**Academics' Perspectives of Performance Management
in a British University Context**

by

William H.K. Tam

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of
Doctor of Education
at the University of Leicester**

Academics' Perspectives of Performance Management
in a British University Context

By William H.K. Tam

ABSTRACT

This study provides an in-depth understanding of how academics perceive and experience a performance management system in a British university. Specifically, it examines - within the context of a university department - the meaning and purposes of performance management; the effectiveness of the processes; the management of the system and its effectiveness; the impact of the system on academics' working lives; and the areas requiring improvement. The study particularly explores the tension between performance management as a means of accountability within a managerial context and the more traditional academic ethos of professional autonomy. The research adopts a qualitative case study approach by selecting a School of Education in an older research-led University. The case School was primarily chosen for its ease of access. However, it had also operated performance management for some time, and it had academics with both high and low research profiles, a phenomenon which was likely to present a range of experiences of the performance management system. Twelve academics with varied backgrounds in terms of years of service, seniority and gender were participants in the study. Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and documentary sources between September 2006 and February 2007. A two-level analytical coding approach was used to derive themes from the collected data. Among the major findings were that the participants found the meanings and purposes of performance management ambiguous; and that the many different processes contained within the system were perceived as fragmenting and confusing in achieving the intended outcomes. Compounding the concern was the lack of dedicated and able academics to manage the process. With work intensification - a prominent feature of academic life, academics became frustrated with the lack of time available for their research work. To defend their research ethos, the study provides evidence that some academics look for a more structured system to address the unbalanced workload issue.

[Keywords: Performance measures, Performance management, Higher Education]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is difficult to acknowledge everyone by name who has helped me through this process. Without their support, though, I could not have reached this final stage.

I would also like to thank all the participants for agreeing to take part in this study despite their busy work schedule. A significant portion of this thesis is based on their accumulated experiences with performance management. Without their participation, I could not have completed this study.

I am indebted, above all, to Professor Clive Dimmock for agreeing to be my supervisor. His thought-provoking advice on the research proposal, ongoing support, and quick turnaround in providing excellent feedback on my various drafts significantly improved the quality of my work.

On a personal note, I express my appreciation to my family for their patience and support throughout this process.

ABBREVIATIONS

DfEE   Department for Education and Employment

ESRC   The Economic and Social Research Council

HEFCE   The Higher Education Funding Council for England

HoD   Head of Department

Ofsted   Office for Standards in Education, Children Services and Skills

PGCE   Postgraduate Certificate in Education

PRP   Performance Related Pay

QAA   Quality Assurance Agency

RAE   Research Assessment Exercise

TQA   Teaching Quality Assurance

UoL   University of Leicester

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 3 – Methodology

Chapter 4 – The Findings

Appendices

References

Tables

CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.0   Introduction

Economic and political changes over the past few decades have had a profound impact on the traditional relationship between the government and universities, their management and academics in the UK Higher education systems are increasingly seen by governments as an instrument to enhance national competitiveness in the global market (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). This has resulted in a transition of higher education from an elite to a mass system to meet the growing demand for highly skilled and educated workforces (Jary & Parker, 1998). Another by-product of globalisation is a neo-liberal 'cultural revolution' with an ideological assumption that the marketisation of public sector practices, including higher education, will improve economic performance and efficiency (Shore & Selwyn, 1998). This market orientation has led to the emergence of a new public sector management movement pushing public sector organisations to adopt processes and practices derived from the private sector management models (Ferlie et al., 1996). Within the higher education sector, the governance of universities has been increasingly influenced by these managerial principles that have gradually replaced the traditional 'trust' relationship (Trow, 1994) between the government and universities. A more demanding external accountability approach has been put in place by successive governments through the introduction of the Research Assessment Exercise and Teaching Quality Assessment requiring institutions to raise both their research outcomes and standards of teaching (Deem, 1998; Brennan & Shah, 2000).

Inevitably, this changing environment has brought universities under significant pressure to seek ways to more actively manage their academics in order to meet with external requirements. In parallel, 'managerialism' has gradually permeated into the management of universities (Deem, 1998; 2001). While the extent to which the values of managerialism have infiltrated into higher education may vary between institutions, it is apparent that structures, systems, and processes derived from managerialism have emerged (Deem, 1998; Brennan & Shah 2000). Embedded in the discourse of managerialism, performance management, which represents one of the means to move

academics to be more effective and efficient, and more accountable, has become a widespread practice in higher education (Middlehurst & Kennie, 2003).

This qualitative case study aims to examine the impacts of performance management on the working lives of academics in a UK University. The traditional relationship between university management and academics emphasises self-regulation, collegial accountability, and self-improvement rather than a performance management approach (Deem, 1998; Brennan & Shah, 2000). With the involvement of a group of 12 academics working in one department of a British university, this study will explore the themes and issues emerging from their experiences and perspectives of performance management. The ultimate aim of this study is to provide an in-depth account of the intricacies surrounding the management of performance in the context of a university, taking into account the nature of academic jobs, individual motivation, and traditional cultures.

This chapter first examines the context for performance management in higher education with a specific focus on how the changing external environment in which universities operate, including the managerialist movement in the public sector, has intensified the attention on performance management. A research profile will then be presented in the second part of this chapter that includes the purpose of the study and research questions, an overview of methodology, significance of the study and its limitations. This chapter concludes with an outline of the structure of the thesis.

1.1   The Impacts of Globalisation on Higher Education

The economic changes as a result of globalisation have created pressures on higher education for transformation. Globalisation, which characterises the economic changes since 1980s, has led to increased integration of economies around the world and has extended the marketplace beyond national borders. Among the common trends are free trade, competition, and reduced government intervention in the national economy (Currie, 2002). Faced with growing global competition, higher education has been increasingly viewed by governments as an instrument to produce knowledge-based workers to support economic growth (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Burke, 2005; Jarvis, 2000). Expanding the higher education system and improving access to

university education have become the core objectives of governments in order to upgrade the workforce. The 1990s witnessed that the UK had moved dramatically into the era of mass higher education (Lomas, 2002; Bruneau & Savage, 2002; Dearlove, 1998a; Dearlove,1998b). The number of universities has increased from 25 in 1962 to more than 100 in 1996 (Lomas, 2002; Bruneau & Savage, 2002). This expansion has changed the higher education system from elitist to one that accommodates a mass higher education policy.

The escalating expectations for higher education from society and massive expansion of higher education across national boundaries have raised public concern about how to maintain academic quality of university education (Barnett, 1992; Dearlove, 1998b). This calls for more rigorous and robust measures for quality assurance. Since the 1980s, governments have been pushing universities to demonstrate greater productivity and accountability for the public dollars they receive. To achieve this end, governments have instilled market mechanisms into higher education institutions with a belief that high quality of research and teaching could only be maintained with some degree of competition and quality assessment (Henkel, 1997; Dill, 1997; Middlehurst & Kennie, 2003). Instead of taking a perfect competitive market model analogous to the approach adopted for the universities in the US, the UK governments chose to push universities to operate under quasi-market conditions (Dill, 1997; Deem, 1998). As described by Dill (1997), this approach involves a central government agency acting as a principal representing the interest of the consumers, and making contracts with institutions on their behalf. The principal is vested with the power to carefully monitor academic institutions. The agency concerned is the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), which was set up in 1992 and assigned with the role as the principal to maintain customer and supplier relationship with universities. As a result, more extensive forms of monitoring have emerged in higher education. In the past two decades, successive governments, through HEFCE, have taken progressive steps to transform the traditional self-regulation of academic standards in research and educational provision by the systems of audit and assessment (Henkel, 1997; Harley & Lee, 1997; Brown, 2000). The Research Assessment Exercise – that monitors research volume and quality, and the Teaching Quality Assessment – that monitors teaching quality – have been used by these governments as the basis for performance models to monitor higher education institutions in the UK.

1.11   Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)

The Research Assessment Exercise was introduced in the UK in 1986 to evaluate the degree of excellence in research, and the assessment results have been used as a basis to determine the size of research funding to different universities and departments (Harley, 2002; Thomas, 2001). This assessment looks for performance indicators such as research publications, numbers of research students and assistants, external research income, and the research environment. The overall quality of research has been ranked on a 7-point rating scale in the order of 1, 2, 3b, 3a, 4, 5, and 5* based on the subjective judgments of peer panels. The resultant grades of RAE are then used as a basis to allocate research funding to higher education institutions. Because of the funding implications, the institution's performance in the RAE is increasingly the key to the strategies of many universities (Thomas, 2001; Yokoyama, 2006).

1.12   Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA)

TQA evaluations are mission-dependent and the quality is assessed against the institution's or department's own aims and objectives (Drennan, 2001). The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) was set up in 1997 with the responsibility to conduct the review and report the performance of higher education institutions. The review involves two types of evaluations: institutional audit and assessment. The distinction between these two evaluations is that the audit focuses on the institution's systems, quality strategies, and infrastructure while assessment is concerned with the complete student experience (Underwood, 2000). Despite the results of the review having no direct impact on funding (Underwood, 2000; Drennan, 2001), the potential reputation risks for a poor rating will affect the ability of universities for student recruitment and in turn their financial position (Hoecht, 2006). This inevitably has created substantial pressures on universities for improving and maintaining quality (Henkel, 1997).

Indeed, the performance implications of these two external accountabilities not only apply at the institutional level, but also to the individual level. As pointed out by Middlehurst and Kennie (2003), the performance of individuals is directly related to

the success of the institution in delivering its mission and objectives. This view is consistent with the findings of the case studies conducted by Brennan and Shah (2000). The results reveal that while most institutions did not initiate quality management activities because of the national quality agencies, the need to comply with the requirements has created the impetus for them to introduce new organising arrangements into the performance of academics. These arrangements include setting goals and priorities and the introduction of internal quality assessment systems. Mirroring the external assessment requirements in the internal quality assessment systems to ensure the expected standards set by the government can be consistently met by academics seems to be the trend according to Brennan and Shah (2000), Talib (2003), and Underwood (2000).

1.2   New Managerialism and Performance Management

Given that performance management is a manifestation of managerialism (Middlehurst & Kennin, 2003), the extent to which the ideology of managerialism has permeated into universities could explain the growing interest in performance management in the higher education sector.

Deem and Brehony (2005) define new managerialism as an ideology that refers to ideas, values, and practices imported from the business sector for managing public institutions in pursuance of efficiency, excellence, and continuous improvement. The characteristics of imported management techniques and practices include monitoring employee performance; imposing tighter financial management control to attain targets; efficient use of resources for improved productivity; quantitative measures performance; benchmarking and performance management (Randle & Brady, 1997; Deem & Brehony, 2005; Morely, 2003).

The emergence of managerialism in universities can be traced back to the public sector reform, which took place in the early 1980s. One of the consequences of this reform was the shift in managerial thought on how to manage public organisations to "new public management" or "new managerialism" (Pollitt, 1993; Ferlie et al., 1996). With the belief that the new managerial approach "will deliver the 'three Es' of

5

economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in public services and therefore can ensure value for taxpayers' money and eliminate waste" (Randle & Brady, 1997, p. 125), successive governments have been pushing all public organisations including universities to adopt this new set of managerial principles.

The movement towards managerialism in universities was encouraged as early as 1985 in the UK by the Jarratt Report (1985). It urges that universities should be considered as corporate organisations and their Vice Chancellors should be seen as Chief Executives in the governance of universities (Dearlove, 1998b). In addition, the external pressure to improve quality and increase productivity has motivated universities to increasingly adopt corporate-style practices and techniques associated with new managerialism (Cohen et al., 1999; Deem, 1998).

Applying the managerial practices to higher education is seen as a new departure because "it entails interrelated organisational, managerial and cultural changes leading to a tightly integrated regime of managerial discipline and control, which is radically different from the traditional collegial model experienced by academics" (Deem et al., 2001, p. 6). To what extent has the ideology of managerialism entered into the academic world?

In a study of six British universities, which involved 105 semi-structured interviews with academics and administrators, Henkel (1997) finds five universities had moved towards a more managerial structure by establishing a strong management team in the university to run the operations and creating non-academic support units to mediate the government's performance expectations and policies. Alongside the growth in administrative functions, the number of Human Resources professionals has increased substantially in universities to provide support in managing academics (Wilson, 1991; Jackson, 2001).

Linking results of RAE to the size of the funding allocation is seen as central to the growth of managerialism (Hartley & Lee, 2001; Yokoyama, 2006; McNay, 1999). In a study on the impact of RAE conducted by McNay (1999) which involved 30 institutional cases, it reveals that RAE has caused some universities to change their recruitment strategies with a specific focus on hiring "research active" academics and

centralise research management with more emphasis on efficiency and control. Another emerging change identified by this study is that some universities have clustered research staff from various departments together by creating research centres to free them from teaching responsibilities (McNay, 1999). The gradual separation of teaching from research increases job specification reinforcing the managerial ideology for efficiency.

Apart from organisational changes, the appointments of academic managers have become pervasive with mandates to co-ordinate, integrate, control, and regulate the work of academics (Deem, 1998; Trowler, 1998; Randle & Brady, 1997). According to Deem et al. (2001), this managerial role has been performed either by academics on a part-time basis or full-time professional administrators. While this role is still new to some universities and most appointed managers do not have private sector experience (Deem et al., 2001; Deem, 2004), they seem to have embraced the concept of managerialism. In a study of four universities in the UK, Prichard and Willmott (1997) find a clear presence of managerialism from the standpoint of senior post holders. This finding is affirmed by a subsequent study conducted by Deem et al. (2001) to examine the extent to which the idea about new managerialism had permeated into higher education between 1998 and 2000. The results reveal that most surveyed academic managers, despite having a background as academics themselves, have a strong belief in their right to manage other academics. The legitimacy of academic managers seems to be further bolstered due to the need to satisfy the requirements set by the external quality audit and assessment on research and teaching (Deem & Brehony, 2005).

With the emergence of the academic manager to take on management roles along with the need to raise the performance standards on research and teaching, the concept of performance management is increasingly seen as an integral part of organisational life in universities to define, measure, and stimulate employee performance (Jackson, 2001; Harvey et al., 2002).

Another factor for intensifying attention to performance is frequent exhortations from governments. Over the past twenty years, UK governments have taken progressive steps to push universities to review and implement performance management. The

Jarratt Report (1985) asserts that "universities should introduce an effective staff appraisal scheme to assist individuals to develop their full potential as quickly as possible and make the most effective use of their academic staff" (Jarratt, 1985, p. 30). This exhortation was reiterated in the Bett report (Bett, 1999) in 1999 urging higher education institutions to review present arrangements and put in place effective appraisal schemes. In 2002, the UK government through the HEFCE explicitly asked universities to adopt the performance management process as outlined in its official guidelines titled, "Rewarding and Developing Staff in Higher Education" (HEFCE, 2002). While compliance with the suggested performance management process is not mandatory, following it may entitle universities to receive additional funding from HEFCE.

1.3   The Research Problem: Performance Management and Academics

The move towards the introduction of performance management into the domain of academia appears to be problematic. Performance management has been perceived as a management tool imported from the private sector and other parts of public sector seeking to introduce command and control on work behaviours in order to achieve institutional objectives. This managerial principle is in conflict with university traditions of 'collegiality' and 'academic freedom'. Therefore, the imposition of such a system may be seen as challenging the traditional ways of how academics self-regulate their work and their long-established professional identities. Unfortunately, there is an apparent inconsistency in the literature on the impacts of performance management on academics. Using different perspectives to view the impacts of performance management could reach opposite conclusions on the matter. This paradox calls for a study to seek a more in-depth understanding of how and whether academics adjust and respond to the changes brought by performance management.

Different models of performance management are found in the literature. Some define performance management as a specific set of practices implemented by managers to control the behaviour of individuals, with the ultimate aim to improve organisational performance (Reeves et al., 2002). Others (Den Hartog et al., 2004; Armstrong & Baron, 2004) take a strategic view suggesting that performance

8

management should be integrated with corporate objectives and other human resources policies to improve the performance of the employees and develop their capabilities to meet organisational future needs (Den Hartog et al., 2004).

While there is no single universally accepted definition in the literature, performance management is typically characterised by processes which include creating a shared vision and aims of the organisation to help each individual employee to understand and recognise their contributions to the overall goals; defining individual performance typically in terms of measurable targets; linking performance outcomes to rewards; and conducting a formal appraisal to communicate performance standards, evaluate employee performance against targets, and identify development needs (Fletcher, 2004; Reeves et al., 2002; Den Hartog, 2004).

Although this system has been used widely in both private and public sectors (CIPD, 2005), Mabey et al. (1998) criticise it as a rationalist model that may not be achievable in reality. Another concern raised by Mabey et al. (1998) is centred on the prescriptions offered by performance management, which take no account of contextual factors in the implementation. Building on these arguments, the imposition of performance management for academics has been strongly challenged by a number of writers, particularly those using a labour process perspective (Simmons, 2002). In their view, performance management is a manifestation of managerialism (Middlehurst & Kennie, 2003; Simmons, 2002), the implementation of which will only intensify managerial control and further erode the traditional academic identity.

As pointed out by Henkel (2005), the most important sources for academic identities are subject disciplines and academic freedom. Academics developed these identities through memberships within disciplines and in higher education institutions (Henkel, 2005; Lomas & Lygo-Baker, 2006). Through these identities, most academics conceive of themselves as experts in a particular area of their discipline. In addition, they believe they should be given freedom to pursue truth and knowledge and manage their own time (Downing, 2005), decide what and how to teach, and choose their research topics (Akerland & Kayrooz, 2003). As asserted by Bryson and Barnes (2000) and Hoecht (2006), academic freedom is the key factor for career choice to become a

university teacher for most academics. Many nowadays, however, argue that most of these so-called freedoms are under attack.

Drawing upon the ideas and concepts developed by the writers using a labour process perspective, it can be argued that the imposition of performance management undermines academic identities for three reasons. One of the premises of performance management is to link the contributions of individual academics to the institution's overall strategy to maintain and improve its market position and satisfy the external accountability requirements. Harris (2005) asserts that this integration 'places more pressure on individuals to pursue and construct academic identities in line with corporate identity' (p.426). The institutional need to satisfy QAA and RAE systems requires teachers to develop curricula which are marketable and meet with the public needs, and to conduct research which is capable of attracting external funds (Nixon, 1996). Both of these trends have made instrumental and economic values, rather than educational values, central in defining academic identity (Harris, 2005). Willmott (1995) and Harley and Lee (1997) describe this managerial control as 'commodification', forcing academics to produce output that has immediate exchange-value.

The second concern is that performance management is viewed as an approach to rationalise and codify work processes by dictating the work priorities for academics in order to ensure their interests are aligned with institutional objectives (Simmons, 2002). Wilson (1991) uses the notion of "Proletarianisation" to describe how the academic job is being degraded because of increased surveillance and managerial control. As a result of proletarianisation, it is argued that academics will become a salaried or even a piece-work labour in the whole labour process (Nixon, 1996).

The final issue is about the emphasis of performance management on defining and measuring performance with quantifiable indicators. This requires the academic labour process to be fragmented into "component parts or activities, each part being translated or operationalised into empirically identifiable and quantifiable indicators or measures" (Dominelli et al., 1996, p. 79). Dominelli et al. (1996) describe this fragmentation process as "Taylorisation" of academic labour which results in

undermining the academic social status as an expert in the field and truncating their traditional functions as a university teacher.

The undesirable consequences of performance management could further trigger five types of feelings of alienation among academics (Seeman, 1959; Kanungo, 1979). Stemming from proletarianisation, academics are alienated by feelings of powerlessness and work meaninglessness due to reduced individual work freedom. The effects of Taylorisation induce feelings of normlessness and isolation with the academic's expert function being truncated. Compounded to the feelings of alienation are the effects of commodification that make academics feel self-estrangement as their employment becomes simply a means of making a living rather than a means for expressing individual potential. Kanungo (1979) conceptualises these feelings of alienation as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection from work. Such disconnection, in turn, will adversely affect academics' organisational commitment, job involvement, and job satisfaction (DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005).

While the above discussion indicates that performance management can undermine academic identities and engender feelings of alienation among academics, there are empirical findings and theories from the literature suggesting a contradictory strand. When drawing on two empirical studies to examine the extent to which the external controls brought by RAE and QAA systems have undermined academic identities, Henkel (2005) finds that academic identities remained surprisingly stable in the period under study, although the longer-term outlook remains uncertain. The findings of a survey carried out by Harley (2002) on the impact of research selectivity on academic work seem to provide a consistent conclusion. Although the results illustrate the complexity of responses to RAE, some academics actually felt that the RAE had provided them with an opportunity to secure or enhance academic status.

In addition to the above empirical findings showing a less established negative impact on academic identities as suggested by the alienation theory, proponents of performance management argue that this system can enhance employee motivation at work and thus commitment to the organisation. Building on the Goal-Setting Theory (Locke, 1978), Armstrong and Baron (2004) describe performance management as about sharing expectations between individuals and managers instead of a 'control'

relationship, emphasizing joint efforts to manage what they need to do with their jobs. They argue that performance management is also about planning and defining individual expectations in relation to organisational plans. This in effect will increase the ability of employees to see the relationships between their contributions to the organisational goals, making their job more meaningful. While performance management emphasises measurement, Behn (1997) supports the assertion that "what gets measured gets managed- and what gets managed gets accomplished" (Becker et al, 2001; p.20) and argues that measurement could be in fact be motivational. He explains that the comparison results generated by the measurement will induce higher motivation from people because nobody would like to look bad in a crowd.

If the above propositions can effectively apply to the academic world, it can be claimed that performance management may not be dysfunctional as postulated by those writers using the perspectives of labour process and workplace alienation. Instead, it could be used to rearticulate and strengthen the core values around the centrality of research and the value of teaching under the new contexts with which universities operate through the process of sharing expectations and setting performance targets between university management and individual academics. With the clarity on role and accountability through performance management, academics may be motivated to engage in reprofessionalisation under the new working environment reinforcing their expert identity in the field (Henkel, 2002; Trowler, 1998).

As the brief review of literature above attests, there is, at the very least, a mixed assessment of the effects of performance management on university academics. While many argue that it is counter to the academic culture, others see benefits that can bring improved performance. Undeniably, there is a problem worthy of research.

1.4   Research Aims and Objectives

The above discussion reveals a dichotomy on how to theorise the impacts of performance management on academics. This theoretical inconsistency raises a conceptual question of whether performance management can effectively achieve its

intended objectives, that is, to align academics' interests with institutional goals in a higher education environment.

