academics became managed employees guided by managerial ideologies.

> *<I feel like not getting recognised for the sort of who I am, but just what I produce, I do think we've lost that, you know, gone are the days of sort of returning to walk through some campus like Oxford or Cambridge with classical music playing and you are having a position status as an academic, that's gone, though I think we're just managed employees. It is a shame, and these things contribute to it=.*

In addition to the challenges posed by PMSs, international academics also confront cultural differences (Pustelnikovaite and Chillas, 2022).This can add an extra layer of complexity to their work, as they must navigate different social norms, communication styles, and expectations. A male teaching fellow at a teaching-intensive university, non-Russell Group, expressed below his struggle with the system and societal change. He experienced situations where students were quite blunt and critical towards him. Additionally, his manager has displayed highly aggressive behaviour during his annual evaluation meetings, to the point that he has been left in tears after leaving the meeting.

> *<Elder's parents, and teachers have are given some respectable place in the society. Not generally, but by youngsters. So that is also something which is not developed here in this society. And that makes job or work in the university coming from attention like that from [his country], where you have taught for many years and then coming to the UK or Irish university, you would not feel that kind of an outward respect, as it is there. So that, too, carries the pressure because if that kind of hesitance is not there on the part of the student, it means they can be quite blunt with you. They can be quite kind of critical to you. And perhaps you never have made a mistake, but still, because they were critical. The management would require you to address it. And these make a kind of control on you how you should, I mean these are aspects of control because if you have come across the ideas of the levers of control, so one lever is that belief system, the value system&They also kind*

> *of shape your behaviour, and that's like a control&here the respect has got a different meaning, or perhaps no meaning=* (TF3).

The centralized control over faculty is unprecedented, at least in the history of universities in workplace democracies (Lorenz, 2012). Such control leads to a culture of permanent mistrust. Mistrust produces attitudes like fear, scepticism, cynicism, watchfulness and vigilance (De Vita and Case, 2016). This creates long-lasting instability in social relationships. This is in line with the results of Du and Lapsley (2019) and Welch (2021). A male lecturer in a research-focused- Russell Group University explained:

> *<You have to report your progress because maybe I want to do everything to the very last day or whereas with the first line manager of the work, quite a lot of attempts to introduce those check-ups, check-in meetings to see how I'm doing with these tasks and with that task and I thought it was a massive waste of time. But as I said, it's just not the way I like to operate. I want to be trusted more with my time and my efforts=.*

The need for respect, trust and control are human psychological needs (omodan, 2022). Respect is an affirmation of an individual9s abilities, qualities, or identity, and lack of respect lies at the root of an employer9s mistreatment. The complicated evaluation metrics derived by managerialism ideology have caused academics to lose control over their daily tasks, workloads, and schedules. This has led to burnout, violated workplace democracy, and deprived academics of their sense of autonomy, self-efficacy, and resulted in feelings of alienation.

8.6 The Culture of Narcissism, Competitiveness, and Jealousy

Narcissism is defined as an inflated self-image, a lack of empathy, and an excessive need for admiration (APA, 1994). The individualization of PMSs, driven by managerialism, shifts the emphasis from collectivism and collegiality to individualism and competitiveness (Feldman and Sandoval, 2018). This shift also fosters a form of narcissistic accountability. On one hand, academics with high narcissistic traits may demonstrate greater compliance with external accountability measures. According to Collins and Stukas (2008) individuals with such traits appear to be heavily focused on presenting themselves in a positive light in public domains. They may place more value on publicly observable or tangible qualities than on internally based qualities. Moreover, their results argued that those with high narcissism tendencies do not diminish their self-enhancing behaviours when held accountable; instead, they tend to rate themselves even more favourably in public domains when faced with external accountability.

Conceptually, I classify academics into two groups: 'achievers' and 'strugglers'. Achievers are individuals who have effectively managed various academic metrics in their favour, and my

research indicates that most achievers are well-established professors. Whereas strugglers are individuals who continue to grapple with metrics, research outputs, publications, and even student feedback. The majority of them belong to the category of ECRs or early-to-mature career researchers. Furthermore, an examination of academics' social media presence, including platforms like LinkedIn and Twitter, reveals that 8achievers9 prominently display their accomplishments as a source of pride. These achievements encompass publications, citations, h-index, conference participation, workshop delivery, extensive professional networks, and university rankings. A male lecturer at a research-intensive university, Russell Group, stated below that Business schools encourage academics to pursue what they term 'professional prestige' or 'professional standing', which constitutes a form of academic image-building intended to showcase one's abilities and achievements. Over time, this process reshapes the academic self, fostering a sense of narcissistic pride.

> *<There's sort of things not so much measured, but they tell us we need to be good academic citizens and also pursue professional prestige...the citizenship they measure up performance on and also, professional standing. They call it at my current institutional professional standing basically, if we guessed any journals if we changed things at conferences, have we been invited to speak, etcetera. So very much sort of an academic image in the wider community, but it's also inherently narcissistic as well. You know, it's very much about appearances, and there isn't a lot of substance behind it=.*

On the other side, the implementation of managerialism in higher education not only fosters narcissism but also breeds jealousy among colleagues. Neoliberalism views every environment as a marketplace, fostering competition and economic rationality among its participants (Alawattage and Wickramasinghe, 2022a). The use of individualized PMSs leads employees to compare themselves to one another. This increasing competitive culture ultimately induces a sense of jealousy among colleagues. Jealousy is defined as the negative emotions, thoughts, and behaviours that arise when an employee experiences a decline in self-esteem or from someone shows superiority (Bani-Melhem *et al.*, 2023b). It encompasses feelings of envy and annoyance and can stem from a sense of inadequacy and inferiority in comparison to others in the workplace (Bayar and Koca, 2021). This employee9s ongoing jealousy may arise from the anxiety of losing positive situations in the workplace. A person sees the person they are jealous of as a threat. Simply doing a job well may arouse animosity from others, especially when others receive organizational rewards such as promotion (Vecchio, 2005).