While there have been increasing trends to study performance management, much of this research has been conducted in the private sector (Fletcher & Williams, 1996), the public sector (McAdam et al., 2005; Radnor & McGuire, 2004), the school environment (Haynes et al., 2002), or focused specifically on the performance appraisal system (Haslam et al., 1992; Townley, 1993; Simmons, 2002; Rutherford, 1988). However, there appears to be relatively little previous study concerning the impact of the performance management process on individual academics in the higher education sector.

The overall goal of this study is to provide an in-depth account of academics' perceptions and experiences of performance management in one case university in the UK. One of the challenges to conduct a research study of performance management in higher education is to decide what elements should be in the scope given that the subject of performance management in higher education is still in its infancy and some elements may not even exist in some universities. To address this concern, this study will adopt the definition of 'performance management' as outlined in the HEFCE's (HEFCE, 2002) guide titled "Rewarding and Developing Staff in Higher Education". This guide is produced to specify what universities should do to improve their human resources practices, including performance management, in order to entitle them to receive additional funding. With the enticement and continuous exhortations from HEFCE, it is conceivable that this process will become the prevailing performance management model for universities and to use it as a framework for research in this area seems justifiable.

The guide characterises the performance management process as having three key components. The first component is the annual performance review which incorporates the traditional aspects of performance appraisal with emphasis on devolving responsibility for annual performance reviews to senior managers. It also clarifies who should carry out the reviews; who should provide ongoing training and support to reviewers to ensure their competence in conducting the review; and to cascade performance objectives from one organisational level down to another to

ensure that staff are integrated in supporting institutional goals and apply the reviews consistently to all levels of staff in various departments. The second component is about rewarding good performance. This includes some form of performance related pay to recognise excellent performance for senior staff, for example, professors. Other reward elements such as staff promotions, discretionary salary increases, and access to higher grades should also be considered. The third component is about managing performance. This involves setting clear performance objectives and measures, seeking commitment to address poor performance, monitoring performance, and providing necessary support and feedback to employees.

The scope of this study will cover all these three components and aim to achieve five objectives. The first objective is to identify what academics' perceptions and perspectives are on performance management. To what extent do they understand the purposes of implementing performance management in the university? Second, the study will examine how academics perceive the effectiveness of current performance management processes in formulating objectives and measures, providing feedback and support and monitoring performance. Third, the ability of the reviewers to perform the performance management role will also be explored. With the growing emphasis on devolving managerial responsibility to academic managers, for example, Head of Department (HoD) or Dean, the study aims to identify the extent to which this devolution has taken place in the case organisation and their roles in the performance management process. The move towards performance management involves setting goals and deadlines and introduces quality assessment systems as well as performance indicators. This increased control could be viewed as a displacement of former academic forms of control characterised by self-regulation. The fourth objective of this study, therefore, is to understand the impact of implementing performance management on employee motivation and on relationships between academics. Finally, a further objective of this study is to provide information on the changes, if any, that need to be made to performance management in order to make it more effective in this particular university context.

1.5   Research Questions

Following the research aims and objectives, the main research question of this study is: *What are academics' perspectives of performance management in a British university context?*

This question will be addressed by a case study of a British university through reviewing relevant policy documents and interviews with a sample of academics at different hierarchical levels in a School of Education. To answer the main research question, the following five specific questions will be addressed to guide the data collection process:

1. How do academic participants perceive the purposes and values of the performance management systems?
2. How do academic participants view the effectiveness of current performance management processes in the department?
3. How do academic participants perceive the impact of academic managers on their work performance?
4. How do academic participants respond to the process, measures and outcomes involved in operating the performance management system?
5. What do academic participants think is an effective performance management system?

1.6   Overview of the Research Methodology

To address the research questions, the researcher used a qualitative case study approach. A School of Education in a British university where the researcher was an EdD student was chosen for this case study. The primary methodology was in-depth interviews with a selection of academics in the School of Education. A total of 12 academics from the School of Education were interviewed. This sample allowed for gender, a range of years of service, and a hierarchy of positions. In addition to the in-depth interviews, the researcher reviewed documents such as policies on annual

appraisal, teaching evaluation, the bonus achievement programme, and the promotion system.

1.7   Profile of the Case University

The case University was founded in 1918 and obtained its Royal Charter in 1957. In 2006, the University had a total student population of approximately 18,000 registered students – about 10,000 of them full-time students and 6,000 of them distance-learning students. To support this student level, the University employs about 750 academic staff (UOL, 2007a). One unique feature of this University is that it is the 2nd largest distance-learning provider in the UK, right after the Open University. To provide quality support to distance learners, the University has adopted 'non-traditional' structures and working patterns in departments with large numbers of distance learners. For example, staff have to be flexible in the times and places where they work both in the UK and overseas.

The University is structured into five faculties: Science, Social Sciences, Arts, Medicine and Biological Sciences, and Law. The School of Education is part of Social Sciences Faculty offering Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programmes for prospective and experienced teachers in primary and secondary schools and a wide range of postgraduate degree programmes up to a doctorate level. In order to maintain a clear focus on research issues, the School of Education also has four Academic Research Groups. In 2007, the School had a total of approximately 42 full time academic staff. The composition of academic staff consists of four Professors, 13 reader/senior lecturers, and 25 lecturers. In terms of gender ratio, women made up 57% of the full-time academic population (UoL, 2007b).

The School of Education is one of the major departments at the University offering distance learning courses at master and doctorate levels. These distance-learning courses are not only available within the UK but also in different parts of the world. Accordingly, those academics involved in overseas distance-learning courses may be subject to the University's flexible working arrangement policy.

As stated in the mission statement, the University is committed to 'delivering high quality undergraduate, postgraduate and professional education and to creating research that is of international significance' (UoL, 2007c). The University has received external recognition for its achievements. In terms of quality of teaching, 19 subject areas have been graded as 'Excellent' by the QAA. As well, the University was ranked joint 1st in the UK in the 2005 and 2006 National Student Survey for teaching quality and overall satisfaction among mainstream English universities. For research, the case University is recognised as a major research university and is among the UK's top 20 research intensive universities in terms of research grant income per member of staff according to data published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency. Its research competence can also be reflected in the 2001 RAE with which 13 departments gained the 5 or 5* ratings (UoL, 2007d). Overall, it has been ranked 21st in the UK by the Sunday Time University Guides out of more than 120 institutions (Times online, 2008).

Faced with the external pressures as discussed earlier and in response to HEFCE initiatives to enhance human resources practices, the University has taken progressive steps to improve the performance management process with objectives to facilitate the development of existing staff to respond to the changing internal and external agenda. It has also tried to achieve a cultural change in entrepreneurial attitudes and skills and gain the commitment of all staff to the University's strategic aims (UoL, 2002a).

The annual appraisal process was revised in August 2002 with a greater emphasis on target-setting to provide focus and direction to staff on the one hand and inform Heads of Departments about staff performance on the other. Changes to performance award programmes such as promotion, achievement bonus scheme, and additional salary increase were also made. In November 2001, Senate and Council approved new promotion procedures for academic and research staff which strengthened the evidential base for the consideration of cases by introducing an additional requirement for three external references for Senior Lectureship. The award criteria for the achievement bonus scheme have been extended to recognise collaborative group cases as well as those of individuals (UoL, 2002a).

Given that the case University has implemented performance management for some time and has made some changes to improve the process over the past few years

in compliance with HEFCE's guidelines, research in this setting will potentially generate rich information on how academics perceive the effectiveness of the programme and how they experience the impact of any resultant changes on their working lives.

1.8   Significance and Outcomes of the Research

This research is of significance for the following reasons and to the following people:

The study will provide information to help higher education administrators in the School and possibly the University to identify what is needed to improve the effectiveness of performance management processes and systems. The outcomes may help the University to meet government expectations and improve the possibility of achieving the intended objectives of performance management. Furthermore, as pay for performance continues to be high on the agenda of university management in the UK, the current study may help to determine whether the case University has an effective performance management system to support this pay initiative, or whether and how it might need changing to meet future needs.

A further outcome of this study is to add to the body of knowledge regarding performance management in university contexts. The findings may provide us with a better understanding of the intricacies surrounding the management of academics. This knowledge will help those in the capacity of academic manager in performing their role. As well, this knowledge could be exported to other professional organisations for managing their knowledge workers.

Finally, the qualitative case study approach adopted by this study can provide in-depth information on contextual and process factors influencing performance management in university settings. The findings may provide theoretical contributions to challenge the underlying generic assumptions of performance management that portray its systems as universal.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

This single case may be seen to have limitations in terms of traditional concerns about generalizability. In qualitative analysis, the transferability is judged by the reader's perspective of the relevance of a given study to another context (Morrow, 2005; Patton, 1990). The choice of this approach is to seek holistic understanding of a particular contextual setting at the expense of external comparability. This study seeks to provide in-depth contextual description and analysis of the case studied to allow the reader to draw comparisons with their own context and hence to decide whether transferability of findings is possible.

1.10 Conclusion

Globalisation has produced pressures on universities to expand and compete for resources. To ensure maintenance and improvement of quality standards, governments have adopted accountability as their instrument for ensuring a bureaucratic approach is in place to regulate and control the quality of teaching and research. In response to external controls, the practice of performance management is increasingly used by universities as a technique to manage academics. Performance management has been seen as a tool to control the work of teachers with the underlying philosophy of promoting efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability. Applying this approach to academics represents a major shift away from traditional values and ways of working in universities. How will academics respond to this change is the main research problem to be addressed by this dissertation.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature on the background and framework to performance management in different sectors and in particular, universities. Accordingly, theories about the academic labour process, alienation and performance management will be reviewed. Previous empirical research relating to how people respond to performance management in various sectors will also be examined. Chapter

3 focuses on the justification for the choice of research paradigm. It also explains the research design, including the sampling approach and data collection method, data analysis, and trustworthiness procedures. Chapter 4 presents and analyzes the findings and data by theme. Chapter 5 discusses the main findings and compares these with previous findings from the literature. The final chapter draws out the implications, suggestions, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 <u>Introduction</u>

Chapter 1 provides a background to the study and an overview of the rationale behind the growth of performance management in higher education. It also highlights the divergent views on the impacts of performance management on academics. Proponents for performance management argue that this approach can enhance motivation at work through its goal-setting process and associated financial incentive. Other writers, using a labour process perspective and Foucaultian analysis, criticise performance management, arguing that it is a tool to control the work of people and is bound to frustrate academic workers whose values emphasise professional identity and freedom.

The goal of this study is to seek an in-depth understanding of academics' perceptions and experiences of performance management in one university in the UK. It aims to find out how academics interpret the meaning and purposes of performance management in the context of higher education; the effectiveness of current performance management processes in formulating objectives and measures, providing feedback and support and monitoring performance; the ability of the manager/appraiser to perform the performance management role; the impacts of performance management on academics' working lives; and the areas that require improvement in order to make performance management work in this particular university context.

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature relevant to these five themes in order to identify the range of knowledge and ideas, including contrasting perspectives and viewpoints, that have been established on these topics, to locate this study in the field of existing knowledge, and to demonstrate the necessity and significance of this study.

2.1 Meaning and Purposes of Performance Management

Performance management is rooted in the private sector and has been transferred into the public sector as a key element in the movement towards new public management or "managerialism" of public services (Hoggett, 1996; Furnham, 2004). While much effort has been devoted by successive UK governments to promote this programme in the higher education sector, this concept has not been welcomed by academics with "universal enthusiasm" (Middlehurst & Kennie, 2003, p.77). Most academics are sceptical about the concept of performance management, taking a stereotyped view that it is a manifestation of managerialism and thus its concern is about command and control (Middlehurst & Kennie, 2003). Given the entrenched collegial culture and the scepticism regarding the term, implementing performance management represents a significant change for academics. According to writers on change management, one critical precondition for the successful implementation of a change programme is to ensure those affected fully understand the reasons behind the initiative (Lippitt et al., 1985). It is therefore essential to seek understanding of what the underlying causes for the existing scepticism are and what academics' experiences and perceptions of the meaning and purposes of performance management are.

Scepticism or confusion about the term performance management does not seem to be unique to the higher education sector according to the literature. Academics' disillusionment with performance management appears to stem from the lack of a precise definition for performance management and their perceptions about the mismatch between rhetoric and reality. These two problems will be discussed in turn.

2.11 Divergent Views on Performance Management

While the subject of performance management has been widely researched, the literature has yet to come up with a universal definition (Fletcher & Williams, 1996; Mabey et al., 1998). As asserted by Williams (2002), it is difficult to define performance management and its precise meaning could vary between organisations. Fletcher (2004) echoes this view by stating that "performance management is not a package solution; it is something that has to be developed specifically and individually for the particular organisation concerned" (p. 32). He further stresses that performance

22

management should be viewed as a management philosophy or belief as opposed to a distinctive body of management techniques. Building on this belief, Brown (2005) argues that the term performance management may have been used as "a convenient umbrella label that is given to a number of approaches which appear similar but which may not, in reality, have any fundamental coherence or relationship" (p. 471).

This open approach has led to a wide range of different interpretations of the term in the literature. Some interpret performance management as an evolutionary extension of traditional appraisal practice or performance related pay (Fletcher, 2001; Williams, 2002), taking the view that it is merely an old wine in a new bottle approach. Others argue that performance management is more than a singular practice (Den Hartog et al., 2004). They note that it consists of a range of activities engaged in by an organisation to enhance the performance of a target person or group (DeNisi, 2000). Apart from the variations on what the critical ingredients of performance management are, perspectives on the level of measurement are also varied (Fletcher, 2001). Williams (2002) discerns from the literature at least three different models to determine "what to measure". One is about managing organisational performance through various organisational strategies such as structure, technological change, and procedures. The second model focuses on individual performance, which places objective setting and formal appraisal systems as the centrepiece. The third model is considered a combination of the other two, with an emphasis on integration. Of these three models, the trend over the past 20 years seems to be moving towards the integrative and strategic model in defining performance management (Den Hartog et al., 2004).

The diversity in perspective on what should be part of performance management and at what level of performance the system should operate inevitably create difficulty in understanding the meaning and purposes of performance management (Williams, 2002; Shelley, 1999; Brown, 2005).

2.12   The Mismatch between Rhetoric and Reality

While there are divergent views on how performance management should be defined, proponents for performance management have come up with a contemporary model that is holistic and strategic in nature. Fletcher and Williams (1996) suggest that

the term is about "creating a shared vision of the purpose and aims of the organisation and helping each individual employee to understand and recognise their contributions to them, and in so doing to manage and enhance the performance of both individuals and the organisation" (p. 169). They emphasise that performance management should be owned and driven by line management, not by a particular department, and believe that its success will lead to higher levels of job satisfaction, job involvement, and organisational commitment (Fletcher, 2004).

Armstrong and Baron (2004) take one step further. Not only do they echo the integrated nature suggested by Fletcher and Williams but also postulate the strategic aspects of performance management in their definition. It states that "performance management is a strategy which relates to every activity of the organisation set in the context of its human resources policies, culture, style and communication systems" (p. 4). As pointed out by Den Hartog et al. (2002), this definition considers performance management as a continuous process with strategic focus on the future performance rather than the past to support organisational success.

The thinking behind these two definitions seems to be underpinned by the notion of "management integration and self-control" as postulated by the human relations model (McGregor, 1987). This model incorporates the assumption of the unitarist approach, that the interests of employee and employer can be integrated together and aims to create an environment where employees can satisfy their higher-level ego and self-actualisation needs while sustaining organisational success through a shared understanding and continuing dialogue about an individual's goals and organisational needs. Despite the fact that this model has theoretical supports and has been widely published in various management textbooks and journals (Mabey et al., 1998; Armstrong & Baron, 2004), its applicability, in reality, seems to be limited, particularly in public organisations, including schools. As a consequence, people who compare these definitions with their experiences will likely be confused by the actual meaning of performance management. This phenomenon can be seen in the research findings drawn from the public sector and schools.

While the performance management model in the public sector is also characterised by integrative and strategic nature (Mwita, 2000), as suggested by the

contemporary model, its focus seems to be biased towards achieving organisational performance through managerial planning, measurement, and control techniques (Radnor & McGuire, 2004). This focus can be reflected by the primary objectives of the performance management model which emphasise rationalization in terms of size, cost, and functions; introduction of more effective systems of financial accountability; greater transparency in the operation of these public institutions; the upgrading of the skills base; and the development of a performance-related pay system (McAdam et al., 2006; Boland & Fowler, 2000). The self-control and employee involvement aspects, as suggested by the contemporary model, seem to be relegated as secondary.

A similar mismatch is also found in the application of performance management to the school environment. When performance management was introduced to all primary and secondary schools in England in 2000, the government incorporated many features of the contemporary model in its policy: adding performance-related pay; reinforcing performance management as an "an ongoing cycle" not an event consisting of three annual stages: planning, monitoring, and reviewing (DfEE, 2000; Reeves et al., 2002); emphasizing staff development by "setting professional standards for teachers at each career stage" (DfEE, 2006, p. 5); and integrating individual objectives to school improvement plans. While what is contained in the policy sounds consistent with the best practices as suggested by the proponents, there seems to be a gap in how teachers have experienced these changes.

When reviewing this model, Reeves et al. (2002) consider it as a managerial approach with a primary objective to control the behaviour of individuals through appraisal systems and performance-related pay to ensure they are motivated to work hard and effectively. In a study of school teachers` experience of performance management, Haynes et al. (2002) report that a majority of surveyed teachers believed the government's aim in introducing performance management was to raise teaching standards or to ensure that teachers are doing their job properly by monitoring them more carefully or encouraging less effective teachers to leave. The overt emphasis on the performance review cycle in the definition has also led to another interpretation, which views performance management as an evolution of the traditional performance appraisal system and that all negative experiences associated with it are reproduced. Brown (2005) confirms this conception based on his findings that most respondents still

view performance management as the traditional performance appraisal system, focusing on individual teacher development.

The discourses in the literature so far have demonstrated the lack of a universal definition of performance management, which has led to various interpretations of the term. While the bundles of practices advocated by the proponents appear in the performance management policy for public organisations and schools, the rhetoric of self-control and employee involvement is hardly matched in reality. With the current obsession with managerialism in the public sector including schools, the theme seems to indicate that performance management, however it is defined, cannot be divorced from the focus on efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability and the unilateral control on the basis of the management prerogative (Down et al., 1999). The serious mismatch between the rhetoric and reality generates confusion and uncertainty about the real intention of performance management.

2.13   The Meaning and Purposes of Performance Management in Higher Education

In the official guidelines titled "Rewarding and Developing Staff in Higher Education", the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE, 2002) provides a brief definition of performance management for universities. As discussed in Chapter 1, the guidelines characterise the process as having three key components: annual performance review, rewarding good performance, and managing performance.

How do academics interpret the meaning of performance management? Will they face the same concerns as discussed in the preceding sections that could have caused confusion and scepticism about the term? More specifically, questions that need to be addressed are: Can a universal performance management model exist in the higher education sector? and To what extent will the mismatch between the rhetoric of self-control and employee involvement be reproduced in the higher education sector?

In writing a chapter about managing performance in Higher Education, Middlehurst and Kennie (2003) advocate that higher education institutions adopting performance management should not consider a universal model. They advise that the institutions should review the value of performance management and the potential

pitfalls involved in the process, test the ideas in practice, and be prepared to adjust the theory to practical realities. Their viewpoint is reflected in findings of the study conducted by Shelley (1999) who identifies a great diversity of performance appraisal practices as well as reasons for introducing the programme across the higher education sector as a whole, that is, not only confined to the binary split between the pre-1992 and post-1992 universities. This finding seems to suggest that the problem of the lack of a universal definition of performance management is reproduced in the higher education sector.

The concern about self-control and employee involvement also appears in some universities. In a study of the performance appraisal system in two universities in the UK, Haslam et al. (1992) note that most surveyed teachers interpret the process is for individual staff development, providing teachers with the primary responsibility to identify aspects of their roles in which development is possible and desirable (Simmons, 2002). While a similar finding is recorded in a study conducted by Rutherford (1998), who also uncovers the dominant view on the purpose of appraisal within Birmingham University is in the context of professional development, both studies admit that there is a group of teachers who are sceptical about the aims of appraisal and are convinced that it is introduced for managerial control purposes rather than individual development. Shelley (1999) casts some doubt over the rhetorical nature of the developmental orientation of appraisal based on these mixed responses. His further study reveals that most universities are struggling to retain collegial culture and as a result most appraisals used are moving towards a more control-evaluative style. Indeed, only elite institutions manage to retain more developmental forms of appraisal and most universities at the lower end of the university league table are subject to an evaluative appraisal system.

It is apparent from the analysis of the findings that the developmental-oriented appraisal operated in a collegial culture is gradually taken up by a control-oriented approach in the higher education sector. As a result of this shift, research indicates that academics are likely to experience the same kind of mismatch concern about the rhetoric of self-control and involvement as teachers from the school sector. This concern along with the lack of a precise definition of performance management may

inevitably reproduce the issue of confusion or scepticism about performance management in the context of universities.

2.2   The Effectiveness of the Performance Management Processes

The dominant performance management models emphasise formulating performance objectives, measuring performance, and linking performance to pay. Many writers link this framework to social psychology, specifically to the Goal-Setting Theory and Expectancy Theory (in Kelley & Protsik, 1997; Mabey et al., 1998), to demonstrate how this process will work for enhanced employee motivation and productivity.

Goal-Setting Theory posits that setting clear, specific, challenging, and achievable goals can motivate employees to higher performance (Latham & Locke, 1979). In this process, employees are given opportunities to participate in deciding what needs to be done and obtain feedback on their achievement through a goal-setting process. According to Locke (1978), this goal setting can be viewed as an element of job enrichment, namely, feedback, which can increase the employee's feeling of achievement and to provide him or her with a sense of personal responsibility for the work.

Attaching a financial incentive to goal attainment could further reinforce the motivation according to the Expectancy Theory. This reinforcement will be achieved by creating a clear line of sight between individual effort and the receipt of a reward, thus building employee confidence that rewards will be generated and reinforcing the value of financial rewards (Heneman, 1992; Odden & Kelley, 1997).

As a corollary, these two theories also suggest that the motivational impact will not be generated if the goal-setting process adopted fails to secure the goal clarity, obtain commitment to the chosen performance measures, and provide attractive rewards (Richardson, 1999). The extent to which these three conditions can be satisfied in the higher educational sector will be the next focus.

2.21   <u>Formulating Clear Individual Goals</u>

The Goal-Setting Theory and Expectancy Theory emphasise the importance of setting individual performance objectives, which should be linked to organisational goals, and should be specific and challenging (Mabey et al., 1998; Heneman, 1992). Complying with these principles has proved to be problematic in the higher education context. The first challenge is to identify and articulate clear strategic objectives for setting individual goals. Clark (1983) points out that the university has inherently a natural ambiguity of purpose. "With the tasks of higher education being both knowledge-intensive and knowledge-extensive, it is difficult for those involved to state the purpose of comprehensive university" (Clark, 1983, p. 18). He further states that "goals are so broad and ambiguous that the university or system is left with no chance either to accomplish the goals – or to fail to accomplish them. There is no way that anyone can assess the degree of goal achievement. No one even knows if any or all the stated goals are accepted by significant groups within the system, and with what priority" (p. 19). Adams and Kirst (1999) share the same concern about multiple and competing goals and point out that this could be due to the fact that administration of educational institutions is influenced by multiple constituencies such as legislatures, political parties, and parents. A multiplicity of competing goals among these stakeholders is likely to reduce goal clarity and will make it difficult for employees to focus their efforts properly, as asserted by Richardson (1999). Another factor that contributes to the difficulty in establishing clear goals is the lack of an effective process in communicating university goals to academics. In a study conducted by Hughes and Sohler (1992), they found that only few universities in Australia have established an effective consultative process in getting academics or staff involved in corporate planning. Indeed many academics or staff are sceptical about the notion of planning in universities and have little knowledge about university goals.

The proliferation of various quantitative performance indicators to evaluate the performance of higher education followed from the recommendations of the Jarratt Report (Jarratt, 1985), which spearheaded a major shift in how the goals of a university should be formulated. As pointed out by Pugh et al. (2005), these indicators have replaced all the previous competing priorities for universities created by their multiple stakeholders. The RAE and TQA are the two most dominant programmes that have

been put in place to direct what UK universities need to achieve (Pugh et al., 2005). Mirroring these external assessment requirements in the internal quality assessment systems to ensure that the expected standards set by the government can be consistently met by academics becomes the trend, according to Brennan and Shah (2000). In a study of 300 academics covering a wide spectrum of institutions, disciplines, and level of positions, Talib (2003) confirms the RAE requirements have been increasingly used by institutions for setting research goals for their individual academics and such goals positively influence the performance of individuals who perceive the goal as difficult but attainable. Similarly, the imposition of TQA requirements have led to the proliferation of various forms of monitoring mechanisms within institutions, which include formalisation and documentation of quality procedures, surveys of student opinion on teaching quality, and peer observation of teaching to monitor the teaching performance of their academics (Underwood, 2000). Complying with the quality procedures and obtaining satisfactory results from the surveys and peer observations are increasingly seen as part of the performance goals for academics (Laughton, 2003; Drennan, 2001).

2.22   Seeking Commitment to Performance Measures

While performance indicators can help formulate specific and challenging goals, the literature documents negative, unintended consequences associated with the use of this approach to measure performance. The dysfunctional impacts include engendering unethical or organisationally-detrimental behaviour, neglecting aspects of jobs without performance indicators, and setting invalid indicators.

Barnetson and Cutright (2000) consider performance indicators as a conceptual technology that shapes "what issues we think about and how we think about those issues" (p. 277). Translating them into an individual performance target will cause unintended consequences. Elton (2004) explains that "the basic reason for this is that performance indicators, when used for control, are unreliable: they do not measure performance itself, distort what is measured, influence practice towards what is being measured, and cause unmeasured parts to get neglected" (Elton, 2004, p. 121). He illustrates these dysfunctional effects in the context of RAE, pointing out that the need to meet the individual target for RAE will engender undesirable consequences, which

include publishing "essentially the same work in different guises in different journals and splitting up of research papers into several smaller ones" (Elton, 2000, p.276) and focusing on research that could generate short-term results, ignoring research that takes a longer time to produce results. This phenomenon is also supported by empirical evidence as revealed from Taylor's study (2001) that involves 152 university academics from four universities in Australia. The results indicate that performance indicators had a significant impact on the participants' approach to teaching and research and led them to focus on those activities measured by the indicators. In response to the pressure, many participants have taken a short-term approach in order to satisfy the performance requirements. Such behaviours include writing a shorter paper in order to increase the quantity of publications or shifting their work priorities to research at the expense of teaching. In a different context, Cutler and Waine (2000) raise a similar concern when using examination results as an indicator to evaluate the performance of school teachers. They argue that the use of performance indicators will encourage manipulation, where concentration on achieving the target could be at the expense of broader and non-quantified, organisational objectives such as professional development. Behn (1997) argues that these potential improper behaviours could at best be labelled as "honest cheating" if they only encourage teachers to focus on what is being measured rather than on their real purpose. Even worse, they could result in dishonest cheating if academics end up taking some unethical or illegal actions to achieve the goals.

Neglecting some aspects of the job is another concern. The use of performance indicators for performance measures is typically limited to a few goals. Brown (2005) in his study of goal-setting exercises in British schools identifies that most teachers typically have fewer than five objectives. This limitation according to Mabey et al. (1998) often creates a concern about neglecting individual employee's subjective perceptions of the mutual obligations between employer and employee built up over time. In fact, this concern is empirically evident as revealed from the study conducted by Taylor (2001), which reports that the performance indicators adopted by four Australian universities have failed to capture all facets of academics' work. Bryson and Barnes (2000), based on their analysis of the experiences of over 1,500 academics and related staff in UK higher education institutions, confirm that a majority of academics feel the importance of the activities that they performed, which are neither stated in the contract nor captured by the performance indicators. Failure to recognise this employee

31

effort will put those academics who carry out activities that are not assessed by the indicators in a disadvantage position for promotion opportunity, contract renewal, and salary increase, and will greatly undermine employee commitment to the organisation based on the Psychological Contract Theory (Stiles et al., 1997).

Another potential problem identified by the literature is that the chosen indicators may not truly reflect the contributions of the individual teachers. In assessing the Green Paper on performance related pay in schools, Richardson (1999) points out that it is extremely difficult for an individual teacher to establish a causal relationship between their contribution and student performance. This problem is particularly apparent when examination results are used as a performance measure. The difficulty is largely due to the fact that there are many influences on the performance of students, for example, students' family background, private tuition, and poor attendance rates because of sickness (Behn, 1997; Marsden, 2000). Luntley (2000) shares the same view and argues that a classroom is a non-linear complex system in which it is very difficult to establish a causal relationship between teacher's input and students' output.

A similar out-of-control issue is related to the use of a teaching survey to measure a teacher's performance. Taylor (2001) reports that many academics are concerned about the validity of the results due to the factors assessed in teaching surveys that tend to be beyond their control such as the ability of students to distinguish between teaching quality and its rigour, their personality, and the topic taught.

2.23   Rewarding Performance with Financial Incentives

The Expectancy Theory posits that adding financial incentives in the form of performance-related pay (PRP) will induce academics to redirect their focus on organisational goals. This proposition seems to be problematic as revealed from the literature produced by writers on management theory. Meyer (1987) asserts that the motivational principle sounds logical, but it does not work as smoothly or as successfully in reality. Kohn (1993) challenges the value of a PRP scheme in the workplace and claims that such pay systems do not create a lasting commitment. Instead they could merely and temporarily change what employees do and at worst would create considerable long-term costs to the organisation. In his view, this

approach reinforces managerial control and punitive management and discourages risk taking, creativity, and innovation. Pfeffer (1998) shares the same view as Kohn and points out that introducing a PRP system will send a negative message to employees that "management believes people won't do what is necessary unless they are rewarded for every little thing" (p. 230) and the function of PRP is viewed as a bribery to employees for increased loyalty and commitment.

The concerns raised by the above writers cast doubt on the applicability of PRP to the education environment in the UK. Central to these concerns is the effectiveness of financial incentives in motivating academics at work. To identify the key factors which have the greatest positive impact on teacher's morale, Varlaam et al. (1992) have surveyed about 3,000 teachers in the UK through a postal questionnaire. The findings reveal that there were 14 "most important factors", with teaching status in the community ranked at the top of the list. Almost all of these factors were about the quality of life in school, reflecting the importance of intrinsic reward for the teacher as a professional. Only a few factors were related to financial reward and they were all concerned about the fairness of pay level relative to their counterparts in the industry.

When asked about the value of performance-related pay, there was unanimity among all groups of teachers that this factor has the least impact on the improvement of morale and motivation of a teacher. The importance of intrinsic reward as a motivator is also echoed by Lacy and Sheehan (1997). In a study of university academics' satisfaction with their job across eight countries, Lacy and Sheehan (1997) conclude that factors related to the environment in which academics work including participation in decision-making, a sense of community acknowledgement, and relationship with colleagues are the greatest predictors of job satisfaction. The importance of job content over extra money is also confirmed by a comparative study conducted by Firestone (1991). In a comparison of two separate teacher work reforms, one with a merit-pay plan and another with job enlargement, the study reports that the preferred choice is job enlargement.

These findings indicate that teachers are not particularly entrepreneurial or achievement oriented in a financial sense, as those people working in the business world. Rather, they are more motivated by the content and process of their work such as

helping students achieve and collaborating with colleagues on teaching and learning (Odden & Kelley, 1997). The extent to which academics value intrinsic incentives could explain why they are attracted to and remained in the job despite their relatively lower pay when compared with other industries (Lewis, 1993).

Stilwell (2003) comes up with a similar conclusion based on his economic analysis. He predicts that whether academics will respond to the financial incentives depends on the nature of their preferences between income and non-directly remunerated tasks. The financial reward can only entice those academics who are income-maximisers and will not work for those who are only interested in maintaining the real income and prefer to allocate more time to those other aspects of academic life which attracted them in the first place. Stilwell (2003) further warns that while adding financial incentives to the performance management process may help improve performance against a measured variable, it could compound the dysfunctional consequences as discussed in the preceding section.

The above review of literature identifies several challenges associated with the current performance management process which could affect its effectiveness. The difficulty in formulating clear goals that are critical for the university's current and future success and selecting appropriate performance measures to gain commitment from academics to the goals seems to be an issue. Added to this problem is the uncertainty about the strength of financial incentives in directing academics' commitment to the goals. Apart from these procedural concerns, another critical factor that will significantly affect the effectiveness of the performance management process is the ability of the managers who are charged with managing it to conduct a fair and objective appraisal (Welbornue, 1997). The relevant literature on this issue will be reviewed in the following section.

2.3   The Role of the Academic Manager in the Performance Management Process

The literature places great emphasis on the role of "manager" in the performance management process. Williams (2002) points out that the manager should act as an agent of communication and as an owner of the performance management

process. The communication role involves conveying the organisational mission and objectives to facilitate the goal-setting exercise and providing feedback to those managed. As an owner, the manager is expected to manage the activities related to the appraisal cycle which includes planning and recording of agreed priorities and how progress will be monitored; reviewing progress and providing support to the managed; evaluating of the academic's performance, taking into account progress against objectives; and making reward decisions. Whether managers, who control performance evaluation and thus the rewards, can be trusted to act fairly is a critical factor in gaining employee confidence to the performance management process (Fletcher, 2001; Williams, 2002; Mabey et al., 1998).

Determining "who is the manager" in the context of the university has been a challenge according to the literature. This concern stems from the traditional structure of the higher education sector, which is organised in a flat structure of loosely coupled parts (Clark, 1983). Unlike the business organisation, there are not many bureaucratic rules or a hierarchy in place to determine the authority of an individual in the academic organisation. Academic authority largely comes from two sources: personal rulership and collegial rulership, according to Clark (1983). The former one is rooted in individual expertise, which enables the senior academics to exercise supervision over the work of junior academics. The collegial rule is a collective control by a body of peers where decision-making is shared by those who participate in the process (Clark, 1983; Deem, 2004). Under this flat hierarchical structure, along with collegial rule, the notion of "line manager" does not seem to be apparent in the traditional academic organisation. Those appointed in a management role are typically appointed on a temporary and part-time basis, and their responsibilities are largely confined to overseeing research, teaching, and staff morale (Deem et al., 2001; Dearlove, 1998b).

The emergence of managerialism in universities has changed the traditional way in managing academics. As discussed in Chapter 1, this new management ideology has transformed the traditional collegial model into corporate organisations adopting corporate-style practices and techniques associated with new managerialism (Cohen et al., 1999; Deem, 1998; Parker & Jary, 1998). This change has led to the emergence of a new managerial class to manage the university organisation (Middlehurst, 2004). As suggested by the Jarratt Report (1985), the traditional role of Vice-Chancellor has

become chief executive who runs the university as a corporate enterprise with machinery for effective co-ordination of resource allocation to achieve value for money. To support the new structure, a clearer hierarchical line of accountability from the chief executive to the deans of faculties to the heads of departments, who are now to be seen as managers, has been established according to Henkel (2002). Many more academics have become involved in management roles, some of them permanently, with expanded responsibility to take on additional tasks that include finance, individual academic performance, and public accountability (Deem, 1998; 2004; Trowler, 1998; Randle & Brady, 1997). The term academic manager has been widely used in the literature to refer to this new managerial class (Deem et al., 2001; Henkel, 2002).

To what extent has this managerial class performed the role as an owner of the performance management process? Based on the interview findings in four universities in the UK, Prichard and Willmott (1997) report that most senior post holders are aware of their role in performance management. They claim that the external accountabilities in the form of RAE have rendered senior academics such as Head of Department and Vice-Chancellor "more explicitly accountable as supervisors and organisers of academic labour, responsible for performance, which is measured in largely quantitative terms" (p. 298).

Similarly, in a study of a group of academic managers drawing from 16 universities in the UK, Deem et al. (2001) report that most surveyed managers agree that performance management is part of their key role and claim that they have spent long hours in holding meetings with individual staff for performance appraisal, mentoring those academics who fail to achieve the required standards in teaching and research; setting RAE score targets as a performance measure; and motivating employees through persuasion. While they are aware of their responsibility for performance management as a manager, the report reveals that most of them are not keen to become a career-track manager. Most respondents are either classified as reluctant managers, typically Head of Department who only perform this role on a temporary basis and their interests are still in teaching and research or as a good citizen where an individual chooses to take on a more senior management role which happens at a later stage of a career. This finding casts doubt on the commitment of academic managers to the performance management process.

Henkel (2002) reports a similar commitment concern in his study. While most surveyed managers agree that staff appraisal is one of the important aspects of their job, they are concerned with the time made available for them to perform this role when taking into account their other responsibilities such as research and teaching. On the other hand, some of the surveyed academic managers are frustrated with the process because of the constraints imposed by university policies, which prevent them from taking what they could have considered as the correct actions to address performance issues. The concern about the commitment of managers to the process is also affirmed from the standpoint of those subject to performance management at lower levels of the hierarchy. In the study of managerialism in the forms of appraisal and target setting, Barry et al. (2001) find limited evidence of the presence of managerialism particularly at the junior levels. This finding implies that academic managers do not take performance management seriously.

The above discussion in the literature reveals that while most surveyed academic managers have a strong belief in their right to manage other academics and have a clear conception of their role in performance management, the extent to which they have fully performed the role as a line-manager in performance management remains a question. It is evident that their effectiveness in performing the role has been bogged down by their workload and their continued involvement in teaching and research. In the absence of a managers' commitment to process, it will not be a surprise to find the issue of "mistrust" identified from the studies of public sector's performance management system in the UK conducted by Richardson (1999) and in an appraisal system in Australian schools conducted by Down et al. (1999) that will be reproduced in the context of higher education in the UK. Both studies report that most being managed are sceptical of the value of the system because they do not trust that their managers can provide a fair and honest reflection of their work. The lack of trust in the system may shift the focus of academics to the negative aspects of performance management and lead them to believe that this is the tool used unilaterally by the management to control their work.

2.4   The Impacts of Performance Management on Academics

The imposition of performance management in the domain of academia appears to be problematic according to the literature reviewed so far. While the concept of performance management in improving performance is sound in theory, the evidence provided by the literature confirms that the contextual factors operating in universities play a large part in undermining its effectiveness in reality. Central to the problem is the feasibility of setting clear goals, seeking commitment to measurement, and generating motivation through financial rewards. The concern about the ability of academic managers in managing the process further reduces the confidence of academics in the system. Without compelling evidence to show that performance management will achieve the intended objectives as expected from the Goal-Setting and Expectancy Theories, much literature has turned their focus on the negative aspects of performance management. Writers using labour-process perspectives and Foucaultian analysis argue that performance management is a management tool seeking to introduce command and control on work behaviour in order to achieve institutional objectives. This managerial principle is in conflict with university traditions of "collegiality" and "academic freedom". Therefore, the imposition of such a system may be seen as challenging the traditional ways of how academics self-regulate their work and their long-established professional identities. The purpose of this part of the chapter is to review the literature using labour-process perspectives and Foucaultian analysis to examine the potential impacts of performance management on traditional academic identity and how academics will respond to this intervention.

2.41   Traditional Academic Identity and Profession

Before examining the implications of performance management for academics, this section will first review the core values that academics hold and how they are linked to academic identity. Jary and Parker (1998) state that "the popular stereotype of the academic is as a member of the leisure class, tenured, eccentric, individualist and able to pursue their arcane teaching and research interests without external constraints" (p. 11). This view concurs with Henkel (1997) who points out that academics should experience: "security of tenure, relatively generous allocations of time, relatively low levels of administration, a common salary structure, the interdependence of at least

38

teaching and research, an emphasis on equality values in the allocation of work and the idea that specialisation is discipline rather than functionally based" (p. 134). The core values identified by these two statements, particularly specialisation and freedom at work, form the basis in the construction of academic identity.

Academic identity is shaped by social settings: discipline or field of study and institution (Clark, 1983; Henkel, 2005; Harley, 2002). Henkel (2005) defines discipline as boundaries in the basic units or departments of universities and the university institution as the key communities in which individual academics see themselves as belonging to a distinctive and bounded sector of society through their membership. Within these two settings, central to the academic identity are individual contributions to one's discipline, judged by its related professional standards and membership of a reputable work organisation, upheld by a system of peer review (Harley, 2002). Using Bernsteinian analysis, Beck and Young (2005) use the terms "inwardness" and "inner dedication" to describe the specialisation in a pure academic discipline that can generate inner commitments and loyalty which are central to the formation of professional identities. They also point out that these identities were traditionally insulated from external interferences and contamination through the creation of boundaries of unique knowledge in the form of a curriculum taught by a professional school; the establishment of a trust relationship with the state; the creation of a professional habitus in the form of professional values and standards of professional integrity, judgment, and loyalty. With this insulation, Clark (1983) claims that the academic profession in the UK has unusual autonomy, which is rooted from the old tradition and exceptional status of Oxford and Cambridge, a trust relationship between academics and government officials. According to Pritchard (1998), this freedom has been internalised in the personal value systems among British dons and institutionalised in collegial structures of shared power. While this freedom is not guaranteed by legislation, it has been taken for granted by most academics as part of their identity (Harley, 2002).

In the discussion of academic freedom, the literature identifies at least two different perspectives of the term (Akerlind & Kayrooz, 2003; Henkel, 2007). One approach is to present it in a negative right of the individual. This can be reflected in the definition provided by Berdahl (1990), who defines it as "freedom of the individual scholar in his/her teaching and research to pursue truth wherever it seems to lead

without fear of punishment or termination of employment for having offended some political, religious and social orthodoxy" (p. 172). Henkel (2007) comments that this type of definition emphasises negative freedom that is, free from obstruction or punishment in the pursuit of truth by each individual academic. Others see academic freedom as being more about a freedom to engage in appropriate academic activities. This represents a shift in the interpretation of academic freedom from being a negative right to a positive right of academics (Akerlind & Kayrooz, 2003). Henkel (2007) describes this positive right as freedom of academics to choose their own agendas in the pursuit of knowledge development.

Another focal point of the discussion on academic freedom is centred on what constitutes this right: Should academic freedom apply only to particular activities or should it be extended indefinitely to cover any teaching, scholarship, research, or publication which any academic chooses to engage in (Berdahl, 1990; Akerlind & Kayrooz, 2003)? The literature highlights three critical ingredients. First, academic freedom is granted with an expectation that academics will be creative, flexible, innovative, and critical instead of conforming and accepting in pursuit of worthwhile knowledge (Akerlind & Kayrooz, 2003; Harrison & Weightman, 1974; Downing, 2005). Second, academics have no "right to silence" and they have an obligation to speak their minds openly without fear (Akerlind & Kayrooz, 2003). Third, academics are expected to perform their roles according to the accepted rules established by the disciplines. Harrison and Weightman (1997) assert that it is the autonomy of disciplines in controlling academics and making judgments on their competence and excellence.

To sum up, the above literature review demonstrates that academic identity emphasises the core values of specialisation and freedom at work. To what extent has this identity been affected by the imposition of performance management? The following section will review the implications using a labour-process perspective and Foucaultian analysis.

2.42   Labour-process Perspective

The labour process refers to the activities of transforming raw materials into products through human labour within a given technology, within the specific dynamics

of a mode of production and antagonistic class relations (Thompson, 1989). According to Braverman (in Hill, 1981), this transformation process is determined by capitalist social relations and is not the result of technical/ organisational factors. The antagonistic relations inherent in capitalist societies lead to a situation where managers cannot rely on labour to work efficiently of its own accord and therefore managers look to maximise their control over the labour process and minimise the autonomy of workers. Braverman places considerable emphasis on Taylorism/scientific management and considers it as the defining system of management under industrial capitalism. This involves the subdivision of tasks, the establishment of new technologies that are less dependent upon worker's craft skills, the separation of conception from execution, and management to assume control over every step of the labour process (Hill, 1981). As a result of Taylorisation, Braverman argues that both manual and non-manual work are being deskilled, producing a proletarianisation of the workforces of such societies, and that labour increasingly takes on the central characteristics of "pure" labour, that is, it becomes an interchangeable commodity (Thompson, 1989; Hill, 1981).

The manifestation of Taylorisation, proletarianisation, and commodification leads to alienation according to labour-process theorists (Thompson, 1989; Hill, 1981). The notion of alienation is rooted in Marx's work, where he argues that the economic structure inevitably damages the psyche of workers forcing them to adapt to the prescribed processes, structure, and technologies (DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005; Sarros et al., 2002). Building on Durkheim's work, Blauner defines his own view of alienation as "the notion of fragmentation in man's existence and consciousness which impedes the wholeness of experience and activity" (in Hill, 1981, p. 91). Kanungo (1979) finds the term alienation is ambiguous due to diverse sociological and psychological thinking on this issue. To improve the clarity of the concept, he has adopted a motivational approach to re-conceptualise the term as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection. The disconnection will lead to a situation where "work is perceived to lack the potentiality for satisfying one's salient needs and expectations" (Kanungo, 1979, p. 131). In other words, alienation occurs when employees perceive that the work environment is personally detrimental to their needs, values, and sense of organisational well-being. This disconnection is caused by the five different dimensions of alienation as summarised by Seeman (1959) which include:

powerlessness (lack of control), meaninglessness (inability to see the relationships between their contributions to the organisational goals), normlessness and isolation (when the norms guiding work behaviour is contrary to personal goals, making the individual feel no sense of belonging), and self-estrangement (when the employment becomes simply a means of making a living rather than a means for expressing individual potential).