> *<There is jealousy. There is a competition, and some see me as a role model, and they aspire to replicate me= (Male Professor, Research lead, teaching-focused, non-Russell Group).*

As expressed above, he sensed jealousy from his colleagues because they compared themselves to him. This was induced by the intensified competition among academics brought by performance metrics. Academics often compare themselves to those who have successfully published, are highly regarded, or have secured significant grants. Feelings of pride or shame result from the outcome of the evaluation, and these emotions are particularly heightened when the evaluation is deemed to be of great importance (Perkrun, 2009). This helps to explain why 8achievers9 often experience pride, joy, self-centeredness, and at times, even narcissism. Conversely, 8strugglers9 may experience feelings of shame and a diminished sense of self-worth. As humans, individuals strive to realize their full professional potential in various facets (Omodan, 2022). Thus, academics not only seek to earn esteem, respect, and recognition within their community but also aim to attain personal fulfilment and the opportunity for personal growth at the pinnacle of their careers. The consequences of workplace jealousy have dual aspects. Jealousy can motivate individuals to strive for self-improvement, thus resulting in improved employee performance (Bani-Melhem *et al.*, 2023b). Conversely, jealousy can lead to employees becoming disengaged (Han et al., 2020) and engaging in social loafing (Thompson et al., 2016), which goes against the principles of workplace democracy.

8.7 Pressure, Fatigue and Its Health Consequences

> *<We've heard stories at some of the London research-intensive universities, people committing suicide because they haven't had a good enough grant record or publications haven't landed. It's not that they weren't doing the work, it's just that they weren't landing in the right place at the right time, and we know about the system of journals and editorships and reviewers and all of that. All of those pressures and I think that that has really poorly impacts on individuals9 mental health and physical well-being, but probably on their family life as well= (female professor, research-intensive, non-Russell Group university).*

Academics facing work-related stress have less time for research, publishing, and professional development, leading to lower standards and increased conflict (Shin and Jung, 2014). Stress affects both physical and emotional well-being, family relationships, and leisure activities (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001b). Work demands and inability to manage personal responsibilities lead to stress and conflict. Job dissatisfaction factors, such as unclear roles, can also cause job stress (Ismail and Gali, 2017). Undoubtedly, REF, fund applications, Impact, and NSS have placed significant pressure on academics (Martin-Sardesai *et al.*, 2017). The REF, in particular, is driving academics towards producing more publications as the metrics used by these evaluations only consider outputs that ultimately impact research funding and career advancement (Loveday, 2018). It's worth noting that the word 8pressure9 has been used by my research participants over

400 times! A female professor, ex-president of a professional Accounting Association and journal board editor stated:

> *<People do feel pressure, particularly younger researchers or newer researchers, and the problem is Deans and others tend to put pressure on people to have 3/4 star papers. So you can put undue pressure on new researchers and others to put all their effort and getting everything into top journals. It's also put a huge amount of pressure on the journals. So you know the top journals get flooded with half-baked papers that really haven't been through the process and they're running out of people to review. Many reviews in the year, you know, so some of the feedback You then get from the journals may be from people who are not experienced reviewers and who are themselves trying to play the game. So I think that puts additional pressure on individuals, but it's also got a lot of pressure on the system, the publishing system. And I think that's a difficulty because that then winds down that people get more rejections. I think the other problems are more that you know there's been an increased pressure to get funding because that shows on the environment statement is increased pressure to find impact, which some people can achieve and others can't=.*

As expressed above, the pressure is twofold. Academics face the pressure to publish in highly ranked journals and journals are pressured by a large amount of less significant submissions. Moreover, there has been a surge in the number of students, resulting in increasingly complex PMSs. The job demands have taken a toll on the well-being and overall health of academics, leading to burnout, stress, and self-induced distress (Welch, 2021). This heightened level of stress appears to contribute to cognitive dissonance and mental breakdowns (Martin-Sardesai *et al.*, 2017) as expressed below by a female teaching fellow from the Russell Group. She linked mental health concerns to work overload.

> *<...in my case, courses that ran very well and were designed for, you know, 50 or 60 students. So now running with 300. And I'm exhausted and everybody in my department is exhausted. And everybody is leaving because it's just incredibly tough to keep going because the student numbers are all insanely high so that's been one problem. And the other problem, which does have implications as well for quality, I think that it probably creates lots of kind of cognitive dissonances really, by which I mean that, on the one hand, you want to give students a lot of variety. You want them to be entertained by your class as well as informed by it. You want to do things like bringing in people from outside, from the industry because you want your class to feel relevant. You want to feel like you want to avoid things that students find in 8Boring9. However, the flip side of that is the more variety and innovation and, you know, things like bringing in employers, for example, you have within*

your class. The more opportunity or potential you're introducing for chaos= (TF4, Female teaching fellow, research university, Russell Group).

High levels of stress in the workplace can have a detrimental effect on the health, well-being, and morale of employees. These health symptoms may include headaches, migraines, sleep disorders, back and neck pain, muscle tension, weight changes, physical fatigue, weakened immunity, hypertension, heart problems, and skin disorders (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001b). Furthermore, the nature of academic jobs requires prolonged periods of sitting in an office, whether for research, administrative work, or responding to a large volume of student emails. As a result, this sedentary lifestyle may lead to issues such as ageing, high blood pressure, obesity, and mobility problems. The pressure of occupational stress is not limited to academics alone, as those in administrative roles, such as heads of departments and research leads, also experience similar challenges. The following are the words of a female senior lecturer and a head of department in a teaching-focused university, non-Russell Group. She is facing a lot of pressure to meet all the requirements of the quantitative metrics.

<So on me, it's heavily impacted. It contributes to my white hair quite a lot because, in terms of my role, we get a lot of pressure as head of the subject to ensure that our programs are in within the subject group are performing well. And when we're saying performing well, it is NSS and P tests. So those metrics, so my level, there's quite a lot of pressure to achieve those metrics, but my approach is when I drill it down to my team is to not focus so much on the actual metrics but focus on a good student experience which will ultimately impact our metrics=.

As expressed above, a female head of the department highlighted the tremendous pressure university managers face in meeting metrics and system targets, which can lead to high levels of stress. She humorously mentioned how this stress contributes to the signs of ageing and the appearance of her white hair. Academics argue that these pressures not only affect their mental and emotional well-being but also impact their physical health. In a teaching-focused university, much of the pressure stems from the NSS, which plays a pivotal role in student recruitment and university rankings. Additionally, the survey influences the TEF ratings, potentially allowing the university to raise tuition fees (Forstenzer, 2018).