The preceding discussion has provided an overview of how conventional labour-process theory describes the underlying causes for the degradation of work and potential resultant alienation to employees. Building on this model, the following section will review relevant literature to examine the impacts of the imposition of performance management on the academic labour process with a specific focus on whether the effects of Taylorisation, proletarianisation, and commodification will be generated.

2.43   Academic Labour Process and Performance Management

Teaching and research are the two important key features of the academic profession (Clark, 1983). The activities involved in delivering these two products such as lecturing and other forms of teaching, which may include the formal lecture, the seminar, class, or laboratory session or individual or group supervision, are the key components of the academic labour process (Miller, 1991). In the transformation process, academics have traditionally been seen as craftspersons, as they are only subject to collegial control and operating on a "trust relationship" with the institution as opposed to "antagonistic relationship" as postulated in Braverman's model. How will the imposition of performance management affect this academic labour process? This question will be addressed by looking at three critical aspects of performance management, namely, target setting, performance measures, and performance appraisal.

Setting expectations and objectives is one of the critical processes of performance management. This typically requires vertical integration of individual contributions with the goals of their department and university at large. This integration, according to Harris (2005), puts pressure on individuals to pursue and construct academic identities in line with corporate identity. Much literature has focused on how

the university goals to meet external quality requirements have impacted on academic identity. Worthington and Hodgson (2005) label these requirements as coercive accountability which creates a situation where university teachers are compelled "to fashion their teaching in accordance with pre-given quantifiable teaching objectives and learning outcomes that correspond with managerial notions of 'best practice' to meet individual student needs and expectations and those of industry. New research funding criteria, research performance indicators, and league tables have similarly created a situation whereby academics remain constantly aware of the importance of publishing the 'magic four' articles in the top-listed journals in their field, for the RAE" (p. 106). Indeed, the university missions of mass education and vocationalism have reduced academic control over student entry (Dearlove, 1997) and forced academics to develop curricula that are marketable and meet with public needs (Nixon, 1996). In relation to research, it is evident that the type of research done is dictated by university goals to satisfy the RAE requirements instead of individual creativity of thought. In the study conducted by Harley and Lee (1997), they identify that many surveyed economics departments actively force their academics to do research and publish in mainstream journals in order to gain a higher RAE ranking.

The emphasis of performance management on defining and measuring performance with quantifiable indicators could be perceived as a means to achieve efficiency through standardisation of works. In setting up performance measures, it typically requires the identification of sequential performance objectives; the operationalisation of performance targets; clear specification of performance measures both input and output; concrete specification of accountabilities; and the formulation of monitoring to track performance. Dominelli et al. (1996) assert that these performance measures require the academic labour process to be fragmented into "component parts or activities each part being translated or operationalised into empirically identifiable and quantifiable indicators or measures" (p. 79). This in effect could break up the traditional academic labour process into separate activities, standardise what needs to be done for each activity, and attach a performance measure against each activity to ensure compliance. While this standardisation of activities could facilitate specialisation for increased productivity and meeting external goals, it could lead to a concern about Taylorisation of the academic labour process (Dominelli et al., 1996; Schapper & Mayson, 2005).

The fragmentation of academic work caused by performance management is evident at least from two perspectives. First, the use of the RAE target as a performance measure has resulted in splitting academic work between research and teaching. Unbundling allows management to reduce the role either to teaching or research, which can maximise research funding on the one hand and increase the capacity of delivering more courses in order to maximise the overall income to the university on the other. Indeed, it is evident that some universities have taken progressive steps to separate research from teaching by having those academics who are "research active" focus on research work only (McNay, 1999), use performance management measurement results to get academics who are weak in research to choose a teaching-only contract (Deem et al., 2001), and change their recruitment strategies and selection criteria to attract proven researchers to join the universities (Harley, 2002; Deem et al., 2001). This restructuring along with the shift in recruitment policy has effectively separated research from teaching for enhanced efficiency, reinforcing the managerial concept of division of labour as advocated by "Taylorism" (Hill, 1981).

Second, the use of requirements set by teaching quality assurance programmes and the customer as performance measures have led to greater standardisation which, in turn, have impacted on academic work by separation of conception from execution. Lomas (2006) confirms there has been a centralising tendency that the power over the curriculum is gravitating towards the centre of universities and away from the departments to ensure that the departments' curriculum design and developments take into account all the external requirements. As a result, the standardisation will require academics to concede control over curriculum development and limit their role to deliver pre-packaged education materials. Based on the findings from a case study of teaching international curriculum in an Australian university, Schapper and Mayson (2005) confirm that standardisation results in centralisation of decision-making on curriculum development, leaving a very limited degree of independence and autonomy to academics. In practice, the Chief Examiners of the course are the managers who made most of the decisions to ensure the standardised delivery of course content, and the only autonomy accorded to academics is in the development of lecture and tutorial materials. As a result, performance management could exert a centralising and homogenising influence on academic work, which could reduce individual autonomy

and displace the traditional dual roles as a "thinker-researcher and the doer-teacher" (p. 191).

2.44 Foucaultian Analysis and Performance Management

One of the key components of performance management is appraisal, which requires documenting the objectives and performance results. By applying Foucaultian analysis of the panopticon, writers such as Findlay and Newton (1998) and Townley (1993) consider performance appraisal as a technology that is embedded with surveillance power to enable management to exercise remote control over every step of the labour process. The concept of panopticon is built on an analogy of a prison design that involves the arrangement of buildings to allow the guards to monitor all the activities of the prisoners without their knowledge (Foucault, 1977). Findlay and Newston (1998) describe appraisal as embedded with this panoptic power not only to allow management to observe how well individuals perform their job through measures but also to identify any inabilities that they may have to meet the expected norms via employee counselling. Findlay and Newton (1998) are concerned that the panoptic capability of counselling is far in excess of electronic surveillance as it enables management to access the inner world of individual workers to find out "their feelings about the job, their workmates, their managers, their home life, their anxieties and aspirations" (p. 215).

Townley (1993) applies the Foucauldian concept to analyse the performance appraisal systems adopted by 30 universities and confirms that the effect of performance appraisal resembles the panopticon. According to her findings, the completed appraisal forms can not only be accessed by the appraiser but are also available for the head of the department who needs to keep all documents to ensure a consistency of review within the department, the staff development officer who needs to access the forms to ensure the uniformity within the university, and other senior management such as Vice Chancellors who need to access the documents as a form of monitoring the performance of their staff. This unrestricted access to the information reinforces that appraisal operates as a form of panopticon with its anonymous and continuous surveillance as seen in the articulation of a monitoring role.

2.45   How will academics respond to degradation of their work?

The preceding literature review provides evidence that performance management could be seen as another component of the rhetoric of managerial control and could develop similar consequences in the academic labour process as Braverman asserts has happened to skilled craft labour in a capitalist economy (Miller, 1991). Using the performance targets and measures to direct the priorities of academic work could result in commodification of academic work as academics are forced to produce research output and teaching quality that have immediate exchange-value rather than education value (Willmott, 1995; Harley & Lee, 1997) "in the form of its contribution to the development of the student as a person, as a citizen or at least a depository and carrier of culturally valued knowledge" (Willmott, 1995, p. 1002). Furthermore, the use of performance measures could result in a "Taylorisation" of academic labour process (Dominelli et al., 1996) and in turn a "proletarianisation" of the academic workforce (Dearlove, 1997; Wilson, 1991), as academic work is becoming more routinised and deskilled due to the split of research and teaching and the separation of curriculum development from course delivery. While the development of Taylorisation, proletarianisation and commodification seems to be apparent, the literature also identifies various coping strategies adopted by academics to adapt the increased surveillance practices such as the RAE.

Dearlove (1997) points out that the labour process perspective could be correct in its broad description, but it fails to recognise the potential counteractive efforts taken by academics against the rise of managerialism. He argues that academics are vested with informal authority that derives from a bottom up and discipline-based university structure that enables them to create a defensive position against proletarianisation. In his view, academic work continues to embody craft elements, and academics remain viewed as professionals despite the increased managerial control. In a study of the impact of managerialist approaches articulated by the introduction of module curriculum in a British higher education institution, Trowler (1998) similarly argues that academics use their informal authority to resist the increased control. While academics are losing control over what to teach as the curriculum is prescribed by the programme, Trowler's study reports two cases where academics use their authority to control what happens inside the classroom to mitigate their feeling of losing their

traditional academic freedom. One respondent reported that he has ignored the syllabus stipulated by the programme and has used his own educational ideology to teach the students in the classroom. In the other case, the teacher has injected his own personality and disciplinary knowledge into the module he taught.

Other literature reports that while the managerial practices could have taken away certain aspects of freedom from academics, these new practices could create other opportunities for re-professionalisation. This point of view can be seen in a speculative discussion by Wilson (1991). He claims that the loss of involvement in the course development, planning, and research as a result of the separation of teaching from research and greater use of modules (that is routinisation) could be compensated by the new skills required to teach a larger group of students, often a mix with non-traditional backgrounds. Willmott (1995) similarly argues that while performance measures impose some constraints on academics, they could provide another source where academics can derive a sense of their identity. The ratings that academics achieve can "become a major source of self-evaluation, and associated self-disciplining actions, especially when they have material consequences in terms of funding and career opportunities" (Willmott, 1995, p. 1024). This argument is affirmed by the findings of the study conducted by Harley (2002). When examining the impact of RAE on academic work, Harley reports that while a majority of respondents are hostile to RAE, some academics take a very different view and consider that RAE has provided them with an opportunity to define themselves in terms of an accepted community of values, reaffirming their traditional identity. This view is consistent with the concept of "domesticated professionalism" postulated by Campion and Renner (1995). Building on the successful experience of how the engineering professionals in the United States have regained some authority over their work under the scientific management environment through adaptation of corporate objectives, Campion and Renner (1995) urge that academics should build up their domesticated professionalism by changing their personal goals of scholarship and enquiry to goals of institutional and national efficiency and productivity. Being a conformist professional aiming to satisfy the criteria set by those in power will help academics regain power over their work and thus their identity. This view is echoed by Nixon (1997) who points out that the changing conditions create a new ground for academics to redefine their occupational values and to construct their professional identity around those values. In a study of two

universities in the UK, which involves 30 interviews of academics from various subject disciplines, Nixon identifies how academics regenerate their professionalism as teachers by providing a coherent professional perspective on what makes for good practices in terms of teaching and learning and what institutional conditions are necessary for such practices to flourish in a new environment.

With the possession of informal authority to defend their identity along with the opportunity for reprofessionalisation, it is therefore not surprising to find academics are reasonably successful in resisting the commodity discourse as claimed by Bryson (2004) based on the findings from his Internet survey. Deriving from 1,586 completed responses from academics, the study concludes that there is little evidence to support a rapid decline in morale and level of satisfaction as a result of the rise in managerialism. While there is some support for work degradation, it has resulted more from substantial work intensification as opposed to deskilling as claimed by the labour-process perspective.

Taken together, Willmott (1995) is right that the imposition of managerial control has generated simmering resentment rather than organised resistance. In part, this is because academics have been partially buffered from some of the changes (Bryson, 2004) due to the growth of an academic underclass of teachers and researchers employed on short-term and part-time contracts (Willmott, 1995), providing a cushion for the rapid degradation of the work for core and permanent academics. Another possibility is that, over time, resistant academics are replaced by newcomers who have little experience with traditional academic work and privilege and thus have little trouble in accepting various performance measures such as the RAE and joining the performativity organising process (Symon et al., 2005).

2.5   How to Make Performance Management Work

Implementing a performance management system represents a significant organisational change for higher education. While the above discussion has illustrated the traditions and cultures of higher education may create a stumbling block for the successful implementation of a performance management system (Mabey et al., 1998),

it also sheds some light that academics may be able to adapt the changes. Therefore, the literature on change management may provide some provoking thoughts on how to make performance management succeed in the higher education sector.

Most change models are built on the three-stage model developed by Kurt Lewin (in Lippitt, 1985). This model involves moving from an old state through stages of unfreezing (becoming aware of the need for change), change (movement from the old state to the new state), and refreezing (reinforcement of new behaviours to make them relatively permanent and resistant to further change) to a new state. To implement Lewin's model, Kotter's (1996) eight-stage change model provides a useful guide for effective management of each process (Lucas & Associates, 2000). These eight stages include: establishing a sense of urgency for the change; creating a guiding coalition; developing a vision and strategy; communicating the changed vision; empowering board-based action; generating short-term wins; consolidating gains and producing more change; and anchoring new approaches in the culture.

These two prominent change models suggest three areas that require improvement in order to increase the likelihood for performance management to succeed in the higher education sector. First, the models emphasise that it is important to ensure academics are aware of the need for change by establishing a sense of urgency for the change and developing a clear vision on what the change aims to achieve. This step is particularly important to this study, as most academics are likely to be sceptical about the term performance management and may resist the change as revealed from the above literature review. Clear communication therefore may help to address this concern and obtain more support from academics (Kotter, 1996).

Second, these models stress the importance of engaging change agents in the process. These individuals should be charged to set the tone in the organisation and show how performance management matters. In addition, they drive the actual performance and ensure that the system is working in a robust way and is being used to make day-to-day decisions. As pointed out by Middlehurst and Elton (1992), this important function should be considered as part of the leadership role with specific responsibility to "clarify the direction of change and to make members of the organisation willing, even enthusiastic partners in the change process" (p. 252). They

further point out that there are two common types of leadership at the departmental level within the university setting: academic leadership, which focuses on the formulation of academic policy and strategy, and administrative leadership, which is concerned about all staff, resources, and activities. It is unclear which leadership type should take on the change agent role for performance management. As revealed in the earlier discussion in this chapter, it appears that this role has been assumed by those classified as academic manager. How effective they have performed this role remains questionable.

The final suggestion derived from the models is that that it is essential to get academics involved in the change design process in order to secure their commitment to the change. In the study of how to improve the application of performance indicators for Australian universities, Taylor (2001) affirms the importance of obtaining input from those affected by the change. In making the transition to a new university environment, Doring (2002) identifies three possible types of responses from academics: "an enthusiastic commitment to change their role in response to the university's changing demands; with sombre enthusiasm, attempt to change through partial involvement in the change process in responding to institutional pressure and their own self-awareness of the need for future survival; and adamantly committed to the status quo but becoming disillusioned as they see others making a successful transition" (p. 143). Getting academics involved in the design of performance management process may secure the buy in from the latter two groups.

2.6   Conclusion and Significance of this Study

This chapter has reviewed the pertinent literature in the areas of definition of performance management, effectiveness of performance management, the role of managers in the performance management process, the impact of performance management on academics' working lives, and how to improve performance management.

The synthesis of previous findings and perspectives suggests that it is a challenge to implement performance management in the higher education sector. The

lack of a precise definition of performance management, along with the outcomes of a discrepancy between rhetoric and reality, creates the issues of confusion and scepticism regarding the purposes of performance management. Compounding these issues is the uncertainty about whether clear goals can be formulated with appropriate performance measures to capture all the facets of an academic's work, the effectiveness of financial incentives in directing academics' commitment to the goals; and the ability of academic managers to perform the role as a change agent to manage the performance management process given their continued involvement in teaching and research. Based on the experience arising from managerialism in higher education, the literature findings seem to indicate a paradoxical view of the impacts of performance management on the working lives of academics. While the managerial control aspects of performance management may alienate academics, the literature provides evidence that the introduction of performance measures could create opportunities for academics to reprofessionalise their identity. This dichotomy, together with the following concerns about methodological soundness of some previous studies justifies the need to conduct this research study.

Regarding methodology, there is a lack of previous research examining the application of performance management to the higher education institutions in the UK. Many previous studies that focus on performance management have been conducted in the context of school environment in the UK (Reeves et al., 2002; Haynes et al., 2002; Brown, 2005; Mardsen, 2000; Luntley, 2000) or the Australian education sector (Taylor, 2001; Stilwell, 2003; Down et al., 1999). The applicability of these findings to higher education in the UK is questionable as contextual differences may generate a different conclusion. Furthermore, for those studies and perspectives that are pertinent to higher education in the UK, their focus is limited to either managerialism (Miller, 1991; Willmott, 1995; Wilson, 1991; Nixon, 1997) or performance appraisal (Townley, 1993; Findlay & Newton, 1998; Shelley, 1999; Rutherford, 1998; Haslam et al., 1992). In addition, the lack of a focus on all components of performance management raises a concern about the validity of the findings provided by these studies.

Second, the previous research is incomplete. While the literature has provided an extensive discussion on the appropriateness of using the RAE as a measure it also points out the importance of capturing all facets of academics' work in order to make

the system work (Talib, 2003; Elton, 2004; Taylor, 2001). The previous research does not provide much knowledge on how to assess other performance dimensions of academic work such as administration and teaching. This missing knowledge is critical to determine whether performance management can adequately recognise the full contribution of academics.

Third, previous research studies may be biased. The literature findings reveal that most academic managers have a strong belief in their right to manage other academics and have a clear conception of their role in performance management based on the findings of three studies conducted by Prichard and Willmott (1996), Deem et al. (2004) and Henkel (2002). This knowledge, however, could be one-sided due to the findings of these studies being based on interviews with academic managers themselves. Thus the findings only reflect their viewpoints on what they need to perform, thereby leaving a gap in experience and views from those who are subject to performance review at lower levels in the hierarchy. While Barry et al. (2001) attempt to fill this gap, their study focuses on the experiences of managerialism instead of being confined to performance management. To what extent have academic managers been involved in the performance management process and how effective they have performed their job remain questionable.

The main purpose of this study is to fill the above research gaps. It aims to conduct an in-depth research study to seek academics' perceptions and experiences of performance management, with a specific focus in one department of a British university. The findings of this study will help confirm whether the concerns about the term performance management and the effectiveness of the performance management process identified by the literature review will be reproduced in the context of a British university. Another contribution of this research study is to address the paradoxical views on how academics respond to performance management as revealed by the literature review. Finally, the findings of this study will yield additional insight into the future direction of performance management with specific focus on what needs to be done in order to improve the effectiveness of the system in the university context. Chapter 3, which follows, will set forth the research methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 <u>**Introduction**</u>

This research study focuses on providing an in-depth account of academics' perspectives on performance management in the context of higher education in the UK. As discussed in Chapter 2, the literature review reveals that performance management is a complex and controversial practice and is gaining attention in the higher education sector. However, no known in-depth study has been conducted to examine the impacts of this system on the working lives of academics in the UK. The design of this research centres on academics in one case study department of a British university with an aim to generate comprehensive and contextual information to address the following five research questions:

1. How do academic participants perceive the purposes and values of the performance management systems?
2. How do academic participants view the effectiveness of current performance management processes in the department?
3. How do academic participants perceive the impact of academic managers on their work performance?
4. How do academic participants respond to the process, measures and outcomes involved in operating the performance management system?
5. What do academic participants think is an effective performance management system?

As the study aimed to discuss sensitive issues regarding individuals' perceptions and values, the choice of appropriate research methodologies was essential in creating the right environment and to gain the information required. This chapter will first discuss the methodological philosophy adopted for this study, followed by the research design, which covers the boundaries of the study and the processes for data collection and analysis. The trustworthiness and methodological limitations of this study as well as ethics involved will be addressed in the final part of this chapter.

3.1   Rationale for the Methodology

While there are various techniques available when developing a research plan, many of these choices are tied to different philosophical positions adopted by the researcher (Easterby-Smith et al., 1994). Choice of research philosophy therefore was the first decision to be made.

In general, there are two main theoretical approaches to educational research, each with a different epistemological basis (Cohen & Manion, 1998). One is positivist methodology, which is based on a scientific view and emphasises that research adopts the methods and procedures of the natural or physical sciences. The other methodology is an interpretive perspective, which takes a very different view about the nature of reality and argues that a conventional scientific view does not suit an investigation of the social world (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989; Bassey, 1998).

Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) and Huysament (1997) point out that the key differences between these two approaches lie in their epistemological assumptions, what researchers believe the nature of social reality to be and how they establish their basis of knowledge. The positivist approach takes a position that "the world is rational and there is a reality 'out there' which exists whether it is observed or not, irrespective of who observes it" (Bassey, 1998, p. 42). This belief is built on the assumptions that people live in a relatively stable, uniform, and coherent world (Gay & Airasian, 2000), and thus the laws governing the events and phenomena in this world are considered to be stable and predictable. By applying this viewpoint, "positivists assume that human behaviour is predictable, caused by, and subject to, both internal pressures and external forces" (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989, p. 18). This implies that once the laws governing human behaviour are correctly observed and identified (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989), human actions can be predicted through correct scientific methods of observation and analysis (Garrick, 1999). Underpinning this assumption, the research goal of a positivist approach is to discover existing facts and establish their causality (Easterby-Smith et al., 1994; Hara, 1995). The research method used in this approach is quantitative in nature, using various statistical techniques and standard procedures to gather facts and measure how patterns occur (Johnson, 1994).

In contrast, interpretive researchers argue that the social world is complex, consisting of people who have different perceptions of reality and who constantly construct and reconstruct the realities of their own lives (Bassey, 1999). Because of individual differences, interpretive researchers believe that there are multiple realities and multiple interpretations 'out there', not just one as advocated by positivists. Building on this view of reality, this approach holds that "all human life is experienced and indeed constructed from a subjective point of view and that social research should seek to elicit the 'meaning' of events and phenomena from the point of view of participants" (Johnson, 1994, p. 7). By adopting this approach, the research goal is to interpret the complexities embedded in human experiences and seek an understanding of their meanings and significance (Berry, 1998). Given that these human experiences are shaped and grounded by individual contextual backgrounds (Ebbs, 1996), it is critical to seek understanding of the meanings of the human experiences in the place where they are found. In this regard, the research methods adopted by interpretive researchers are qualitative in nature, focusing on a small number of individuals. Collection of data is largely through observation of human interactions and their participation in activities, and by interviewing stakeholders. While the size of sample would normally raise a concern about generalizability, this qualitative approach generates rich and detailed data that yield greater understanding of human behaviour in relation to the phenomenon under investigation. Indeed, generalizability ceases to be the main objective of such research.

The purpose of this research study is to understand the academics' perspectives on and experiences of the performance management system from a holistic perspective. As revealed from the literature review, existing knowledge is incomplete with respect to the impact of performance management on the working lives of academics in the university context. This study strives to discover how each of the performance management processes affects a selected group of academics based on their real-life experiences within a British university context. The interpretive approach is consistent with the primary goal of this study, which is exploratory in nature and inclusive of context. Strauss and Corbin (1990) note that one of the advantages of interpretive research is to uncover little known phenomena and explore intricate details of individuals' lives. According to Nicholson (1996), to study teacher thinking systematically, the researcher must uncover the inner world of teachers, that is, the way

they perceive, judge, and conceptualise the performance management system. To obtain this level of information, the interpretive approach, by its nature, is the appropriate method to collect the critical data for this research study. Hammersley (2000) echoes this view and points out that "teaching operates in contexts of having high levels of multidimensionality, immediacy and unpredictability" (p. 396). The knowledge of most teachers about their job is tacit, which may be below their level of consciousness. The qualitative methods of data collection used by the interpretive approach could extract this level of knowledge by finding ways of talking about the tacit knowledge of teachers. Given the confusion and scepticism about performance management, the interpretive approach enables the researcher to probe the concept and aids the respondents to think consciously of their responses. Another function of the interpretive approach postulated by Hammersley is "appreciative capacity". The interpretive approach seeks to understand people's behaviour within the context in which it occurs, identify their responses to change, and the reasons why they have arisen. This information is particularly important for this study, when exploring the potential reactions of academics to the implementation of performance management, which represents a significant organisational change for higher education.

3.2 **Research Design**

Research design is about organising research activities to effectively obtain the type of data required to answer research questions. These activities include assembling, organising, and integrating information to produce a desired end product (Merriam, 1998). Details of the rationale for the chosen boundaries of this study, methods of data collection, and data analysis processes will be discussed in the following section.

3.21 Case Study

The 'case study' is frequently used in qualitative research to define a boundary around the study (Punch, 1998; Stake, 1998). Merriam (1998) states that "it is the nature of the problem to be investigated that provides a major means for setting boundaries" (p. 46). In selecting the case, it is important to ensure that the chosen boundary contains a phenomenon that is deemed important and vital for this study

(Stake, 1988). In addition, according to Merriam (1998), the chosen case should be characterised by four unique features. It should be particularistic to focus on the phenomenon under investigation to reveal a holistic view of the situation; descriptive to produce a rich "thick" description of the phenomenon; heuristic to provide readers with insight into the phenomenon to stimulate their interests to conduct further investigation; and inductive to offer opportunities for recovery of new relationships, concepts, and understanding.

Another boundary decision that needs to be made for this study is the number of cases to be studied. Yin (2003) points out a single-case design can allow researchers to investigate phenomena in depth to provide rich description and a greater understanding. Multiple case designs, on the other hand, will allow cross-case analysis and comparison, and the investigation of a particular phenomenon in diverse settings (Yin, 2003; Darke et al., 1998). Yin (2003) posits that a single-case design is a common practice for doing case studies and is justifiable under five conditions: when the case represents a critical test of existing theory, or a unique circumstance, or a typical case, or the case serves a revelatory or longitudinal purpose. Other practical issues that impact the design and the scope of a case study are the resources available to the researcher (Darke et al., 1998) and accessibility to the information. In selecting the case, Stake (1994) states that his preferred approach is to choose one from which "we feel we can learn the most" (Stake, 1994, p. 243). This indicates that Stake's selection criteria holds that taking the case that is most accessible and the one that offers the greatest potential for learning is optimal, as opposed to one that achieves representativeness.

This case study was designed to examine the contemporary phenomenon associated with performance management in a British university and how academics perceive and experience this management practice in real-life contexts. There are almost 100 universities in the UK operating performance management systems and, in theory, any one of them could potentially be selected as the bounded system. In selecting the case, consideration was made to choose a university setting where performance management has been in place for a reasonable timeframe and its teachers have experience of how the system works. In addition, an older research-led university

was sought, where academics conformed to high research and publication profiles, and where performance management might be juxtaposed against a traditional academic ethos.

Thus the University chosen for this case study is one of the older universities in the UK, serving approximately 18,000 students from over 150 countries. It is a strong, research-active university with over 90% of staff actively engaged in high quality research and has consistently attained a high ranking on teaching quality from the QAA and the National Student Survey. In addition, the case University is the UK's largest provider of distance learning education after the Open University. The commitment to deliver high-quality teaching and create research that is of international significance is explicitly stated in the University's mission statement and its human resources strategy with a specific focus on improving the already established performance management process in compliance with HEFCE's guidelines. It is conceivable that research in this setting will potentially generate rich information on how academics perceive the effectiveness of the programme and how they experience the impact of any resultant changes on their working lives as well as the contextual information necessary to answer the research questions.

3.22   Unit of Analysis

The case University is structured into five faculties: Science, Social Sciences, Arts, Medicine and Biological Sciences, and Law. The School of Education, which is part of the faculty of Social Sciences, was chosen as the unit of analysis for this case study for two reasons. First, the School's set up and its mission in both research and teaching reflect the unique characteristics of the case University. Over the 45-year history of the School, it has built up an excellent reputation for being in the forefront of educational research and the professional education of teachers is in line with the goals of the case University. To promote a strong culture of research among its academics and maintain a clear focus on research issues, the School has created four specialist "Academic Research Groups"– Pedagogy & Professional Practice, Educational Leadership & Management, Social Inclusion & Education for Citizenship, and English Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics – to plan and monitor research activities. With respect to teaching, the School not only provides campus-based programmes up to

the doctorate level, but it is also active in providing distance learning programmes both nationally and overseas. Indeed, the School is one of largest providers of distance learning programmes within the University. The history of the School and its characteristics reflect the values of the case University and offer rich information to address the research questions.

Another reason for choosing the School of Education was the possibility and ease of gaining access to a site where, the researcher, could spend time gathering the required in-depth data (Stake, 1994). The researcher is a student of the EdD programme in the School and thus it provided him a unique opportunity to gain access to academic staff for data collection and documents related to the performance management policy and processes.

3.23 <u>Sampling</u>

Within the chosen research site, the next decision was the selection of the participants. This study was oriented to exploring the impacts of performance management from a participant perspective, thus the sampling decision regarding "who to look at or talk with" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27) in order to generate the required information for the research questions was critical to the study design.

Qualitative inquiry typically adopts a purposeful sampling approach for selecting cases that can provide rich information relating to the central issues of the study (Patton, 1990; Punch, 1998). Miles and Huberman (1994) explain that qualitative samples tend to be more purposive than random because "social processes have a logic and coherence that random sampling of events or treatments usually reduces to uninterpretable sawdust" (p. 36). In other words, the sample in qualitative inquiry typically is selected in a deliberate way based on the purpose of the research questions (Punch, 1998) and the assumption that the chosen one(s) can provide the most relevant information (Patton, 1990). Patton (1990) further adds that "there are no rules for the sample in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of inquiry, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources" (p. 184).

Essentially, this research design adopted a strategy of purposeful sampling to focus on sources that would provide the most pertinent views of performance management. The researcher attempted to balance the breadth and the depth of information required by this study (Patton, 1990) and chose to put more weight on the depth of experiences from a smaller number of information-rich sources. As noted in Chapter 1, the chosen School of Education has about 42 full-time academic staff. The composition of academic staff consists of four professors, 13 reader/senior lecturers, and 25 lecturers. While the targeted participants are all working for the same School, their experiences or views may be tempered by a range of contextual factors such as their years of service with the institution and level of position. To understand the phenomenon that cuts across different characteristics of the academic staff, the researcher adopted a purposeful, maximum-variation sampling approach in an attempt to elicit a range of perspectives regarding themes, processes, and interactions related to performance management (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990).

To achieve sample variation, the researcher first identified the targeted number to sample from each level of position with an initial intention of having two professors, three to four senior lectures and five to six lecturers. With assistance from a senior academic and an administrative assistant in the School, an email communication was sent out to all academics in the School inviting their participation in the study. The communication spelled out the purposes of the research study, emphasised that data would be treated in confidence and reiterated that participation was on a voluntary basis. A total of 12 academic staff from the School of Education volunteered to participate in the survey. The composition of participants from each position level was very close to the targeted number. Participants offered a wide range of years of service and levels of positions to reflect a variety of perspectives and experiences. The characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The characteristics of the participants

Grade	Years of Service
Professor	< 3 years
Professor	< 3 years
Senior Lecture/Reader	> 10 years
Senior Lecturer/Reader	> 10 years
Senior Lecturer/Reader	> 10 years
Senior Lecturer/Reader	> 10 years
Lecturer	> 10 years
Lecturer	5-10 years
Lecturer	5-10 years
Lecturer	< 3 years
Lecturer	< 3 years
Lecturer	< 3 years

3.3 Methods of Data Collection

3.31 Choice of Methods

Qualitative approaches to data collection usually involve direct interaction with individuals on a one-to-one basis or in a group setting. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) identified five different methods used by qualitative researchers for data collection that include interviews, observation, cultural artifacts, visual methods, and personal experience. According to Gay and Airasian (2000), of these five methods, the most commonly used techniques are observation and interview.

The observational method can take many forms in qualitative research, depending on the involvement of the researchers (Gay & Airasian, 2000). Their involvement can range from being a participant observer who fully engages in the activities being studied to an external observer who just watches the activities without direct participation (Gay & Airasian, 2000; Patton, 1990). Researchers using an external observer approach record how people behave in a given situation with minimal interaction/conversation with the people in the group being studied. In contrast, the research interview is designed as a purposeful interaction and the data is collected through conversation with the people by asking them to talk about their lives as they relate to the study topic. The conversation is normally initiated by the interviewer with a specific focus on obtaining relevant information for the research study (Gay & Airasian, 2000; Cohen & Manion, 1994).

Compared with the research interview, the observational method seems to have an edge in two areas according to Patton (1990). First, it is relatively easier than a research interview to access the settings because it is unobtrusive and does not require direct interaction with participants. Second, it can ascertain information on sensitive topics that the participant may be unwilling to provide in an interview. However, the major concern of this approach is that it cannot observe everything, particularly information that relates to personal feelings, values, thoughts, concerns, intentions, and past events. In contrast, according to Whipp (1998), an interviewing approach provides a means for accessing these inner perspectives.

In this study, the individual interview was adopted as a primary data collection tool, with an aim to obtain sufficient information to produce a thick description of the phenomenon. Whipp (1998) suggests that an interview is an effective means of accessing the experiences and subjective view of respondents. The flexibility of an interview also enables the researcher to open up new dimensions of a problem or to discover clues that connect its different elements. Gay and Airasian (2000) further add that interviews permit researchers to obtain important information that includes past events, experiences, values, interests, feelings, and concerns that cannot be easily obtained by other data collection methods.

In addition, this study also collected documentary data in the form of policy papers, memorandum, reports, et cetera. Yin (2003) points out that documents play an explicit role in any data collection for case studies. The specific values they provide include verifying information that is provided during the interview, providing other specific details to corroborate information from other sources such as interviews, and making inferences from documents.

3.32   The Interview

One of the challenges faced by the researcher was to determine the structure of the interview to be used for the research study. There are various types of interviewing approaches, for example, structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Johnson, 1994; Cohen & Manion, 1994; Patton, 1990). At one extreme, an interview can be highly

structured, one in which the questions and procedures are well-organised in advance, leaving little room for the interviewers to change the sequence and the wording of the questions. The other extreme is an unstructured approach, one that does not involve any specific types or order of questions. These are casual conversations that provide the greatest opportunity for respondents to express their own views and values (Whipp, 1998; Johnson, 1994). Straddling between these two approaches is the semi-structured approach. This is conducted according to an interview guide that focuses on the central theme of the research study (Kvale, 1996). The researcher adopting this approach will develop a list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview. As pointed out by Patton (1990), "each approach has strengths and weaknesses, and each serves a somewhat different purpose" (Patton, 1990, p. 280). The choice therefore depends on the nature of the research study.

The purpose of this research study is to understand the experiences of teachers in detail and in sufficient depth. According to Holstein and Gubrium (1997), the stock of knowledge embodied in respondents' minds will not necessarily come out easily by apt questioning. In response to the questions, they may deliberately provide a "socially desirable" answer in order to please the interviewer or inadvertently omit certain relevant information due to faulty memory, according to Fontanna and Frey (2000). Holstein and Gubrium (1997) further add that the meaning and knowledge of human experiences are created through the collaborative efforts between the respondents and the interviewer during their interactions in an interview situation. The interviewer's role in this context is to activate the respondents' stock of knowledge, stimulate their interpretive capabilities, help them to broaden their thinking on the subject and provide an environment conductive to the production of the meanings that address research issues (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997). Kvale (1996) asserts that the research interview needs to be structured in a format similar to an everyday conversation in order to facilitate this meaning-making process. To meet this spontaneous requirement while ensuring the key research themes can be consistently captured in each interview, this research study adopted a semi-structured interviewing approach.

Accordingly, the interview schedule was developed for eliciting information and in-depth probing to ensure all five specific research questions of this study would be

addressed. The interview questions, as listed in Appendix I, were created based on the literature to help participants to focus their thoughts on:

- goals and objectives of performance management,
- key components of performance management,
- the effectiveness of each process,
- the concept of academic managers,
- feelings about the whole process, and
- future direction for improvement.

Examples of the interview questions for the above six themes are: for the theme "goals of performance management", the question was: What do you think are the purposes of performance management?; for the theme "key components of performance management", the question was: What arrangements should form part of performance management?; for the theme "the effectiveness of each process", the question was: Can you describe the process of setting your individual goals and standards?; for the theme "academic managers", the question was: Do you feel the assigned reviewer is qualified or adequately prepared for measuring and managing your performance?; for the theme "feelings about the whole process", the question was: How does the performance management system affect the quality as well as output of your work?; and for the theme "future direction for improvement", the question was: What changes need to be made to the current system in order to make it equitable, comprehensive, unbiased, and motivational?

During the interview, this schedule was only used as a guide in order to maintain an environment conducive to a free flowing exchange of information. Neither the sequence nor the wording of the questions as listed in the schedule was rigidly followed. Appropriate probing was also adopted in order to obtain more in-depth information. During the interviews, respondents sometimes gave closed answers to some of the open questions. One noted example is that when seeking views on the process of setting individual goals and standards, the following probing questions were used to help some respondents to think more deeply about the issue in hand: When does it take place?; Who is normally assigned as the reviewer of your performance?; How

would you describe the process of reaching an agreement on the goals and related performance standards with the reviewer?; and Is it through collaborative effort or negotiation?

Most participants were interviewed twice during the data collection period from October 2006 to February 2007. The individual interviews were conducted in either the office of each participant or a conference room, and the duration of each interview ranged from 45 to 60 minutes. All interviews were audio taped with the consent of the participants. When conducting the interviews, the researcher was very cautious about building an effective interviewing relationship to facilitate the discussion, to avoid projecting assumptions on to respondents (Whipp, 1998), and not to make comments or provide leading questions to bias the interview (Cohen & Manion, 1994). The questioning techniques adopted by the researcher included repeating clear questions to check responses, asking a single question at a time, using truly open-ended questions, asking experience/behaviour questions before opinion/feeling questions, sequencing the questions from general to specific, probing and using follow-up questions, clarifying and extending the meanings to avoid misinterpretations, avoiding sensitive questions, encouraging a free rein but maintaining control, and establishing rapport (Berry, 1999).

3.33 Documentary Sources

To seek an understanding of the contexts of the case University and its current performance management process/system, a documentary review was conducted. For this reason, the researcher obtained copies of the University mission statement, the strategic plan, the human resources management and development strategy, the University's research strategy, the annual review guidelines including a form, the merit award programme, the peer-observation scheme and the appraisal scheme.

While these documents can furnish valuable evidence to confirm the information obtained from the interviews, there is invariably a concern about whether such documentary evidence can guarantee objectivity, consistency, or even accuracy, as evidenced in the following ways. As pointed out by Atkinson and Coffey (2004), "documents are 'social facts' in that they are produced, shared and used in socially organised ways. They are not, however, transparent representations of organisational

65

routines, decision-making processes or professional diagnoses." (p.58). This view is shared by McCulloch (2004) who warns that some of the government documents available on the website tend to be written in the way to persuade the reader to accept a particular policy or set of policies, and even their underlying philosophies instead of reflecting realities. Given that "every document was written for some specific purpose and some specific audience" (Yin, 2003; p. 87), Scott (1990) asserts that it is critical that researchers should carefully assess the document before accepting the evidence using quality control criteria such as authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning.

When extracting documentary information for this study, the researcher was mindful of the above risks of being misled by such evidence and thus took several precautionary steps. These included establishing the authenticity of the document to ensure the version used for review was correct, the texts within the document were consistent in relation to the context in which it was produced, and the evidence was genuine and derived from the original source. In addition, understanding was sought of who were the implied readers and authors in order to determine whether the evidence available in the documents was applicable to the case study; and linked documents were searched to ensure that the evidence was credible, consistent and free from error (Scott, 1990; McCulloch, 2004; Atkinson & Coffey, 2004). Furthermore, the researcher only used the evidence provided by the documents as a secondary source of information. In any case where discrepancies were found between the documents and interview data, the researcher would go back to the participants for verification. These steps further mitigated the risks of using documentary source.

3.4   <u>Data Analysis</u>

The in-depth interviews along with the document review generated a large amount of text. In order to derive meaningful and useful results from this massive amount of data, it is important that the material under scrutiny is analysed in a methodical manner (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Various techniques on how to conduct qualitative data analysis have been well documented in the literature (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Punch, 1998), and they all share the common objective of identifying

themes and concepts embedded in the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that the data analysis process involves three activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion. The first step involves "selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data that appears in the written-up field notes" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10). Once the data is condensed, the data is displayed in an organised format that permits conclusion drawing and action taking. The final step of the process is to discern any patterns and common themes that emerge from the data; to determine any deviations and interrelationship; and to assess if there is a need to revise any research questions based on the findings. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), these three activities together with the data collection process are interwoven and will take place on a continuous, iterative, and cyclical basis.

To facilitate data analysis, coding and memoing are typically used to organise data (Patton, 1990). The coding process involves putting tags, names, or labels against pieces of the data to facilitate the search for themes/patterns (Patton, 1990). Two approaches can be adopted to develop the coding framework. One is to use priori codes that are developed before examining the data. These are derived from theories or the literature (Weston et al., 2001; Attride-Stirling, 2001). The other approach is to use inductive codes that are developed by the researcher through examining the data (Punch, 1998). For conducting thematic analysis, two types of hierarchical codes–descriptive codes and inferential codes – are typically used (Punch, 1998). The descriptive codes or first-level codes or basic themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001) are used to dissect the collected data into text segments to provide a basis for the second-level, higher-order coding. The inferential codes or second-level codes or organising themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001) are used for grouping the broad categories created by the first-level codes into a smaller number of overarching themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). These second-level codes summarise the principal assumptions of the first-order codes to make them more abstract and more apparent for revealing what is going on in the texts. Through the process of reorganising and labelling, the second-level codes will form a basis to derive the global categories or themes, which "encompass the principal metaphors in the data as a whole" (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 389).

Throughout the entire process of data analysis, memoing can be used to document any initial thoughts, themes, or sense of the data as they strike the researcher.

These notes are useful because they help identify topics or issues that the researcher needs to explore in more detail and what might be important to focus on in the data analysis (Gay & Airasian, 2000; Punch, 1998).

The data analysis process for this study started with transcribing every interview from the audiotapes to produce full transcripts of all the interview data, followed by the two-level coding processes to identify themes and patterns. To identify patterns, themes, and connections between categories, the constant comparative approach was adopted by comparing one segment of data with others. The comparison continued until the data collected from each interview had been compared with all others. This conceptualisation process was augmented by negative case analysis. During the data comparison process, any identified negative cases that contradicted an emerging category were analysed to determine if a new way of organising the data was required or a continuous search for data to support the new thinking was necessary (Patton, 1990). In addition, the documentary sources were also used to reinforce or contradict the data obtained through the semi-structured interviews. To illustrate how the coding process was conducted in this research study, the analysis of the interviewing data for the research question "What do academic participants think is an effective performance management system?" is taken as an example in the following discussion.

3.41   First-Level Codes

The researcher carefully read through the transcribed data, line by line, and divided the data into meaningful analytical units by assigning broad categories (Punch, 1998) to the information and concepts related to the research questions. These preliminary codes were developed based on both the researcher's knowledge of the literature and an analysis of the data. For example, the code "Appraiser" applied to vivo text such as "We need a highly motivated manager to look after people". The code "Teamwork" was assigned to vivo text such as "The performance targets should be set based on teamwork". To further refine these broad categories, the researcher examined the original text data by looking for properties that could give more meaning to the categories as well as any relationship between the properties. As a result of this refinement, the researcher identified 15 refined first-level codes. Examples on how refined codes are derived from some of vivo texts are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: An extract of first-level coding process

Vivo Response	First-Level Code	Refined First-Level Code
Need to integrate various components of performance management	System	Require an integrated system
Need a system to provide evidence on how people are performing their job	System	Understand how people spend their time at work
The targets should be negotiated and followed through	Goal setting	Goals should be negotiated
We need a highly motivated manager to look after people	Appraiser	Require a dedicated personnel to manage the performance management process
The system should not have any impact on the current collegial culture	Culture	Maintain the collegial culture
The system needs to be totally transparent and the consequences should be predictable.	System	Increase transparency of the system to ensure people understand how the system works
Focus on engaging people at work	Employee motivation	Promote self-control
The performance target can be set based on team work.	Team work	Promote team work
A more structured management team with clearly defined accountability	Management structure	Require adequate management structure
The current system is unfair due to the workload is not evenly allocated.	Work allocation	Provide academics with equal opportunities for research work
A balanced system is very important	Goal setting	Recognise all facets of academics' work
Need a consultation process to seek agreement from academics on the chosen performance measures	System	Promote a collaborative decision making process
Require effective leadership in managing the system	Appraiser	Require effective leadership skills
I am not a big fan of monetary rewards and I am intrinsically motivated	Rewards	Focus on non-monetary rewards to minimise divisive effects
The performance measures adopted by the system should put equal weight on teaching and research	Performance measures	The reward programs should recognise teaching contributions as much as they values research

3.42 Second-Level Codes

Using inductive and deductive processes and a comparative analysis of coded data, the 15 first-level codes were organised into clusters that would represent broader, more abstract concepts. This organising process resulted in seven second-level codes, which included "Collegial Culture", "Able Leaders", "Organisational Structure", "Effective Design", "Equal Treatment Between Teaching and Research", "Transparency of the System" and "Equitable Allocation of Work". For example, the code "Collegial Culture" included the first-level codes such as, "Focus on non-monetary rewards", "Goals should be negotiated", "Promote a collaborative decision making process", "Promote self control", "Maintain the collegial culture" and "Promote teamwork".