A well-established male professor and a research lead at a teaching-focused university, non-Russell Group, have expressed how much stress he faced in the research process:

<&But they don't see the stress of coming up with the ideas. Implementing an idea. Then we got in the data. And then writing up. And sending the papers for publication with the

editors' rejection. Is a continuous stress to change, right? Most of the research may be done at night or weekends which is not seen by my other colleagues=.

Sadly, the most troubling aspect of the academics' account is that a few among them resorted to suicide due to feelings of despair and being subjected to excessive levels of stress. The burden of workload pressure is cited as a contributing factor to this stress (Loveday, 2018; Boncori, Bizjak and Sicca, 2020). Through my research, I have come across two instances of academic suicide occurring during the academic year 2022/2023, as reported by academics who participated in my study, as follows:

<I've seen cases where individuals were driven to suicide because they could not they were not compatible, they could not agree, and they could not match the expectations and the requirements that were pushed on them with their own ethical setup= (Male associate professor, research university, Russell group).

<My colleague at [University Name] was marking exam scripts in his room, and from the stress, he committed a suicide and hung up himself!= (Male professor, deputy dean, research university, non-Russell group).

The ideology of managerialism in UK business schools has resulted in the establishment of hierarchical authority, leading to overt control and bureaucracy by university managers (Winter, 2017). This excessive bureaucracy has changed a once fulfilling profession into one that now experiences rising stress levels due to a loss of control and diminished academics9 autonomy in their daily work life (De Vita and Case, 2016). The managerial reforms require academics to do more paperwork, increase teaching hours, and undertake more entrepreneurial activities and community service (Shin and Jung, 2014). This has led to increased workloads and negatively impacted the balance between work and personal life (Lyons and Ingersoll 2010). Additionally, job security is declining due to this ideology aiming for efficiency and budget cuts (Shin and Jung, 2014). This has led to fragmented academic employment, with part-time and contract-based positions replacing full-time and tenured roles, causing job stress in the UK academia (Webster, 1995).

Consequently, the new labour structure reshaped by managerialism led to lower decision latitude and hindered workplace democracy. Research has linked stress-related illness primarily to low decision latitude and job strain (van der Vliet, 2012; Foley and Polanyi, 2006). In a democratic workplace, employees would have greater control over their jobs and work arrangements, contributing to workers9 health. The lack of workplace democracy in Business schools led to academics losing their influence even on academic affairs in university-wide decision-making (Shin and Jung, 2014). A major source of stress was the lack of staff consultation

by management and decisions made based too heavily on corporate and financial considerations, with little consideration of teaching, research, and staff interests (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001b).

8.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter highlights the profound emotional impact of PMSs on UK academics, largely due to the pervasive adoption of managerialism. The introduction of NPM techniques has led to a hyper-focus on quantitative metrics, triggering heightened anxiety, depression, and burnout among academic staff. This managerial approach, often emphasizing control, efficiency, and competition, creates a disconnect between academics and their institutions. Key issues such as job insecurity, excessive workloads, and an unclear evaluation system significantly undermine the emotional well-being of academics, contributing to feelings of inadequacy and isolation.

From the lens of managerialism, the shift in focus from collegiality and academic freedom to rigid performance metrics has led to a transactional work environment, where the quality of academic contributions is often overshadowed by the need to meet quantifiable targets. This results in reduced autonomy, undermining workplace democracy which is critical for fostering a healthy, inclusive work environment. Without a democratic framework in place, academics feel marginalized and voiceless, leading to disillusionment and cynicism toward the managerial hierarchy.

Framing these findings through theories of workplace democracy reinforces the importance of participatory decision-making and transparency in academic institutions. It suggests that reforms aimed at restoring a sense of autonomy and inclusivity could mitigate the negative emotional and psychological impacts of managerialism. By fostering a culture that values trust, collaboration, and shared governance, universities can create a more balanced environment, aligning organizational goals with the emotional well-being of their academic staff.

Chapter 9 Discussion and Conclusion

9.1 Key Headings

In line with the central goal highlighted in Chapter 1, this thesis has explored how UK academics engage in gaming and/or other strategies to cope with various PMSs, and how the increasing pressures from extensive PMSs and the academics9 involvement in gaming strategies affect their emotional well-being. Through a qualitative analysis of interviews, documents and social media platforms, this study empirically investigated how academics manipulate the research metrics through publication game strategies, exploiting junior academics and promotion game. It also unveil the ways they appropriate the NSS/TEF metrics through managing feedback or other techniques. On a managerial level, university managers play with the system loopholes. They might create ambiguities within the system to be able to game it. The results of this study show that managers set ambiguous targets, whether deliberately to control the system or even as a result of the multiple logics that impeded the system and confused academics. Moreover, the management with its extensive managerialism approach situates academics to treat students as customers by appropriating academic contracts, recruitment and promotion in order to manage the REF submissions.

The second chapter delved into the historical evolution of PMSs in UK business schools and their associated funding structure. It detailed the significant chronological shifts in the UK's higher education sector from the 1940s onward, encompassing research and teaching components during the pre-NPM, NPM, and post-NPM eras. Moreover, the chapter examined the influence of neoliberal ideologies on funding structures, ultimately shaping the accountability mechanisms within UK business schools.

A key milestone in UK higher education started when the 8Robbins Report9 was released in 1963. The report called for the expansion of HE and a cost-sharing model by establishing a grants and loans finance system for students. Thatcher's government (197931990) led a radical political, social and economic transformation, where neoliberal ideologies led to a reduction in public funds and a gradual increase in tuition fees for international students (Wikipedia, accessed 2024). By the dawning of the 1980s, NPM established the market rules in HE and concepts of managerialism, marketisation and competitiveness were entrenched in the business schools. The first RAE was introduced in 1986 and was updated to a third version in 1996 and to REFs 2014 and 2021 to assess research quality and allocate research funds. On the teaching aspect, quality assurance systems for teaching were launched in 1987 to evaluate teaching quality and to cope with the expansion in student numbers. In fact, student numbers increased by 50% in 1997,

followed by the introduction of domestic tuition in 1998. NSS was launched in early 2005, then TEF in 2016 in order to evaluate teaching excellence, improve teaching quality and customer satisfaction.