3.43 Categories

By using the same iterative process in developing the two-level codes to increase the understanding of the phenomenon, the seven second-level codes were further grouped into four broader categories on the basis of related concept context. These four themes are: "Culture", "Effective leadership", "Equity", and "Structured system". Their relationship can be summarised by the following statement: "The effective system requires a more structured approach by integrating various components together and effective leadership skills to manage and own the performance management process to address equity concerns about ensuring an equal opportunity for academics to get on research work while maintaining the collegial culture operating in the case University". Table 3 shows how the some of first-level and second-level codes coalesced into the categories.

Table 3: An extract of how the categories were developed

Category	Second-Level Codes	First-Level Codes
Culture	Collegial Culture	• Focus on non-monetary rewards • Goals should be negotiated • Promote a collaborative decision making process • Promote self control • Maintain the collegial culture • Promote team work
Effective Leadership	Able Leaders	• Require a dedicated personnel • Require effective leadership skills
Structured System	Organisational Structure	• Require adequate management structure
	Effective Design	• Recognise all key facets of academic's work • Require an integrated system
Equity	Equitable treatment between teaching and research	• The reward programs should recognise teaching contributions as much as they values research
	Equitable Allocation of work	• Understand how people spend their time at work • Address work allocation issue to ensure an equal opportunity for research work
	Transparency of the system	• Increase transparency of the system to ensure people understand how the system works

3.5   Trustworthiness

To enhance the confidence in the research findings, the design of this study aims to meet the four criteria of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Morrow, 2005; Rodwell & Byers, 1997).

To enhance the credibility of the study, the data collection process was designed to ensure that the researcher would spend sufficient time in the field to obtain the required depth of data from participants as well as seek understanding of organisational contexts. During the data collection phase, most participants were interviewed twice to ensure an adequate level of information was collected. In addition, participants were

given an opportunity to read the interview transcripts for verifying the accuracy of information collected during the interview (Morrow, 2005). To further enhance credibility, the researcher cross-validated the findings between the interviews and the documentary review to make the findings and conclusion more convincing and accurate (Yin, 2003).

According Rodwell and Byers (1997), transferability refers to the extent to which the readers can apply the findings to other contexts. This research study has created a rich, "thick" description of the phenomenon and provided information about the researcher, context, research processes, profile of participants, and the researcher relationship with participants. This level of information aimed to help readers decide whether the findings of this study can be applied to other contexts (Morrow, 2005).

To achieve the dependability of this study, the researcher kept an audit trail documenting all methodological decisions and changes, details of research activities, data analysis processes, emerging themes, and categories used (Morrow, 2005). Table 4 illustrates one example of how the data analysis process was documented for audit purposes. This level of information aimed to provide readers with the opportunity to make judgments about whether they would arrive at conclusions similar to those of the researcher using the same research process.

Table 4: Documentation on how the category "Culture" was developed

| Vivo Response | Date Created March 31, 2007 | | | |
	First-Level Codes	Refined First-Level Codes	Second-Level Codes	Category
The system should not have any impact on the current collegial culture	Culture	Maintain collegial culture	Collegial culture	Culture
The system should not develop a blame culture				
The system will not create a significant salary gap in order to keep team spirit	Team work	Promote team work		
Create a semi-autonomous work groups				

3.6   Personal Standpoint of the Researcher

The research design aims to enhance the confirmability by demonstrating that the findings are grounded in the data (Morrow, 2005; Rodwell & Byers, 1997). As the researcher for this study is an instrument in the qualitative inquiry (Patton, 1990), one of the major challenges is how to manage and minimise the biases and assumptions that come from personal experiences or interactions with participants (Patton, 1990; Morrow, 2005) or the subject matter.

The study was conducted in the setting where the researcher was an EdD student. This raises a question concerning the researcher's relationships with participants − that is, student/teacher relationships − and whether they would have a 'shadow' or 'halo' effect on how participants would normally behave. Arguably, if the study conducted by the researcher was viewed as 'practitioner research' on behalf of the School (Fraser 1997) or if the researcher was accepted as a 'native' by the participants of the study due to the established relationship (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007), the researcher might be considered an insider and thus two potential methodological concerns could be created. The first concern is about the perceived role of the researcher as a practitioner in the organisation and how the researcher might use the data apart from the research study. This might prevent the participants from being honest thereby affecting the quality, particularly the accuracy, of data obtained (Fraser, 1997). The second challenge is related to changes in relationships, meaning that people were no longer just co-members of the same institution, but became the researcher and the researched. According to DeLyser (2001) and Seidman (1991), it is difficult to interview friends and co-workers in a close-knit group with an assumed shared knowledge. Instead of exploring assumptions and seeking clarity about the questions posed to them, the participants tend to assume that the researcher knows their meaning and thus have a tendency to provide brief and implied responses. There is also the possibility that familiarity tends to lead people to either withhold information, or to impart information they think the researcher wants to have (Mercer, 2007).

However, since the researcher was also a postgraduate student in the School, there are mitigating circumstances that mean he was not a clear insider researcher.

While conducting the study part-time, he was resident in Canada and had no face-to-face tutorial relationships with the participants of the study. Apart from the ease of access that being a student afforded him, the researcher had no personal experiences of, nor was he in a position to influence, the phenomenon under investigation. Based on this remote relationship, it is plausible to argue that the researcher would not be viewed as a complete "insider" from the perspectives of the 12 participants involved in the study. What might have potentially made the participants feel insecure about the relationship with the researcher was their possible association with the researcher's supervisor. However, the researcher was able to assure participants of confidentiality at the outset of each interview and recorded and reported data using codes for participants to protect their identity. The supervisor was not informed of the identity of participants.

By contrast, given that the researcher had little prior knowledge, insight and experiences of the phenomenon at the case School, and might therefore be considered as much of an "outsider" as an "insider", Bridges (2001) raises two other concerns from an "outsider" perspective. The first concern is about whether the researcher can accurately represent the experiences of insiders/participants involved in the study. Another issue is related to whether the researcher could import damaging frameworks of understanding based on his/her personal views. To address these two concerns, the researcher committed to fulfil his primary responsibility as a researcher to "seek honestly, sensitively and with humility to understand and represent the experience of a community to which he does not belong" (Bridges, 2001, p. 375). Furthermore, the researcher declared that he does have his own personal view about performance management drawn from his human resources background in the business sector and acknowledged that he would take all the necessary preventative steps to alert himself to any prejudices that he would bring to this research study. For this reason, a self-reflective journal was used to keep track of the researcher's "experiences, reactions, and emerging awareness of any assumptions or biases that come to the fore" (Morrow, 2005, p. 254). This information was referenced when conducting the data analysis to ensure that any personal bias was consciously considered or excluded. Furthermore, to enhance the confirmability, this study included participant quotes in the write-up to demonstrate that the findings are derived from the data instead of from the researcher's view only (Morrow, 2005).

3.7 <u>Methodological Limitations</u>

This single case may be seen to have limitations in terms of traditional concerns about generalizability. As discussed in the preceding section, the transferability is judged by the reader's perspective of the relevance of a given study to another context (Morrow, 2005; Patton, 1990). The choice of this approach is to seek holistic understanding of a particular contextual setting at the expense of external comparability rather than to generalize.

In qualitative inquiry, the researcher serves as the primary research instrument. As pointed out by Jansen and Peshkin (1992) "qualitative researchers, whether interviewing or in participant observation, are so palpably, inescapably present that they cannot delude themselves that who they are will not make a difference in the outcomes of their study" (p. 720). Given this, it is important to note that the researcher's view could potentially impact the study. While the researcher has acknowledged this concern and taken a number of preventive steps, as discussed in the preceding section, the risk of having another researcher with different skills and experiences using the same methodology to arrive at different conclusion cannot be eliminated.

Another concern is about the participants involved in the study who serve as the major sources of data. Their own individual experiences and biased views about performance management could impact the findings of this study. However, this concern has been mediated somewhat through the use of multiple sources of data to help overcome the problem.

The final methodological concern is related to the data collection techniques. While the chosen interviews and documentary analysis provided rich information about the performance management phenomenon, some interesting insights could not be revealed from these two methods alone. In the study of contemporary trends to individualise employment relations within the Australian coal industry, Connell et al. (2001) admit that while the semi-structured interview and document analysis generated rich data, more non-participant observation would have offered an additional means to confirm findings. This finding suggests that the expansion of the sources of data for triangulation could further enhance the validity of this research study.

3.8 Ethics

Committing to ethical responsibility is a primary concern of this research. In conducting the study, the following three key ethnical principles, as set out by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, 2006), have been followed:

1. Participation in the survey should be on a voluntary basis;
2. The participant will be informed fully about the purpose, methods, and intended possible use of the research findings; and
3. The confidentiality of information supplied by participants and the anonymity of respondents must be respected.

The targeted sample was accessed through voluntary sign up to participate in the survey. An overview of the research study was included in the invitation. During the interviewing sessions, all participants were informed again on the purpose of the study and assured that the researcher would keep the information in strict confidence and would only use the collected data or information for degree examination purposes.

The research topic involves sensitive issues such as the comments on academic managers and current performance management processes and associated recognition programmes. The anonymity of research participants and research data was protected and confidentiality was ensured in this study (Cohen & Manion, 1994). To achieve anonymity, the researcher disguised the names of participants as well as all other personal means of identification when reporting the findings. Special coding was also used for data collection and analysis worksheets to ensure that the identity of participants could not be revealed from any working papers.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodology adopted for this study, a qualitative, a single case study approach using semi-structured interviews and documentary sources as primary data gathering techniques. While the use of a single case for this study could

raise a methodological concern, this focus did not jeopardise the research process. Indeed, the research strategy adopted for this study has generated rich data to facilitate an in-depth and more nuanced analysis of the research issues under investigation. Because of this reason, the choice of an appropriate case is clearly more important than the number of cases involved for this research study. In addition, the preventive measures to limit potential researcher's bias provided some reassurance that the study would present the truth rather than the researcher's interpretation. The findings presented in Chapter 4 are the results from the application of this methodology.

CHAPTER 4

THE FINDINGS

4.0   Introduction

The purpose of this research was to investigate academics' perspectives on and experiences of performance management in a British university. The analysis of the information was focused around the following five key research questions:

1. How do academic participants perceive the purposes and values of the performance management systems?
2. How do academic participants view the effectiveness of current performance management processes in the department?
3. How do academic participants perceive the impact of academic managers on their work performance?
4. How do academic participants respond to the process, measures, and outcomes involved in operating the performance management system?
5. What do academic participants think is an effective performance management system?

A semi-structured interviewing approach was used to elicit the required information together with documentary analysis to confirm and supplement the findings. The data collected for analysis were coded and then organised under the key research question headings. Patterns and trends drawn from the interview questions have been gathered together to respond to the key research questions. The findings will be presented in a style with direct quotations from the interview data to reflect participants' perspectives. To protect the identity of participants, they have each been assigned a code. When referring to an individual participant in the third person, "he/she" has been deliberately used as a pronoun to disguise the gender status of the participant. This chapter starts with an outline of the participant coding system, followed by details on the research findings.

4.1   <u>Participant Coding System</u>

      The study involved a total of 12 academic participants. When reporting their responses, they were clustered into three groups to reflect their perspectives and viewpoints based on their tenure, career stage, and management roles at the School. The first group, titled 'cadre', included those who have just started their university career as teacher and were on probation at the time this study was conducted. The second group, labelled 'regular', comprised academics who have been with the University for more than five years. The final group, titled 'leadership', encompassed those academics who were considered as senior members with some leadership responsibilities within the School. Each participant was assigned a two-part code, which starts with two letters followed by a digit. The two letters represent the group in which the participant belonged and the digit is the individual participant's identification code. Below is the set of codes:

Cadre Group: CG1-3

Regular Group: RG1-3

Leadership Group- LG1-6

4.2   <u>How Do Academic Participants Perceive the Purposes and Values of the Performance Management Systems?</u>

      In this question, the researcher aimed to understand how academics perceive the concept of performance management. The interview questions were designed to seek the views of participants on the purposes of performance management and what components currently in place at the University are considered part of performance management.

<u>4.21 Purposes of Performance Management</u>

      When asked about the meaning and purposes of performance management, there were divergent views from the participants. In fact, three participants were confused by the term 'performance management' when the question was first posed and asked for clarification and elaboration before providing their views. The results of the data

analysis identified three themes as related to the purposes of performance management: goal-setting, professional development, and control of work allocation. The findings with regard to each of the three themes follow.

Goal-Setting

The most frequently cited reason for the development of performance management was to facilitate formulation and agreement of individual academic's annual performance goals. 10 participants provided this reason, one of whom elaborated that this process is about "setting targets, reviewing where you want to be, and making an action plan" (CG1). These targets, in the opinion of another participant, "should be tied to the job role as documented in the job description" (LG1) and "aligned with the University's objectives" suggested two other participants (CG1; CG2).

Another purpose of this target-setting process, asserted by two participants, was to provide a framework for the negotiation of performance standards. As pointed out by a senior academic member, "This goal-setting process enables you to negotiate with your supervisor what you would like to achieve in your career, taking into account the university's requirements" (LG1). His/Her view was echoed by another participant in the cadre group: "In the university's culture, performance management is about the negotiation between the line manager/managers and those managed, to set the targets" (CG1).

Furthermore, the target-setting exercises were considered a communication forum to enable individuals to provide feedback to the organisation. One participant put it,

> I think that performance management, through its target-setting process, aims to create a forum where a conversation in an opposite direction can take place to allow the person who is being managed to potentially reflect to the organisation about what they think are barriers that prevent them from doing the job properly (CG3).

Professional development

Five respondents felt that the purpose of performance management was for professional development. One academic member on regular term asserted that, "The performance management system is more geared for individual development" (RG3). Another participant in the same group added, "It is useful for an individual, helping them to achieve their own professional goals" (RG2). With this objective, "The system should be supportive and collegial", suggested another member (LG6).

Not surprisingly, this view was echoed by those academics in the cadre group. Two of them considered performance management as "a positive developmental process" (CG2; CG3) and believed one of its primary purposes was to help them to grow in their job, particularly during their probationary period, by "identifying future plans and intentions, and determining how they can develop further to address any deficiencies" (CG3).

Control of work allocation

In contrast to the professional development model, another obvious purpose of performance management perceived by participants among the various groups was control and monitoring. One senior academic used McGregor's theory "X" and "Y" to describe the purposes of performance management and pointed out that one aspect of performance management is about "managerial control in which the corporation sets out the requirements for employees to comply to" (LG3). He/She added, "It is a tool to police how employees perform their work in the form of surveillance". This managerial perspective implies that "performance management is about monitoring your performance in three main areas namely, research, teaching, and administration", according to CG1, and to ensure "you will work as effectively as possible" LG5 added. Another senior academic who concurred felt that performance management is to ensure "people's time is being used effectively on appropriate activities because their time is the important thing for the University now" (LG4).

4.22 <u>Key Components of Performance Management</u>

Building on the academics' perception of the purpose of introducing performance management, the researcher sought to find out what arrangements, processes, or policies currently in place in the University are considered as performance management based on participants' point of view. When this question was posed, not all respondents could provide immediate answers without probing. One respondent admitted that he/she was new to the University and has only limited knowledge about what systems were in operation at the University (CG3). Two participants in the leadership group claimed that there was no performance management system in the University, offering the following comments:

> I don't think this University has anything called performance management; certainly it is not within the School of Education (LG2).

> I don't get a great sense of performance management really. I do not feel there is a systematic system to monitor my performance. It is a mix between collegiality and formality. It is a relatively loose management structure (LG1).

After probing and discussion revolved around what arrangements currently in place could conceivably be considered as performance management, five thematic areas emerged that included appraisal, research monitoring, mentoring and probation, teaching evaluation, and rewards.

Appraisal scheme

The most frequently cited system was appraisal. Almost all participants, including those in the cadre group, could clearly articulate the appraisal process. As indicated in the University's policy statement, "The appraisal scheme forms a key element of the University Strategy Plan and its commitment to good management and staff development" (UoL, 2007e). This scheme operates on an annual cycle where the appraiser and appraisee will agree to appropriate objectives and targets arising from the discussion and review of any previously set objectives.

While almost all participants considered this system as part of performance management, they held a strong view that this process was designed for professional

development and not as a means for controlling or monitoring performance. As claimed by one academic in the leadership group, the conventional term "performance appraisal is not used in the University" (LG1). "The process adopted in the University is highly personalised, and to a certain extent it is advisory and supportive rather than a management tool", commented another participant in the same group (LG5). This view was also shared by participants in cadre and regular groups. They also saw the process as "a very personal thing" (CG3), with an objective to "assist people in their professional development rather than something to check on what people have done" (RG2). These responses seemed to be consistent with the intention of the University's appraisal scheme that aims to use this scheme as a means of developing the contribution of staff and engaging staff in the achievement of its strategic goals. The segregation of the appraisal scheme from the annual review with respect to promotion, re-grading, or the award of additional and discretionary elements reinforces its focus on professional development (UoL, 2007e).

Research monitoring process

Another frequently cited system was the research-monitoring process. Almost all participants spoke with pride about this scheme and felt the process was consonant with the School's commitment to "support and maintain high-quality research which gains the respect of the academic, policy-making, and practitioner-communities within the UK and internationally" (UoL, 2007f); and meet the RAE requirements (RG3; LG5). One participant characterised the process as another form of performance management (LG3) that "is a formalised process operating in parallel with appraisal" (LG1). Another participant in the same group described how this process works as follows:

> It is done through academic research groups; that the leader of each research group will meet with team members twice a year to look at different aspects of research and different activities. Not only can it monitor the research progress, but it also creates opportunities to discuss priorities and so on (LG4).

While this process contains a monitoring element, "It is not designed for surveillance, rather it is geared to provide support and encouragement", emphasised one senior

participant (LG1). This view seemed to be agreed upon by all participants in the cadre group and one of their comments is as follows:

> I think that is a really good performance management practice. It involves professional dialogue about what I am thinking to write, where I am up to, the type of journal to publish in. That form of performance management does not feel like a typical performance management because it is having a professional discussion about moving towards and yet it does produce targets at the back of it. It makes you feel that you are moving things together as opposed to encroaching upon you (CG3).

Mentoring and probation reports

In addition to the above two processes, participants in the cadre group also saw mentoring and probationary reports as part of performance management. According to the University's terms and conditions of appointment, initial appointments to lectureships are normally probationary. The period of probation is normally for up to three years to judge the individual's potential in research and assess his or her actual achievement (UoL, 2000). One respondent reported that during the probationary period, "There are a whole series of targets that I have to meet over the next three years in terms of training, in terms of publication, et cetera" (CG3). Another respondent added,

> A mentor, who is an experienced member of staff in the School, is assigned to each probationer to provide advice and help him/her reflect on what he/she is doing so that he/she can get more out of it – and again there has a target-setting element in it. During the process, people will be asked what their expected targets are over the next six months (LG3).

To monitor their performance, each probationer is required to report work progress on a prescribed form annually. As pointed out by one participant in the cadre group,

> The form consists of two parts – A and B. For me, I have to provide all the information about what I have done during the evaluation period including research activities. The line manager will use this information along with details provided by my mentor to complete Part B (CG2).

Another academic in the same group felt this probationary structure is "one form of performance management which is used to monitor our performance and determine if I can stay after three years" (CG1).

Teaching evaluation

The case University is committed to "providing a high-quality educational experience for all its students, and promoting excellence in learning" as stated in its "Learning and Teaching Strategy Paper–2006" (UoL, 2007g). Various systems have been put in place to provide evidence on the quality of the teacher, according to two participants (LG4; CG3). Peer-observation was seen to be the most frequently used approach. This process aims to "provide the opportunity for individuals to have feedback from experienced teachers so that they can reflect good ways of teaching" (LG5). As pointed out by the other two participants (LG1; RG1), this scheme was geared for individual development as opposed to monitoring. This view is confirmed from the University's peer observation guideline, which states that "Peer observation of teaching is independent of other procedures and not linked to promotion and appraisal procedures" (UoL, 2006).

Five participants reported that the student feedback questionnaire could be considered as another source of information to evaluate their quality of teaching (CG2; LG4; LG5; RG3; RG1). As stated in the University's protocol, "This process aims to gauge student experience set in the context of the learning outcomes of the module or programme being undertaken" (UoL, 2002b). Similar to peer-observation, the focus of this process is for individual development according to the University's protocol.

Only two participants (LG4; R3) considered the processes that involved external bodies such as reports of external examiner, QAA audits, and Office for Standards in Education, Children Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspections to evaluate the quality of teaching as one of the performance management components. One participant explained that "These external bodies only reported performance information at the departmental or programme level and may not offer sufficient details to determine individual performance (RG1). Instead of seeing these exercises as performance management, other participant reported increased workload effects and claimed that "The process

involved a lot of paper and administrative work. Being a co-ordinator, I have to collate all the documentation together for the audit exercise. Nevertheless, it did not affect my own teaching practice" (RG2).

Overall, it appeared that there was not much of a formal system or process to monitor individual teaching (CG1; RG1; LG2). Indeed, the lack of a system to evaluate their teaching performance was not seen to be a concern across the three groups. This phenomenon could be explained by their background as professional teachers as reflected in the following view offered by one participant:

> There is a difference between what is set up in the University and what goes on here, recognising the fact that we are the School of Education. For us, teaching is a different kind of status for this department. Academics' view of their own career and their priority of their career would be different from other departments where teaching was in many cases the route from which the academics came. They had a good reputation from being a good teacher in many cases (LG5).

Reward programmes

According to the University's human resources strategy document (UoL, 2002a), there are three programmes to reward performance: promotion, which can be recommended by the Head of Department or self-initiated by completing a proposal for promotion; additional salary increments to reward sustained, exceptional performance over a period of time; and achievement bonuses to recognise outstanding achievement in the last calendar year, either through sustained effort or "one-off" activities.