In the early chapters of the thesis, it was shown that the trajectory changes in UK Higher Education after implementing NPM have been described as <in crisis= (Brown and Carasso, 2013). These changes were adopted in response to the 2010 government austerity policy, which stemmed from the 2008 global banking crisis. Indeed, neoliberal ideologies pursue the use of PMSs to account public institutions for <value for money.= One of the negative consequences of the intensified adoption of PMSs in UK business schools was the emergence of unethical behaviour, which is called <Gaming behaviour= (Aboubichr and Conway, 2021).

University managers face great pressure to meet the targets of REF, NSS, TEF and other accountability metrics. Indeed, these metrics hold the power to allocate research funds and the capability to increase tuition fees, following the cut on government fund (Martin-Sardesai *et al.*, 2017). NPM has fostered a new identity known as the "academic performer," who prioritizes publications, journal rankings, and career advancement, often displaying tendencies toward individualism, competitiveness, symbolic compliance, opportunism, and manipulation (Aboubichr and Conway, 2021). The widespread use of PMSs has ingrained the achievement of targets as a key value and normative standard in the mindset of academics, shaping this new identity. This emphasis on numeracy has encouraged instrumental behaviours, ultimately elevating what can be measured and compared (Pianezzi et al., 2020).

Academics started to see their profession as a game that must be played, and by accepting to play the game, they accepted the rules and game the system! Studies have found a correlation between PMSs and symptoms of employee anxiety and stress. This can be attributed to the extensive control exerted by PMSs, practical challenges, difficulties in meeting the heightened scrutiny of academic work through the REF and TEF, concerns regarding time management and meeting employer expectations, as well as workload and competition pressures, the pressure to publish and secure grant income (Kallio *et al.*, 2016; Loveday, 2018). Moreover, the application of NPM has led to the casualization of the academic workforce. Academics on part-time, temporary, teaching-only, or research-only contracts face uncertainties related to financial security, job stability, future career plans, and marginalization, ultimately resulting in professional fragmentation, reduced autonomy and freedom, job insecurity, diminished self-worth, lack of trust, and increased instances of bullying (Santiago and Carvalho, 2008; Du and Lapsley, 2019).

The qualitative approach (Chapters 6, 7 and 8) carried out in UK business schools identified several main themes in the research. More specifically, the data analysis was centred around three main themes for each case: (1) the responses of university managers toward PMSs and

whether they adopt gaming strategies, (2) Academics gaming Behaviours and (3) academics' emotional reactions to the extensive use of PMSs. Managerialism and Workplace Democracy constitute the theoretical framework used in this qualitative research study to analyse and understand data, which was conducted at the individual level.

9.2 Key Findings

9.2.1 Academics Gaming the PMSs

This research expands upon academics9 gaming strategies, as introduced by Graf (2019), Oravec (2019) and Aboubichr and Conway (2021). It highlights four genuine gaming strategies adopted by UK academics in response to the intensified use of PMSs. This includes gaming the teaching and research metrics. These strategies are the Publication game, promotion game, grooming of ECRs and PhD students, and manipulation of TEF and NSS.

Firstly, academics 8play it safe9 by choosing the journal before the topic. The culture of journal ranking seems to be dominant in academia. Academics chase 3* or 4* journals to be 8referable9. Academics face difficulty in publishing their work in their desired journals. They had to alter the focus, themes, or even topics of their papers to fit a particular box. Furthermore, some academics are limited in the journals they can publish in within their field, which leads to conformity to specific trends and writing stories that align with the preferred journal. This practice of boxing academics into specific journals resembles the concept of Aboubichr and Conway9s (2021) 'Fitting Research into Journals'. Consequently, scholars may choose to 8play it safe9 by shaping their research topics and methodologies to fit the desired journal, potentially disregarding more challenging and critical issues (Aboubichr and Conway, 2021).

The arduous publishing process in accounting journals has led academics to focus on non-accounting journals for publication. This shift is due to the perceived difficulty of publishing in accounting journals. Academics often shift their focus toward positive quantitative methods due to their perceived ease. My findings also indicated that some academics have been observed using the same data sets to produce multiple publications, a practice that aligns with the concept of Aboubichr and Conway9s 'gratuitous proliferation' (2023). Essentially, this entails publishing numerous articles that originate from the same data set, sometimes known as "salami slicing" or "recycling data." Consequently, many journals now mandate that authors disclose their use of the same data set at the time of submission.

Secondly, REF rules (before 2021) have created a power game between academics and their universities. academics with noteworthy publications had a certain level of bargaining power to move from their current university to another. Under the REF rules, an academic could transition

to a new institution during a specific time of the year, with their research output being considered a product of the new institution, not the previous one. This gave academics a strong bargaining chip. As a result, every few years, academics who had amassed enough publications would apply for positions elsewhere and either ask their current university to match the offer or leave. This tactic led to promotion within their existing university or a higher position with a higher salary at a different institution. The bargaining power of academics extended beyond publications to encompass the value and source of grants. However, the gaming behaviour of academics was being met with changes in PMS criteria, as evidenced by the new REF rules (2021), which imposed limitations on the transfer of papers from one university to another. Additionally, universities were granted the ability to claim outputs produced by former staff during their employment (REF 2021), provided that these outputs had been made publicly available.

Thirdly, the need to publish quickly has caused academics to depend on the work of their PhD students. This kind of exploitation is one aspect of the influence of managerialism in academia. Academics who are unable to conduct research due to teaching and other commitments may rely on their colleagues or their PhD students. A research project might be turned down if it doesn't result in a 3-star publication. Furthermore, these managerial pressures have made ECRs susceptible to being taken advantage of by their seniors. Senior academics may involve ECRs in their work without offering them co-authorship, which can be seen as a kind of coercion. This result aligns with the concept of "*forced Joint Authorship*" introduced by (Oravec, 2019), which refers to adding the name of a person in a high managerial position to the list of authors without their contribution to the research-creation process.

Lastly, the competition among universities to attract students has led to a focus on metrics such as NSS, TEF, and league table rankings (Richardson, Slater and Wilson, 2007b; Jones *et al.*, 2020). Demonstrating teaching excellence through the TEF rating can result in higher tuition fees (Forstenzer, 2018), creating incentives to manipulate the TEF metric. Business schools rely on students as their main source of revenue (Nixon, Scullion and Hearn, 2018), making student satisfaction a key strategic objective. The NSS plays a crucial rule in attracting prospective students and improving a university's position in the league table. Academic institutions put significant effort into managing these evaluations to maximize their impact.