In discussion about what actual reward programmes were in place, almost all respondents readily pointed to the promotion programme. However, only three participants could articulate the bonus achievement scheme (LG1; LG5; RG1). Other programmes such as additional increments were never mentioned, reflecting that most academics did not have a full picture about the reward programmes currently operating in the University. One participant admitted that "Promotion is clear to me, but I don't have much knowledge about other reward programmes" (LG4). Another participant in

the cadre group explained why he/she did not pay much attention to the reward programmes as follows:

> I think I've got an interesting view about rewards because I am driven by what I want to achieve. I think if you have done something which is significant and warrants a financial reward, then that is nice. But I would not necessarily see it as an incentive. At this stage, my priority is to complete my probationary period not the reward programmes (CG1).

In summary, the above findings indicated that some participants across various groups were similarly confused about the meaning of performance management and the purposes of introducing such a system. While the findings revealed three major reasons for introducing performance management, the participants' experiences of current processes and systems operating in the case University indicated the focus of performance management for the case University was centred on individual professional development as opposed to monitoring the work performance of academics. The idea of performance management, as it applies at the level of the whole organisation, was less frequently considered.

4.3   How Do Academic Participants View The Effectiveness of Current Performance Management Processes in the Department?

To address this research question, participants were asked to provide their perspective on the effectiveness of the current processes for formulating clear goals and measures, seeking their commitment to goals, and linking performance to rewards.

4.31   Formulating Clear Individual Goals and Measures

As reported above, the majority of respondents felt that one of the key objectives of performance management was goal setting. The findings identified three processes that were designed to facilitate the formulation of performance goals: appraisal, a research-monitoring process, and probationary reporting. These three processes seemed to share a common feature: requiring a one-on-one meeting between each academic and an assigned person in discussing, agreeing upon, and evaluating goals. During each meeting, the two parties discussed and evaluated the appropriateness

of proposed goals and modified them, if needed. They then agreed on and documented action plans for each goal. These goal-setting processes were found to elicit a range of responses among the academics during the interviews that have been categorised into three main themes: "effects on professional development", "effects on the work focus", and "challenges for goal alignment".

Effects on professional development

Of the 12 participants, 10 academics seemed to indicate a strong belief that the goal-setting meetings offered useful opportunities for checking progress and seeking advice, which provided support for their individual development. One senior academic member attested to the value of these meetings based on his/her experience of being an appraiser:

> I can get to know about my colleagues through the goal-setting discussions. I think they found it useful in just talking through issues about points of their career, aims, personal targets, and next steps. It happens that they were at a very critical point in terms of promotion, preparing for next steps, and I think they found the discussion quite helpful in thinking about how to move forward (LG4).

As another participant in the regular group described, "These meetings were conducted in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere which made me feel no pressure in expressing my views openly and discussing any issues I might have encountered at the meetings" (RG2). This discussion forum is particularly useful for helping individuals to grow in the research area according to three participants. One significant benefit brought by this communication forum is that it formalises a person "to take an overview and interest in what people are writing, what people are bidding for, and so on. As well, with this process in place, people can have somebody they can go to if they encounter any problem and need to seek advice and support", commented one participant (LG4). This assigned person can "Guide people to think carefully about their research publication records and consider appropriate ways of meeting the quality of research publications that the University expected", added other senior academic member (LG3). "The supports provided by this goal-setting forum are critical for professional development particularly for those academics who are quite early in their research career and publication is the priority", opined one participant in the cadre group (CG2).

Effects on work focus

Another added value of the goal-setting processes identified through the interviews was that it put pressure on individuals to focus on critical activities, which they could have otherwise not taken seriously (LG4) or even thought about in the past (LG3). One participant described how this process imposed pressure on an individual by saying that

> RAE has become increasingly important to the UK universities as it drives the university sector about money and the status of the institution. Over the years, the pressure to perform has been intensified and has become personalised. By setting individual goals to meet the RAE requirements, it has imposed significant pressure on some people who are not performing well in research (LG6).

Challenges for goal alignment

While the goal-setting meetings were found effective in supporting individual development objectives, the extent to which the agreed goals were aligned with the departmental mission appeared to be a concern. When asked if they were clear about the mission of the School of Education, almost all respondents were clear about the research goal to meet the RAE requirements. When further asked whether they had been provided with information about the organisational goals for the goal-setting exercise, almost all the respondents replied with an emphatic "no". Although ensuring staff are briefed on the aims and objectives of the Department before the commencement of an appraisal round is part of the University's appraisal policy, one respondent commented that "I don't think that is explicit" (LG1). He/She continued, "If you ask everybody what is the goal of the School of Education, you could probably get many different answers and I don't think it is clear to everyone in the School". This ambiguity could be due to lack of strategy and vision, as pointed out by another participant (CG2). He/She explained that

> The School aims to achieve far too many things in an undirected and unfocused way. There is plenty of scope for people to do things in their own way. Therefore it is difficult to show the alignment at all. Indeed, it is all over the place anyway (CG2).

The lack of a formal process to provide clarity of the University's or departmental goals seemed to create a perception that the goal-setting exercise is a self-identification process. This view can be reflected in the following comment made by one participant:

> The School's mission statement will help drive inspiration. For appraisal, it is more a case of knowing what you want to do and seeing how you can fit in the mission. In other words, the mission statement does not come first. What you want to do will come first, then you will try to fit in (RG2).

While the findings seemed to indicate that most academics may not have a clear idea about the goals of the School, one senior respondent argued that, "People here do know what they are expected to do, but it is not the utility of performance management" (LG3). He/She further explained that, "It has resulted from individual enthusiasm and engagement to the organisation. Their professional identity and desire to do the best within their ability motivate them to find out what they need to do to meet the organisational goals" (LG3). This enthusiasm was similarly mentioned by one participant in the cadre group who stated, "My ultimate goal is always the same, that is, to improve my research and become RAE returnable" (CG1). "Attaining the highest grade in the RAE is the department's objective that coincides with my personal goals", he/she added.

In summary, goal setting is a self-identification process. As one senior participant acknowledged:

> By and large, it is up to me to identify my goals and objectives. Sometimes, it may come up during the research-monitoring discussion. But in that sense, it is pretty well up to me to push it through. Only for junior researches, their goals could have been set with assistance from those seniors (LG1).

Therefore, the success of this process, as emphasised by another participant, "depends on whether the individual will make it happen" (LG5). He/She continued, "The success varies between cases, possibly and haphazardly based on the characteristics of a person's professional life, which have a bearing on what success or problem is encountered".

4.32   Seeking a Commitment to Performance Measures

The data analysis on the respondents' responses on the effectiveness of the current process in seeking their commitment to performance goals identified three thematic concerns: lack of valid performance measures, lack of follow-up actions and lack of ongoing feedback.

Lack of valid performance measures

When asked if measurable criteria could be established for the academic job, more than half of respondents indicated that the outcomes of research could be quantified, but they raised concerns about setting criteria for evaluation of teaching and administration work. Details of findings in each area will be reported in the following section.

1.   Measures for research

While almost all respondents felt that research was more outcomes driven, partly because of the RAE requirements, there was a debate on whether the evaluation should be based just on the crude numbers, for example, number of publications, number of conferences attended, and the amount of research funding. One participant asserted that any assessment should be based on the impact of the research results, for example, "number of citations and a statement of impact" (RG3). This view was shared by another participant who cautioned that,

> The measure should not be just focused on short-term outcomes.
> Rather it should look at longer-term impacts. I don't feel the
> assessment should only be focused on the number of
> publications. In my view it should be judged by impact while
> agreeing that it might be a challenge (RG1).

The effect of factors on their performance outside academic control was another concern identified by this study. One senior member pointed out the problem as follows:

> While you can achieve the targets by putting in five research
> papers, there is no guarantee that they will get published or

generate required research funding due to the bidding process and assessment process for publication. In effect, you have failed to meet the targets but the outcome to some extent is outside of your control. This is one of the difficulties; you can set the target for doing things, not necessary for achieving things. Another difficulty is that you set the targets and then other things happen which are outside of your control. Examples of those uncontrollable factors include: you have to get on with other teaching; you could have a student who is problematic and takes up most of your time. This is the reason why some people think target setting is an artificial system. While people will set the targets, it is not necessary that they think these targets are very meaningful to them (LG4).

In addition, one participant voiced his/her reservation that the performance measure could generate a dysfunctional impact of pushing academics to focus on research that could generate immediate results. This view is reflected in the following response:

> To a large extent, the RAE requirements are consistent with my personal goals. I have no objection. It is part of my job. The only tension I feel is the national system - imposes a pressure to produce a certain number of publications within a fixed time. It means that it is better to abandon those research studies which take a long term to process the data analysis and focus on those studies which can be completed much quicker. As a result, you still aim to produce quality work but those scholarly in-depth works that require time will get left out (RG2).

2.   Measures for teaching

Although all participants felt pride in their teaching skills, about half of them felt it was a challenge to measure the quality of the teacher. Two major themes related to this challenge were identified from analysis of study data: uncontrollable factors and lack of effective sources of evidence.

At least two participants voiced concern about using student achievement to determine their teaching performance. Central to their concern is the difficulty in establishing the causal link between their contributions and student achievement due to the effects of those factors outside of their control. As pointed out by LG6, "While you have spent a lot of effort to motivate your students in their learning, there is no guarantee that they will be rewarded with

the best degree". "There are many factors beyond academic control" (CG1), which could lead to unexpected results. Given this broken link, "If you use a snapshot view without taking into account the context, the measurement will not be accurate", he/she added.

Lack of effective sources of evidence to measure the quality of teaching for each individual academic seemed to be another challenge identified by the participants. While student evaluation questionnaires and peer observation have been used, their effectiveness was questionable. With respect to student evaluation questionnaires, while two participants felt comfortable using student feedback as a basis to determine their performance (RG1; RG3), another two participants cast doubt on the trustworthiness of student ratings to reflect the quality of their teaching (LG6; CG2). This divided view along with silent responses from all other participants raised a concern about the validity of this approach.

Peer-supported observation of teaching was mentioned by six respondents as one of the popular methods of evaluation. However, two thematic concerns were identified about using this result as a basis to measure individual performance: the validity of the report and the inconsistence of observations. At least two participants raised concern about the validity of the report. "I learnt nothing from the report and the problem is that observers tend to not include any negative comments in the report" (CG2). "The key reason is that being equal as a colleague, they try to avoid criticizing in order to maintain the ongoing day-to-day relationship", he/she explained. This view was shared by another participant who remarked that "It is paradoxical to conduct peer-supported observation" (CG3). "While there is a good reason to do observation, it will potentially create a detrimental effect on relationships", he/she added. Another concern about this approach regarded the timing for conducting an observation of teaching. According to the University's guideline, peer-supported observations would take place at intervals no longer than four years and no less than one year (UoL, 2006). While the School has implemented this approach, the participation in the scheme for the regular academics was on a voluntary basis (LG5). According to the findings, only those participants on probation

confirmed that they had just gone through the process. Another participant in the regular group indicated that, "Within the department, I have not been watched by anybody at the higher level than me for about five years–quite a long time" (RG1).

3.   **Measures for administrative work**

While almost all respondents, including a newly-joined lecturer, have experienced increased administrative workload, most of them expressed concern about the accuracy in measuring and recognising their efforts towards this aspect of the job. One participant commented that, "Administration represents a significant part of what I do, and probably the least satisfying" (LG1).

Even though this aspect of work was included in the appraisal discussion and was considered as one of the criteria for promotion, there were no formal measurements to determine how well an individual has performed these tasks. The general consensus on how to judge the quality of administrative work is largely based on "the quantity" and "the number of complaints" as reflected in the following three comments:

> While it is difficult to see how well you have performed, it will become noticeable when someone fails to get the job done on a timely basis (LG5).

> If you are very poor in performing administrative work, people will complain about it very quickly. If you are working well, not so sure whether people will say anything (RG1).

> In other words, you have to take on more in order to demonstrate you have done a great job (LG6).

Lack of follow-up actions

One of the critical steps of a performance management system is to ensure the agreed upon goals are followed through. This requirement is also stated in the University's appraisal policy (UoL, 2007e). However, at least five participants expressed dissatisfaction with the process. One participant complained that, "There is no structure or pressure on those targets which are identified by the appraiser, to

monitor whether they have been achieved" (LG1). As a consequence, "If the appraisee comes back next year and fails to achieve some of targets, there is no investigation on why they failed, no discussion on whether they have received appropriate support, or any particular outcomes to those employees who fail to achieve the targets", he/she added. Another participant explained that this problem could be partly due to the fact that the University's appraisal system cannot be used for disciplinary reasons. Therefore, "If there is a problem of performance, we can only discuss it at the appraisal meeting but cannot report it to somebody who is more senior to take action" (LG6). In effect, "There are no systems currently in place to deal with any bad teacher" (RG3) one participant added.

Lack of ongoing feedback

Effective feedback helps individual academics to succeed by suggesting areas for improvement, encouraging growth and new learning, and reinforcing observed and desired behaviours. One senior academic characterised the importance of this process by saying that "It can show you are interested in what people are doing and create an opportunity for you to tell people that what they are doing is very important to the School" (LG2). When asked how often individual academics have received ongoing feedback, participants almost universally responded "Usually no regular feedback at all except at the particular time when appraisal is conducted" (RG2) or "Normally, the feedback is via the probationary report which is once per year" (CG1). These responses indicate that academics would only receive the formal feedback once per year and could be supplemented by "informal feedback" during the year via sources such as "the group discussion" (CG3), "the research community when you attend a conference" (LG4) and "the involvement of various day-to-day activities" (CG2). When asked about the value of the feedback they have received, it appeared that the quality varies depending on the effectiveness of the individual involved in the process as revealed in the following two comments:

> I think the feedback needs to be linked with the targets. Otherwise it will only create confusion. The feedback I have received during my first year of employment was confusing because of this reason. However, the feedback, which I have received for the second year, has been much clearer in terms of matching with the targets (CG1).

I find the mentors assigned to me provided more effective feedback than what I
have obtained from the appraisal system (CG2).

4.33   Rewarding performance with financial incentives

While a number of reward plans are available at the University, the line between
the rewards and performance outcomes seems to be tenuous. The data analysis
identified three major concerns about this process: the effects of financial incentives on
performance, the biased focus of research outcomes, and the transparency of the
system.

The effects of financial incentives on performance

One senior academic participant commented that, "The link between
performance and reward is very poor in the university context" (LG4). This view was
echoed by another participant who asserted that, "There is no stick and carrot in this
University" (RG2). He/she further explained that:

> If I fail to achieve the goals, there are no consequences that I can predict.
> Likewise, even though I have worked towards the goals and objectives,
> there is no guarantee that I will receive the rewards. In other words, there
> are no clear criteria on how to receive the award. I think generally,
> somewhat similar to a black box (RG2).

Another respondent made a stronger statement against the reward systems by saying:

> I think most reward systems don't work and are even counter productive.
> The system here in the University is having a problem of complete
> disconnection. There are reward systems but so rarely will people get
> anything. As a result, the systems will only create a divisive, suspicious,
> jealous, and counterproductive environment, and I am sure the quality of
> education will be affected (LG2).

In contrast, three respondents who have received rewards during their career
with the University felt that the programmes could bring some positive effects, although
somewhat limited:

> I did receive a bonus years ago to reward my good performance based on
> the inspection results from an external agency. I was very pleased with it
> because someone had noticed what I have done and used this programme
> to recognise my contributions (RG1).

I have received a bonus award. Although it is a very much second-class activity when compared with promotion, I see it as a consolation prize for my contributions (LG5).

I have received two bonus awards and one promotion. Rewarding financially is nice. However, if I had not received any, my point of view could have been otherwise (LG1).

The effects of focusing on rewarding research outcomes

In addition to the above concern about the impact of financial incentives, at least three participants felt that the criteria for rewards were designed in favour of those who are strong in research: "While the promotion documentation indicates that you can be promoted for good teaching and good organisational skills, nobody can get it unless you have a good research report", observed one participant (RG1). "The criteria as they are expressed in the document are not fully implemented", commented another participant (LG5). "Because the emphasis of the University is on research, the establishment has focused on a single criterion of research output for rewards", he/she explained.

This research bias seemed to be problematic as it could put those academics who see themselves as a professional teacher in a disadvantaged position. "This is a particular concern for the School of Education where most people come from a school teaching background, and they see their personal identity very much as a teacher" (LG4). The challenge they will face is that, "Not only do they have to get used to different forms of teaching but also have to do research activities because of the RAE and they have to get publications" (LG6). When reward criteria are solely based on research, "They are actually penalized by the system" (RG3). Similarly, this problem would apply to "those people who are assigned a considerable amount of responsibility in the area of course leadership and managing the department. They will not get much recognition in terms of promotion" (LG4). "This is a very difficult issue and political, which is about the definition of the university, whether it should be a research organisation, a teaching university, or a combination", LG6 commented.

Transparency of the reward programmes

Another concern about the link was related to the transparency of the programmes. For those participants who recently joined the University, all indicated that they were not aware of the reward programmes except the promotion programme. This concern about transparency was also expressed by a senior member who recalled the process he/she had gone through to get a promotion as follows:

> When I think back to how I was promoted to senior lecturer, I talked to my appraiser in order to get some direction on what things I need to do and what areas I need to focus on. There was no clear guideline to provide me with a promotion track, steps and sorts of things that I ought to do. In other words, it is more a kind of word-of-mouth thing (LG1).

In addition, one respondent raised an equity concern about the availability of information to different levels of employees. "I felt that part-time staff did not receive the same level of information as full-time, and their values of work are sometimes underestimated" (RG1). He/she further voiced a concern about "whether women in the University have been treated equally as men for promotion, as the recent promotions seemed to be male dominated" (RG1).

In summary, the findings seem to indicate that the current process is effective in helping individuals to set personal career development goals, which is consistent with the majority view of respondents that one of the key purposes of implementing performance management should be to support professional development. However, the findings also reveal the weaknesses of the current system in aligning individual goals with the University's objectives, seeking academic commitment to performance and motivating academics at work through existing reward programmes. There was also evidence that the research culture was strong in the School of Education, as reflected in the responses related to performance measures and reward programmes.

4.4 How Do Academic Participants Perceive the Impact of Academic Managers on Their Work Performance?

This research question aimed to find out who were considered academic managers in the School of Education and their impacts on individual academic

performance. When asked about the term 'academic manager', almost all respondents indicated that they had not heard about this role. This raised a question of who had the ultimate responsibility for managing their performance. One senior academic member commented that, "The management structure here is quite loose" (LG1). For this reason, "It is unclear to me who is the person would be responsible for managing my performance or setting my target or monitoring whether my targets have been achieved or providing me with necessary resources", he/she added. Another senior academic member argued that, "I personally do not believe that we can use the line management model to manage the academics" (LG4). "The contexts currently operating within the School are too diverse and too complex and I don't think a single line-manager model will work here", he/she emphasised. While there was a debate on the need to have a clearer line management structure, role ambiguity and role effectiveness seemed to be the central concerns identified from the data analysis under the current reporting structure and arrangement.

4.41   Role Ambiguity

The probing questions generated more in-depth discussion on who is the key stakeholder in performance management and the analysis of the interview data collected through these questions revealed four roles that are accorded some performance management responsibilities from the perspective of participants.

Six participants felt that the "Head of Department" (HoD) was their line manager and should have a vital role in performance management. As one participant put it, "The (HoD) is the line manager of everyone" (LG1) and "He/She is the person I will go to if I have a problem and cannot get it resolved", commented another participant (RG2). At least three participants said that the 'course director' also has some sort of performance management responsibility. As described by one of the participants, "The course director is one of the senior tutors here" (LG3). To that extent, "They are managing the teachers for the programme" (LG3). A similar view was expressed by another participant who explained that, "The role of the course leaders is to identify the strengths and weaknesses, with the members of their team making judgements on deploying teachers for the delivery of courses" (LG5). Another stakeholder in the process, as mentioned by one participant, was the 'academic research

director'. "This person has the responsibility to monitor the progress of my research work" (RG1). The academic research director, echoed another participant, "Has a role to monitor the individual's performance on research on a regular basis" (LG5). Finally, almost without exception, participants considered the 'appraiser' was a key stakeholder in the performance management process. One participant described this role as follows:

> Everybody in the department, including myself, is managed by just one person, that is, the head of department. In addition, there is an individual person looking at my research work and a different person to look at my teaching. However, my overall performance – Who will look at it? – is my appraiser during the annual appraisal process (RG1).

Consistent with the University's appraisal policy (UoL, 2007e), the appraisers were assigned by the HoD, a person who is "one of the members in the course team" (RG2) but who "is not my supervisor" (RG1). Typically, the person "is senior in the department and has substantial experience", he/she added.

The involvement of multiple stakeholders in the process seemed to have created ambiguity on who owns the process and has the ultimate responsibility for setting the targets on all facets of academic work, linking individual goals to the strategic intent of the School, ensuring academics will have the information they need to perform their job, monitoring their progress against all targets, providing support and advice, and making reward decisions (LG1). The overlap in some performance management activities between the four roles further compounded the ambiguity concern. As commented by one participant, "Research is part of my job and therefore it has been included as part of the annual appraisal discussion. But this area is also discussed on a separate basis through the research monitoring meeting" (RG2). These concerns raised a question of the effectiveness of each role in managing the performance management processes.

4.42   Role Effectiveness

While the HoD was considered as the line manager for everyone in the department, the impact of this role on individual performance seemed to be a bit remote. One participant commented that, "The impact of the HoD on my work depends on his/her managerial approach" (CG1). "Typically, the HoD will only get involved at

the year-end when the probationary report is submitted for review and whenever I seek advice. Otherwise, I am more or less on my own", he/she added. There was a general consensus that the ability of the HoD to get involved in the performance management has been seriously impaired by not only his/her obligatory requirements such as teaching, meetings, and research but also the wide span of his/her control. Without any clear hierarchical structure within the school, the HoD literally has more than 40 academics reporting directly to him/her. As one participant commented, "The lack of middle managers to support the HoD" seemed to be the problem (LG6). As a result, "Too many people are reporting to him/her and therefore he/she is not very effective" (RG2).

With respect to the course director, it was generally agreed that this managerial role was not clearly defined and the impact of the course leader, at best, could be influential and advisory as opposed to directive. "The relationship between course leader and members is maintained through a collegial relationship", emphatically pointed out one participant (LG3). In his/her opinion, "The course leader uses influential power to ensure work is on track", as opposed to a line-management stance. One participant voiced another complexity that "Most of us work for multiple programmes which are led by different directors" (RG2). Another participant echoed, "How the course director in each particular group provides information to a central person within the department to come up with an overall rating on my teaching is a challenge that may involve a lot of effort and depend on the managerial structure within the department" (CG3).