The emphasis on "keeping students happy" has raised concerns about the potential lowering of academic standards. Some academics have been accused of providing easy content and exams, and in some cases, sharing exam questions in advance through assignments (Adisa *et al.*, 2023b). Informal questionnaires have been used by academics to gather student feedback, aiming to address any complaints before students reach their final year and complete the NSS. The term "feedback" is heavily emphasized and used as a means to satisfy NSS requirements. This strategy

is used by university managers and cascaded down to individual academics. Research data has also revealed instances where academics may have manipulated NSS ratings.

9.2.2 University Managers' Gaming the PMSs

This section discusses the research results which are related to the gaming strategies that university managers adopt to cope with the rise of PMS pressures. Data analysis identifies three gaming techniques: 8setting ambiguous PMSs9, 8Appropriating contracts, recruitment and promotion9, and 8treating students as customers9.

The first tactic shows that PMSs' criteria for academic work are somewhat unclear. Academics express frustration with the lack of communication from management or their line managers regarding what is being measured, leaving them with ambiguous evaluation criteria. Moreover, the distribution of hours for research, teaching, and other responsibilities is ambiguous, which results in decreased motivation to carry out job duties. Moving targets were noticeable in research-focused universities, leading the managers to revise their expectations whenever an academic achieved the target. This caused considerable confusion amidst the changing environment. Conversely, adjusting PMS criteria reflects the institution's response to external environmental changes (Posen and Levinthal, 2012).

The lack of transparency in the changes made by universities has led academics to coin the terms 'zombie university' and 'toxic university'. Various factors contribute to the ambiguity surrounding PMSs in academia (Smyth, 2017; Murphy, 2017). Confusion among university managers arises from the coexistence of multiple logics, leading to the simultaneous application of different metrics, whether external or internal. Furthermore, it is argued that managers often employ tactics to manipulate the evaluation procedures and the environment by creating loopholes, exclusions, and using ambiguous language, which allow for finding ways to bypass or undermine the rules, or to introduce uncertainties within the performance control system (Salter, 2010). The ongoing debate revolves around whether university managers intentionally introduce ambiguities within the PMSs to be able to game it, or whether vagueness is inherited in the control system due to its conflicted ideologies.

The second gaming tactic used by university managers to manipulate the PMSs involves the strategic management of REF submissions. They seek to manipulate contracts and structures to ensure that they have the optimal number of academics submitted to the REF. One tactic involves transferring staff from balanced contracts to teaching-only contracts to conceal them from the REF if they are not producing enough research. Additionally, academics are now being appointed in more specialized roles, such as teaching-only or research-only positions.

Additionally, prior to 2008, RAE regulations allowed university managers to strategically recruit highly qualified academics with publications records to boost research performance for the RAE. This practice prioritized improving the institution's research submission over genuine research quality. As a result, RAE 2008 implemented a requirement for a minimum of 20% full-time contracts for academic recruitment to prevent such behaviour.

The REF submission process has been manipulated by university managers in the past, with some submitting only high-performing academics. Changes in the 2021 draft now require all academics with significant research responsibilities to be submitted (REF 2021). Each person must have 1-5 publications, and the maximum number of submissions is 2.5 times the number of staff members (HEFCE, 2021). These changes aim to prevent gaming the system by encouraging more representative submissions. However, some university managers still find ways to game the system by manipulating the criteria related to significant responsibility for research.

The third tactic is treating students as customers and education as a product, which has led to standardized teaching and the use of the NSS as a crucial tool for evaluating teaching performance. Universities rely on the NSS score to attract potential students and shape their reputation (Adisa *et al.*, 2023b). To enhance their scores, university managers arrange events to engage students and invite prospective employers to address these occasions. Academics understand the importance of performance metrics such as NSS for their university's reputation and resilience. Establishing a positive rapport with students, especially those eligible to participate in the NSS exercise, is crucial for an institution's preparation. University managers take extra measures to ensure a positive environment leading up to the survey's release and use this time to connect more closely with students. Universities engage in social events and activities to please their students and a significant portion of relationship-building efforts involve satisfying students' needs through a "you said, we did" approach (Beech and Wolstencroft (2022). However, this approach has been criticized for potentially compromising academic standards and rigour to appease students (Adisa *et al.*, 2023b).

Furthermore, university managers heavily emphasize the concept of "feedback" in various student activities throughout the university. The goal is for students to check the box when responding to the NSS survey about receiving feedback, which is a soft way of manipulating the system.

9.2.3 Academics' Emotional Responses to the PMSs

Academics are experiencing feelings of anxiety, social disengagement, depression, disrespect, narcissism, jealousy, and stress as a response to the intensified use of PMSs. This research highlights why and how they sense these types of negative feelings that impact not only their well-

being but also their physical health. It expands the conceptual frameworks proposed by Sarrico and Melo (2012) and Raaper (2016b).

PMSs trigger anxiety as academics feel under threat of not meeting research goals and fear being deemed incapable of carrying out their job tasks. This aligns with Jensen, Patel and Messersmith (2013) explanation of how anxiety is linked to the emergence of PMSs. Furthermore, the sensation of anxiety stems from the lack of clarity regarding the regularly evolving evaluation criteria within UK academia, and the potential impact of these metrics on researchers' allowances and job stability. Furthermore, my research findings revealed that academics sense a lack of support from their superiors. The prevailing culture of individualism has fostered a competitive environment, resulting in conflicts of interest and a lack of camaraderie among colleagues (Welch, 2021). The social cost of being an academic cannot be underestimated. Many of my research participants have stated that the workload not only affects them but also their families and friends. Striving for a work-life balance can prove to be a significant challenge in academia, affecting the social lives and relationships of academics. Undeniably, engaging in research requires intense concentration and mental effort, which can lead to feelings of isolation among academics. Despite being naturally social beings, this isolation can lead to burnout and a substantial decline in mental and emotional well-being (Welch, 2021).

Additionally, academics face a pervasive sense of depression, disappointment and frustration. these emotions appear to be the natural byproduct of the difficulty associated with achieving optimistic targets in academia, such as publishing in 4* or 3* journals. Experiencing failure could lead to frustration, for instance, receiving a rejection from a journal, or employer, or receiving negative feedback from students or managers. Results also show that academics feel that they are not given the respect and recognition they deserve when they do not meet the strict managerial targets. The pressure on academics in Russell Group universities to publish in top-ranked journals, which often have a rejection rate as high as 95%, is immense. Struggling to meet these targets leads to feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and a lack of acknowledgement and respect. The centralized control over faculty creates a culture of ongoing distrust, resulting in attitudes of fear, scepticism, cynicism, watchfulness, and vigilance (De Vita and Case, 2016). This leads to long-term instability in social relationships, which aligns with the findings of Du and Lapsley (2019) and Welch (2021).

My research findings indicate that business schools encourage academics to seek what they refer to as 'professional prestige' or 'professional standing', which involves creating an academic image to demonstrate one's skills and accomplishments. This gradually transforms the academic identity, nurturing a feeling of narcissistic pride. Moreover, the use of individualized PMSs leads employees to compare themselves to one another, ultimately creating a sense of jealousy among

colleagues. This employee9s ongoing jealousy may arise from the anxiety of losing positive situations in the workplace. A person sees the person they are jealous of as a threat. Simply doing a job well may arouse animosity from others, especially when others receive organizational rewards such as promotion (Vecchio, 2005). This was induced by the intensified competition among academics brought by performance metrics. Academics often compare themselves to those who have successfully published, are highly regarded, or have secured significant grants.

Indeed, REF, fund applications, Impact, and NSS have placed significant pressure on academics (Martin-Sardesai *et al.*, 2017). The REF specifically is pushing academics to produce more publications because the metrics used for evaluations only take into account outputs that directly affect research funding and career progression (Loveday, 2018). This increased stress seems to lead to cognitive dissonance and mental breakdowns (Martin-Sardesai *et al.*, 2017), which can negatively impact the health, well-being, and morale of academics. Health issues that may arise from this stress include headaches, migraines, sleep disturbances, back and neck pain, muscle tension, weight fluctuations, physical fatigue, weakened immunity, hypertension, and heart problems (Gillespie *et al.*, 2001b). Sadly, a distressing aspect of the situation is that some academics have resorted to suicide due to feelings of hopelessness and overwhelming stress. The burden of workload pressure is cited as a contributing factor to this stress (Loveday, 2018; Boncori, Bizjak and Sicca, 2020). My findings encountered two cases of academic suicide during the academic year 2022/2023.

9.3 Contributions to the literature (theory/empirical)

This thesis has presented theoretical, empirical and practical contributions that demonstrate the novelty and validity of the underlying research. The underlying frame of managerialism and workplace democracy, explored in Chapter 4, is the primary theoretical contribution of this research and provides a tool to understand the impacts of PMSs on academics' emotional ill-being and gaming behaviours.

In addition, through the analysis of the qualitative data, this research provides an empirical contribution that explores the emotional as well as the behavioural responses of UK academics to the intensified use of PMSs. It extends what Graf (2019), Oravec (2019) and Aboubichr and Conway (2021) have claimed about academics9 gaming the research PMSs. Indeed, my research offers a refined analysis of academics9 gaming behaviour, introducing four new gaming behaviours. It also explores how this behaviour cascaded down from their university managers. It introduces three genuine techniques of university managers' gaming tactics. Gaming behaviours include both research and teaching aspects, unlike previous research, which focused only on the research aspect. My research included different types of UK universities, such as

teaching/research-intensive and Russell/non-Russell Group. It also fills the gap on the impacts of PMSs on the emotional aspect of individual academics. Additionally, the findings contribute to research on the shortcomings of PMSs. The main contributions of this study are outlined in Table 9.1 below.

Table 9.1 Contribution of the research

Concept	Existing Literature	Contribution of the Research
PMSs and academics9 gaming behaviour	• Philosophical and conceptual discussion of the unintended consequences of PMSs (Franco-Santos and Otley, 2018), on gaming behaviours in the public sector, and the main causes of PM gaming in the public sector (Taylor, 2021), in the English healthcare system (Bevan and Hood, 2006a), in academia (Ozga and Paul, 2022). • Academics' behaviours in gaming are the research metrics (Graf, 2019; Oravec, 2019; Aboubichr and Conway, 2021).	• It explores the behavioural responses of UK academics to the intensified use of PMSs. • It offers a refined analysis of academics9 gaming behaviour, introducing four new gaming behaviours. • It also explores how this behaviour cascaded down from their university managers. It introduces three genuine techniques of university managers' gaming tactics. • Gaming behaviours include both research and teaching aspects.
PMSs and academics well-being	A conceptual discussion of how the pressures of PMSs induce anxiety and depression in academia (Sarrico and Melo, 2012), frustration (Raaper, 2016b), and narcissism (Young *et al.*, 2016; Peteet, Witvliet and Stephen Evans, 2022).	This research empirically examines the impact of PMSs on UK academics9 well-being. It highlights that academics suffer from social alienation, anxiety, stress, pressure, narcissism and mental ill-being due to the extensive audit of the PMSs.
Theoretical Framework of the Research	Previous literature draws on *the sociology of Bourdieu* to explain academics9 responses to PMSs in Australia (Kalfa, Wilkinson and Gollan, 2018), agency and stewardship theories to explain the unintended consequences of PMSs (Franco-Santos and Otley, 2018).	This research adopts managerialism and workplace democracy in business schools as a frame to explain the primary themes that emerged from the interview data. Indeed, managerialism impedes the practice of workplace democracy in academia.
Data Collection Techniques	Scholars have conducted interviews to explore the impact of PMSs on academics9 behaviour in Germany (Graf, 2019), in Australia (Kalfa, Wilkinson and Gollan, 2018), and the UK (Aboubichr and Conway, 2021).	I adopted a triangulation of data collection techniques including interviews, social media analysis and document analysis allowing for a more contextual analysis of the interview data and ongoing refinement of the interview questions as more insight about the phenomenon and its context is gained from observed practices.
Universities under investigation	Research-intensive universities in the Top quartile of 2014 (Aboubichr and Conway, 2021).	I included both research and teaching-intensive universities from Russell and non-Russell groups.
Data collection period	Previous research data was collected in 2012 (Kalfa, Wilkinson and Gollan, 2018; Graf, 2019), and in 2014 (Aboubichr and Conway, 2021).	Data collection was conducted in the academic year 2022/2023.

This research's methodological approach is unique in that it uses a triangulation of interviews, document analysis, and social media analysis. This genuine methodology contributes to the literature on PMSs in business schools.

9.4 Implications for Policymakers

Another contribution can be viewed as a practical one for higher education policy makers. The findings might help policymakers evaluate their evaluation practices and revisit the regulatory framework and universities9 methods of applying PMSs. In addition, business schools could use the findings to evaluate the impacts of their application on academics and the degree to which PMSs are effective in their institutions. Analysing qualitative data from more than fifty academics across more than twenty UK business schools does contribute to the mentioned theories.

9.5 Limitations of the Research

I made an effort to familiarize myself with the UK's higher education context to enhance the depth of my analysis, but my limited understanding of the sector may have impacted the research and analysis. While I am not a UK academic, this non-native perspective may have provided a certain degree of cultural and historical distance from the context.

This research adopted a qualitative approach to deepen understanding of the phenomenon in its context by collecting empirical evidence from people in contemporary real-life situations with no control of the researcher (Myers, 2020). This research strategy is suitable for searching the constitutive nature of accounting in its social and organizational context; discovering what is beyond the numbers and the economic technicality of accounting (Hoque, 2017). However, qualitative studies cannot make statistical inferences.

9.6 Suggestions for Further Research

This research shows individual reactions to the use of PMSs in UK academia. Future research on the institutional level is seen as interesting. Interviews were conducted with academics, the heads of the department, deans, REF panel members, Journal Editors, the heads of teaching, and the heads of research. Interviewing Councillors, boards of governors, vice-chancellors and university presidents are recommended for future research.

9.7 Conclusion

Linking back to the questions raised and the defined objective outlined in the first chapter, this research has uncovered the behavioural and emotional responses of UK academics toward the extensive managerial adoption of PMSs. The findings show that university managers could ensure the ambiguity of the system to hold its control and be able to manipulate it. They also manage the REF submissions by changing the balanced contracts to teaching only, recruiting academics on limited rules, and recruiting high-profile academics on fractional contracts. They also manage

Teaching metrics, such as NSS and TEF, by pleasing their customers in different ways. They might form events before the submission of data and use feedback to manage the metrics.

In addition, this thesis has shed light on academics9 gaming tactics in response to PMSs. Academics with highly ranked publications use their bargaining power to get promoted by blackmailing their institutions. In fact, Seniors use their PhD students and ECRs to produce publications to which they never contribute. On the teaching side, data show some instances where academics manipulate NSS ratings or even use the <feedback= to achieve the system targets. Based on the qualitative approach, this study revealed emotional ill-being that UK academics sense as a response to the great pressures of performance metrics. The difficulty of achieving optimistic managerial goals, on the one hand, induces anxiety and frustration among young academics. On the other hand, outcome failures impact academics' self-worth, self-respect, and jealousy.

Appendix A Interviews Guide

- What impact have Performance Measurement Systems (PMSs) on you?
- How do PMSs affect the way you go about your work?
- What do you observe your colleagues doing to meet the requirements of TEF?
- What do you observe your colleagues doing to meet the requirements of REF?
- What led them to take these actions?
- What do you think of these actions?
- Can you think of a time you had a bad experience with these PMSs? How did you respond?
- Can you think of a time you had a good experience with these PMSs? How did it affect you?
- If there are no PMSs, would you have worked differently?
- How do you think PMSs influence the advancement of scholarship?

Appendix B Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: Performance measurement systems, academics; gaming behaviours and emotional well-being

Researcher: Shahenda Shehata

ERGO number: 78534

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

I am a PhD researcher at the University of Southampton and my project is fully funded by the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research. The extensive use of Performance measurements systems (PMSs) in academia, such as: REF, TEF and KEF, have affected academics; resulting in different responses; one of it is fake compliance with the system by gaming it. Few scholars have paid attention to gaming the research aspect of the PMSs in academia, however research into gaming in general and manipulating the teaching aspect of the system in specific, how it arises, its process, causes or even its consequences is still underdeveloped (Graf, 2019; Aboubichr and Conway, 2021; Liu, Yang and Wu, 2021; Taylor, 2021). I seek to explore this issue with regard to the responses of academics toward the extensive use of PMSs in general, and their coping strategies through gaming the system, in specific. In the context of the mentioned gap, the research addresses the following questions: How do PMSs affect professional academics in the UK? What are the pressures emerged faced by the professional academics? What kind of strategies they use to cope with the rise of it, and whether they engage in gaming strategies in order to cope with the system?

Why have I been asked to participate?

The research context is academics from different UK universities as they are the most affected stakeholders of the extensive application of PMSs in academia, and participant selection criteria are being an academic in a UK university, while their numbers depend on the size of their business schools and their willingness and availability to participate as well.

What will happen to me if I take part?

A semi-structured interview would be conducted between you and the researcher (Shahenda Shehata) ranging from 30 to 120 minutes in your office or zoom meeting; a follow up interview might be needed, also the interview would be audio-record in order to be easily transcribed without revealing the name of you or other participants. To ensure privacy of my participants, a coding system of fictional names would be used.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

There is no direct benefit to the participant, however, the study may help improve our understanding of the impact of extensive use of PMSs on academics, their gaming behaviour and its consequences.

Are there any risks involved?

No risks involved.

What data will be collected?

The researcher would collect data about academics9 responses, resistance, or/and gaming behaviour to adopting an extensive PMSs in academia, to deepen an understanding of the phenomenon in its context through collecting empirical evidence from people in contemporary real life situations with no control of the researcher. To ensure privacy of my participants, a coding system of fictional names would be used in addition to lockable cabinets for hard data, such as: personal data, contact details and consent forms which would be kept separate from non-identifiable data.

Will my participation be confidential?

Your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential.

Only members of the research team and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

Electronic data would be stored and encrypted using flash drive, OneDrive, my laptop, and University storage. My paper-based interview notes and consent forms would be physically stored in a secure filing cabinet.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part.

What happens if I change my mind?

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time (except after submission of the dissertation) without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected.

What will happen to the results of the research?

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you without your specific consent. You can receive a copy of the results, upon your request.

Where can I get more information?

The Researcher: Shahenda Shehata (s.shehata@soton.ac.uk)

Main Supervisor: Dr. Nunung Nurul Hidayah (n.n.hidayah@soton.ac.uk)

Second Supervisor: Dr. Mahmoud Al-Sayed (m.al-sayed@soton.ac.uk)

What happens if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researcher who will do their best to answer your questions.

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

The Researcher: Shahenda Shehata (s.shehata@soton.ac.uk)

Main Supervisor: Dr. Nunung Nurul Hidayah (n.n.hidayah@soton.ac.uk)

Second Supervisor: Dr. Mahmoud Al-Sayed (m.al-sayed@soton.ac.uk)

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, 8Personal data9 means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University9s data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University9s policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason (8lawful basis9) to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the 8Data Controller9 for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for four years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights 3 such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and

accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University9s data protection webpage (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University9s Data Protection Officer (data.protection@soton.ac.uk).

Thank you.

Appendix C Consent Form

Study title: Performance measurement systems, academics gaming behaviours and Emotional Well-being

Researcher name: Shahenda Shehata

ERGO number: 78534

Participant Identification Number (if applicable*):*

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.	
I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw (at any time except after submission of dissertation) for any reason without my participation rights being affected.	
I understand that I may be quoted directly in reports of the research but that I will not be directly identified (e.g. that my name will not be used).	
I understand that taking part in the study involves audio recording *which will be transcribed and then destroyed* for the purposes set out in the participation information sheet.	

Name of participant (print name) &&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&

Signature of participant&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&.

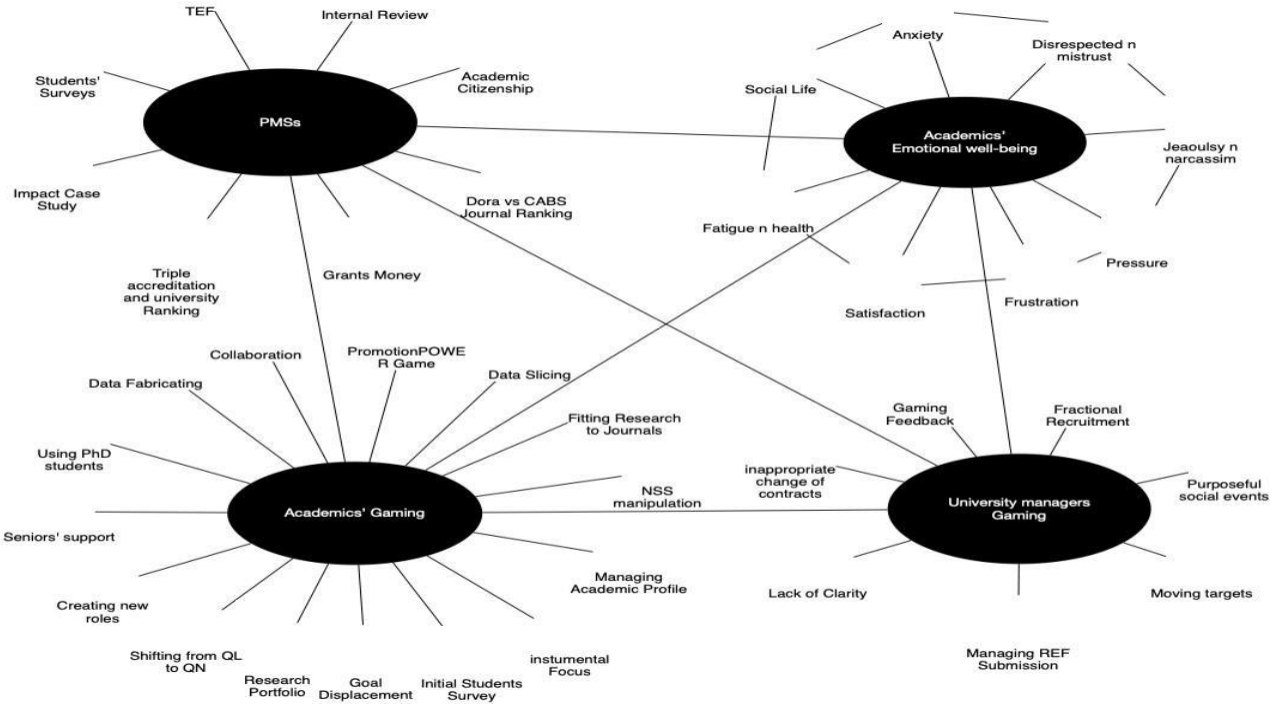
Date &&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&.

Name of researcher (print name) Shahenda Shehata

Signature of researcher

Date 17/11/2022

Appendix D Thematic map extracted from NVIVO



Glossary of Terms

NPM.....New Public Management. Scholars have described NPM as the incorporation of private-sector practices into the public sector (Ter Bogt and Scapens, 2009; Dobija et al., 2019).

PMSs..... Performance measurement systems. These are frameworks used by institutions to assess their performance against strategic goals and involve the analysis of both financial and non-financial data (Bourne et al., 2018; Franceschini et al., 2019).

REF..... Research Excellence Framework serves as the principal mechanism for assessing research quality in UK higher education institutions, and its outcomes play a critical role in informing the allocation of public funding for universities' research endeavours (UKRI; REF, accessed 2024).

NSS..... National Student Survey functions as an independent survey aimed at compiling the perspectives of final-year undergraduate students regarding the calibre of their academic program (OfS, accessed 2024).

RAE ..... Research Assessment Exercise was a periodic evaluation conducted approximately every five years on behalf of the four UK higher education funding councils (HEFCE, SHEFC, HEFCW, DELNI). Its purpose was to assess and gauge the quality of research conducted by British higher education institutions (Wikipedia, 2024).

TEF .....The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is a national initiative overseen by the Office for Students (OfS) designed to incentivize higher education institutions to enhance their performance and provide excellence in pivotal areas of student concern, namely teaching, learning, and the attainment of favourable outcomes from their academic pursuits (OfS, 2024).

Gaming behaviour..... instances where employees take advantage of the deficiencies and loopholes in PMSs to enhance their careers A (boubichr & Conway, 2021).

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