The academic research director in effect faced a similar problem as the course director. One participant was adamant about this arrangement and complained that:

> This research monitoring is done by a person who is not in charge of you and he/she does not know how much teaching you are doing. By looking at research in isolation from the teaching, it is kind of checking the boxes to report whether you have done an article on a timely basis and whether you have hit the right level, then it goes nowhere (LG2).

As reported in the above comment, the appraiser assigned by the HoD for the annual appraisal plays a key role in the performance management processes. However,

there were mixed responses in terms of the appropriateness of the person who is the appraiser. Two participants in the cadre group felt the assigned person was appropriate. "He/she has a very wide knowledge of the educational sector in general and can offer me a broad overview of the things I ought to look at" (CG3). This positive view was also shared by other participants in the regular group who felt that, "The appraiser has a good understanding of what he/she is doing" (RG2) and "provided him/her with effective advice to help him/her grow in the job" (RG1). In contrast, the study results also identified some negative responses from at least three participants. One participant voiced the complaint that, "The appraisal I had last year, the appraiser knew nothing about me" (CG2). "It has not even delivered what the University wants to achieve" LG2 added. In effect, "The meeting with the appraiser does not really result in any identifiable targets and no follow up with the results of the identifiable targets are the concern" (LG1). The problem is that "I think the skills of the people who are doing it are very poor" (LG2) and "many of them do not have a clear notion of what management looks like" (LG1). In sum, "There is a huge training requirement here", observed one participant (LG2).

Overall, the results indicate that respondents at all levels were similarly not aware of the term 'academic manager'. HoD, course leaders, academic research director, and appraisers were identified by respondents as having roles that could have some level of managerial responsibility. However, their effectiveness in performing the managerial role seemed to be undermined by the lack of legitimacy as a line manager, variation in skills and time commitment to perform the performance management role. This problem appeared to be under review at the time the interviews were conducted. Almost all participants in the leadership group mentioned that the need for a stronger managerial role is being discussed at the moment as part of the academic review.

4.5   How Do Academic Participants Respond to the Process, Measures, and Outcomes Involved in Operating the Performance Management System?

When exploring how academic participants have responded to the performance management processes, the probing questions were centred on the impact of the system on their academic identity and professionalism. The analysis of collected data resulted

in four broad categories to conceptualise the strategies adopted by academics in response to the performance management system; these were: sailing, redefining, struggling, and submerging.

4.51   Sailing

Academics taking this approach were essentially content with the current system and can continue to thrive without changing their working practices within the new environment. At least nine participants felt that the current performance management arrangements have minimal impacts on their working lives and claimed that their work practices have not been changed significantly for the sake of the system. Three thematic reasons were identified from the interview data explaining why some respondents have a "business-as-usual" feeling. These included: the School's entrenched collegial culture, participants' personal pride, and participants' background.

Entrenched collegial culture

Despite the performance management arrangements, one senior academic asserted that, "In UK universities, we still rely a lot on the 'trust' system with an expectation that academics are professional and self-motivated when performing their roles" (LG6). Claimed by another senior member and consistent with the University culture, "One of the great strengths of this School has always been its collegiality, formed with minimal managerial control. This ethos has been maintained since I started here back in 1994" (LG1). He/She continued, "This culture is incredibly important for me and is also attributable to the informality of some of the processes in the School whereby support, encouragement, advice, and so on are informally dealt with". Because of this entrenched collegial culture, another respondent stated that, "I think we have not noticed any reduction on our autonomy as much as other departments could have experienced" (LG5). One respondent described how he/she responded to this self-regulated work environment:

> If you look at the way we work here, I know I've got teaching to do. I know I have administration works to do such as meetings, et cetera. For some weeks, I could have nothing in my diary and I know that is time I need to figure out how to be productive in doing my research and writing in order to progress. If I am not, I know I could not get my job done. So

it is down to my own sense of career and professionalism. Also I suppose if you want to progress, you will have to strive to use your time productively in order to get the job done. Nobody knows what time I am coming in the morning and what time I am going home. I don't have to tell anybody. It is up to me to get the job done (LG6).

Participants' personal pride

At least four participants felt personal pride in being university teachers and emphasised that they will do their best regardless of performance management. One respondent participant reported:

I never feel any impacts of performance management on me because I always perform in the same manner and aim to exceed my goals. I might see the impact of performance management on my working life quite differently, if I have underperformed for some reason, for example, a personal problem (RG2).

A similar view was expressed by another two senior members:

I always work responsibly and commit to do the things I say I am going to do. I do very well even without having very close monitoring (LG5).

At the personal level, I am self-motivated, I don't really like people coming to watch me and tell me what I should be doing. I believe in intrinsic motivation, and the reason why I am here is because I enjoy doing the project. The most effective way to get the best out of me is to tell me what I need to do and then leave me alone (LG2).

This pride was also expressed by one recently joined academic.

For me, whether or not the performance management system is in place, my quality and output of work will not be different. I have my own targets, which go beyond what I am asked to do anyway. With respect to teaching, I always felt that I wanted my lesson to be at the highest standard. I think I have set this quality standard whether the inspector from an external agency is in the room or not. My aim to do my best came from my own sense of responsibility and dedication and not from any forms of performance management (CG1).

Another reason which explained why some respondents felt indifferent about the current performance management system was due to their previous background, before joining the University, where they were subject to much more rigorous managerial control. This is reflected in the following comments made by those respondents who recently joined the University:

> In terms of feeling controlled, it is all relative, though. In this University, the degree of freedom for academics is much more than what I had with my previous employer (CG2).

> The formal performance management system I was used to from the school environment created a much more imposing feeling. The level of autonomy I have experienced from this department, so far, is much greater than what I had before (CG3).

4.52   Redefining

Those participants who belonged to this group reported that managerial control has increased under the current performance management system and that they have made some changes in their work practices. Examination of the responses from this group of participants revealed that they were not overly concerned about the changes and their explanations for this phenomenon seemed to relate to two fundamental beliefs: favourable effects of change and enough choices available to maintain academic identity.

Favourable effects of change

Two participants saw the positive effects of the performance management system on their work. One senior participant maintained that the control aspect of the current system served as a reminder of what he/she has to do and provided him/her with some support where necessary and therefore he/she was not concerned:

> It is very reasonable to keep the log of my work and what I need to do. I have to do this tracking myself anyway. It does not either upset me or excite me. Actually, it is quite helpful to have someone else to say 'Have

you thought about this?' or 'Is the timeframe realistic?' It seems to me that these kinds of dialogue are fairly reasonable. It helps me think through my work, reminds me what I need to do, and how does my work fit into the whole picture (LG3).

Another participant considered that the performance management system could have created a positive effect on teaching as follows:

In the school of education, it is subject to control from external agencies. As a result, what you teach and how you teach are being controlled. While there is an increased control, I try to see it in a positive way, as being a challenge to ensure the effectiveness of teaching in the School (LG4).

Sufficient room to maintain academic identity

While the managerial practices could have taken away certain aspects of freedom from academics, the above two participants further expressed that they did not feel alienation because there is a lot of scope in academic work that could offer opportunities to compensate their loss of autonomy and maintain their job interests. This is reflected in the following comments:

I have lost some control to the organisation but on balance I feel that I have sufficient measure of choices about what I am doing to feel comfortable. Nonetheless, different people may have different feelings about this process (LG3).

If teaching is all I am doing, I would probably feel frustrated. In fact, we still have a lot of freedom about the research. RAE is a constraint because it forces you to think about what journal you are going to publish in. But we still have quite a great deal of freedom in terms of areas we want to research and the way in which the research is reported. In addition, we still have other independent resources for research funding, for example, research council and charity, which they don't impose restrictions (LG4).

This view was also shared by another participant in the regular group who felt the increased control by QAA had not taken away his/her autonomy as there was still a lot of freedom within the framework (RG3).

4.53 Struggling

While the findings indicated that all participants managed to adapt to the performance management system either through sailing or redefining strategy, there was a group of respondents who were not happy with the current system. Central to the concern was the ineffectiveness of the current system in the allocation of workload. While they would continue to cope with the situation, they warned that they might be forced to adopt struggling strategy which could have deleterious consequences for students and others.

As one participant said, "Under the current performance management system, it does not have much monitoring or a follow-up feature to ensure targets are achieved. As a result, there are too many abuses; too many people have free rides" (LG2). He/She continued, "It creates a culture in which 'you can do your own thing'; so you can teach a great deal and research very little or you can research a lot and teach very little". Given that the working arrangement of all academics is based on indeterminate working hours, where no minimum and maximum hours of work are stipulated in order to be consistent with the autonomy and professional orientation of the staff, "some people may do a lot of hours per week but some don't do many hours as pointed out by another participant (LG5)". This culture inevitably created an uneven workload situation as reflected in the following comment:

> Without a more formalised system, it creates issues such as 'knocking on the door' syndrome. What happens is that when some people want something, they will knock on the door of the person most likely to say 'yes'. The danger is that it will create an uneven workload allocation. Getting the balance right is critical. Collegiality without structure can lead to lack of organisation and lack of clear line communication. Unfortunately, the current environment may not fit for someone who is not good as a self-manager. If they don't know where to go to get resources and where to get support, they may easily get lost and would not manage their time well. Consequently, it affects their productivity and creates an uneven workload to the department (LG1).

In response to this laissez-faire nature of performance management and the resultant impact on the allocation of work, "The key challenge is how to handle my workload and decide on the priorities without affecting the support that I can provide to

my students (RG2)". "But there are only 24 hours a day", emphasised another participant (LG5). He/She added, despite the importance of the research for the University as well as individual career development, "The ability of some individual academics to get on with the research work has been seriously impaired by the unbalanced workload". In other words emphasised RG2, "The workload is the key factor which limits my autonomy to decide what I want to do; the control aspect of performance management system is not the major issue". This workload concern did not seem to apply only to those academics who have been with the School for sometime; it was also expressed by one participant in the cadre group as follows:

> Compared with my previous employment, the performance management system in the School is much more relaxed. You can come and go as you please and you can get involved in the project or not. I therefore have no problem in dealing with this environment. However, I do find the workload is problematic and hope the University or the School of Education can be a bit more flexible in terms of research expectations, taking into account the teaching and administration workload (CG2).

4.54   Submerging

Academics in this category were dissatisfied with the system but would not try to cope or redefine their working practices. None of the participants in this study have adopted this approach. However, during the interview, two participants indicated that they have heard people taking a sinking strategy in response to the system. One participant remarked that, "The RAE has imposed significant pressure on some people who have not done publications or produced quality publications which can generate any monies, I heard somebody had decided to take early retirement because of this in order to avoid it" (LG6).

The above discussion seems to indicate that there were no significant concerns about the control aspect of performance management. As revealed from the findings, most respondents were quite comfortable with the current level of autonomy they have retained at work. With the wide scope of the academic work, some respondents felt that there have been enough opportunities for them to grow in other areas in order to sustain their job satisfaction level and compensate any loss of control arising from the performance management system. By contrast, most participants were more concerned about the effectiveness of the current performance management system in managing the

workload. Indeed, what has reduced their autonomy was not performance management, it was the increased workload.

4.6   What Do Academic Participants Think Is an Effective Performance Management System?

The interview questions aimed to solicit participants' perspectives on how to improve the system. Based on the data analysis, four thematic recommendations were identified: (1) a more integrated and structured approach, (2) equity, (3) collegial culture, and (4) effective leadership.

4.61   Integrated and Structured Approach

The fragmentation and lack of connection between components within the current system was identified as one of the critical areas needing improvement. Two senior respondents disapproved the current arrangement and pointed out that:

> The system is completely disconnected from line management and it is not really about performance. On the face of it, it looks like performance management, but actually it is disconnected from one and the other and leads the academics to a fundamental culture that is 'I do what I like' to avoid accountability (LG2).

> Overall, the performance management process is in place but fragmented rather than held in one very obvious place and you may make an argument that it needs to be more streamlined (LG3).

To address this concern, there was a debate on whether a more formalised performance management system would be required. One participant argued that, "For me, an informal system would work much better" (RG2). "Academics in general are keen on the job and they are not here for money or the glory. Therefore, I don't think a rigorous system is needed to keep them on their toes" he/she explained. Contrasting to this view were the following responses from four participants that suggested that a more structured, integrated, and visible approach would be required for target setting, monitoring, and communication:

109

Integrate various components of performance management such as mentoring, staff development, research assessment exercise and appraisal together, and it should be managed by one-group rather than separate stakeholders. Each employee should be looked after in totality. Appraisal should be the tool to draw all information together. The whole process should be structured but should be seen as supportive as opposed to oppressive (LG2).

A more effective way of having information of what people are doing, making those things transparent for everybody in the department. You need to have some evidence to see how people use their time (LG4).

I personally welcome the idea of setting up a more structured management team with clearly defined accountabilities in each functional area such as teaching, research and administration. As well, we need a more visible reporting structure showing for whom I am personally responsible and to whom I will report (LG1).

The need for a more structured system was also echoed by a recently joined academic:

I can't think of any other way without a system because the people who manage the University need to have evidence with which they can make their judgment (CG1).

4.62   Equity

Equity was the second thematic recommendation which was found to encompass three major areas expressed by participants: (1) equitable allocation of work, (2) equitable treatment between teaching and research, and (3) transparency of the system.

Closely related to the problems of loose structure and increased workload, at least six interviewed have explicitly raised concerns about fairness in the allocation of work. One respondent expressed his/her dissatisfaction and stated that,

I feel the current system is unfair due to the workload that is not evenly allocated to each academic staff. This problem is partly due to individuals who are not willing to take on additional tasks and partly due to the system which fails to reassign work to those academics whose courses are no longer recruiting very well (RG1).

Another factor contributing to the uneven distribution of workload was, added another senior member, "the failure of the current system to control absenteeism" (RG3). The

negative impact of this problem is that some academics in the School could end up with a huge teaching and administration load leaving them with limited time for doing research, which seemed to be the prevalent concern. As commented on by one senior respondent:

> Everyone should be given the opportunity to conduct research in order to maintain equity, because we are a research University and most of our reward programmes are closely linked to research results. Therefore, a better performance management system should be introduced to ensure everybody has an equal opportunity to engage in the activities of the work that will be rewarded. In other words, a balanced system is very important (LG6).

The second equity concern was linked to the research bias issue inherent in the current reward systems. This biased focus neglected the recognition of academic contributions towards the other critical aspects of their work, such as teaching and administration. One participant suggested that, "The performance measures used by the system should put an equal weight between teaching and research" (RG1). Another participant took one step further and urged for a balanced measurement system with which "people will be measured and rewarded appropriately against these three areas" (LG6) namely teaching, research and administration. To address the concern that some academics may not be good at research, he/she further suggested that "What I would like to see is a greater use of teaching only contracts so that people who are good at teaching and want to be a teacher not researcher can focus on teaching only and be rewarded appropriately".

The third equity concern was transparency of the system. Three participants suggested that the system should be transparent about the University's expectations of each activity and the link between effort and recognition. As pointed out by one participant, "The current processes are not transparent. It is difficult particularly for someone who is new to the department to know what systems exist" (LG1). What we need is a transparent system "so that people understand what is considered as the reasonable amount of teaching that everybody should be contributing and what is the reasonable amount of research activity" (LG4): "In other words, we need to set a clear expectation of their jobs" he/she emphasised. In addition, "The system needs to be totally transparent and the consequences should be predictable, for example, the

promotion, the criteria should be clear and transparent to everybody" (RG2). "In the absence of such transparency and clear articulation, the system could be seen as very negative and will just put more pressure on people without being constructive" (RG2).

4.63   Collegial Culture

While three participants in the leadership group (LG1; LG2; LG4) advocated that what was needed was to have a more formalised system to manage the process to address the equity concerns, another concern raised by participants was how to maintain the collegial culture. Participants thought that critical components to support collegial culture included academic autonomy, teamwork, collaboration, and intrinsic rewards.

At least two participants warned that the system should not be designed in a control-oriented form otherwise it could infringe on their academic freedom. This view was shared by both long-serving and newly-joined academics:

> If the current design is control-oriented, it should be taken down, as the system will only create a hierarchy for policing purposes, which alienates people themselves for their engagement and generates less effectiveness and efficiency for people working together. Introducing performance management with a 'control orientation' for a group of people who have been enthusiastic about the job and self-managing their practices will only disengage this group (LG3).

> If the system is designed to control people, it almost automatically means that a percentage of them will attempt to take a short cut with it to make up data and will ultimately lead to a negative atmosphere to the organisation. It creates one-way relationships on what you can do to the organisation. Somehow the organisation does not seem to have a duty of care to develop what you are doing. This is inherently a bad system because it concentrates on the negative terms (CG3).

Rather, as urged by both senior and junior members, the system should emphasise teamwork. As pointed out by one senior participant, "The system should focus on how to engage people, recognise their contributions and ensure people work as a group" (LG3). This view was echoed by another participant who underscored the critical success of the system hinged on its effectiveness in "building up teamwork to get people to work together instead of competing with each other" (CG1). In their view, this could be achieved by "creating a system to support a semi-autonomous group

concept" (LG3) and "setting performance targets based on teamwork as opposed to the individual" (CG1).

Another key characteristic of the system identified by the respondents was to create an environment that would be conducive to collaborative discussion on target setting and action plans. One participant suggested that "What I want to see is something similar to the current appraisal system where there will be a discussion to reach an agreement with your line manager – a hierarchical system. At the meeting, we will talk about what I have done and then come up with some explanations to account for the performance" (LG1). In other words, the system should be designed to reduce evaluator-controlled nature of interactions and encourage collaborative discussion. In developing an effective environment for collaborative talk, it is critical that "people do not put up defences during the discussion on target setting and action plans and that people work as a team without a blame culture" (CG1). "Building up defences is detrimental to collegial relationship and not healthy to the University", he/she warned.

To support the collegial culture, another suggestion was to ensure the system would not encourage individual academics to compete with each other. Closely linked to the concern about the divisive effects of the current reward systems as reported earlier, almost all participants felt the importance of intrinsic motivation. One participant put it: "I am not a big fan of monetary rewards and I am intrinsically motivated" (L2). Instead, opined L4 in the same vein, "Most people look at other ways for rewards such as job satisfaction". The effective system to motivate academics is that:

> The system aims to pick up when people are doing something well and you indicate to them that you notice it. I think a 'pat on the back' every once in a while will be far more effective than any other forms of rewards. Given that academics already do what they want to do, appreciation of what they are doing, although saying 'good job' will be very effective even in the absence of monetary rewards (RG2).

4.64   Effective Leadership

The role of leadership was recognised as being vital for the success of the system. Closely linked to the concern raised earlier about the effectiveness of those individuals involved in the performance management process and the three suggested improvement

areas discussed above, the summary of responses seemed to call for an effective leader to manage and integrate various performance management activities, ensure all the components of the system are designed and implemented in an equitable manner and operated within the collegial culture. One participant was adamant in saying that "The system will become worthless unless we have an effective leader to run it. We need to have someone in a managerial role" (LG2). "What we need is a highly motivated manager to look after people", he/she emphasised. In his/her view, the performance management system should only be used as a means of "collecting information to help the leader to manage the process not to upset people". Another participant opined in a similar vein, "No matter how we tinker with the system and procedure, my major concern is about the personality and the effectiveness of the individual who manages the process. I don't think any amount of training can address this issue" (CG2).

The findings also revealed that three key expectations from this leadership role: more follow through actions, more communication, and a more positive working environment. Linked to the concern about the fragmentation of the current process, one of the critical roles of the leader is to "help academics set targets, maintain the process, provide support, and follow up. If the academics fail to achieve the targets, the evaluator needs to research why and follow through" (LG1). Providing a clear line of communication to those managed to ensure they will receive necessary information for target setting, feedback, and support was identified as another critical role. One senior member pointed out the challenge as follows:

> One thing we are weak in is about communication with each other, ensuring everybody will receive the same message. The geographic location of the School is scattered in various small buildings, which makes the communication difficult. Sometimes we don't see each other, and the communication relies heavily on paper or e-mail without personal intervention. The problem is that if people don't see each other for sometime, it can be magnified in all kinds of misunderstandings. How to improve the communication within the resources we have is the key challenge for the leader (LG5).

Another expected role of this leader was to create a more positive working environment such as a supportive climate, consultation, and fairness. As suggested by one participant, "The bottom line is that we have to create the right climate to support

114

people to do research and provide them with an adequate amount of time to achieve the targets" (LG2). To seek academics' commitment to work towards the targets, another participant suggested that, "We would need to have a clear means of measuring performance, and it has to be a consultation process to seek agreement from academics on the chosen performance measures" (LG1). Finally, CG2 stressed, "Any performance management system can only be good when the people operating it do not allow their own personality to affect how the system operates and follow the steps consistently as laid down in the policy procedures".

In maintaining the value of a collegial culture, the overall proposed changes seemed to centre on how to uphold the value of academic professionalism and teamwork. While a call for more monitoring and accountability was suggested, the focus was more on maintaining equity in the allocation of work in order to further foster the cultural value of teamwork and facilitate individual professional development, particularly in the research area. To ensure the success of the current system, the findings revealed the importance of having effective leaders to manage the process. These individuals should be equipped with skills in communication and creating the right climate for people to accept the changes.

4.7   Conclusion

This chapter presented findings addressing the five research questions. According to the results of the data analysis, the term 'performance management' was found to be ambiguous among most of the respondents. The effectiveness of the current performance management system was questioned. Major concerns included difficulties in aligning individual goals with the School's mission, selecting appropriate measures to truly evaluate the performance of academics, and establishing an equitable link between effort and rewards. Compounding this concern was the effectiveness of the individuals who were assigned the performance management responsibility. The lack of a clear line management structure and an effective leader to manage the process were considered to be the major problems. While opposition to the control nature of performance management was frequently associated with responses from the participants, there was no evidence in the findings indicating that academics were

alienated due to the loss of professional identity and autonomy. Despite the fact that a performance management system has been put in place at the School, 'trust academics as professionals' was still the dominant culture within the School. In addition, the wide scope of the academic job offers sufficient opportunities for academics to build on their professionalism to compensate for any loss of autonomy due to the control aspects of the performance management system. The findings, however, confirmed that the biggest concern about the current system was linked to its ineffectiveness in maintaining an equitable allocation of work. As a result, some academics were overloaded with teaching and administrative work, leaving them with limited time to meet their targets for research, which ultimately would have a significant impact on their career progression. To address this inequity problem, the findings revealed the need for a more integrated and structured system along with effective leadership to manage the performance management system while upholding the collegial values.

To what extent the above results are consistent with previous research findings and existing theory as discussed in Chapter 2 and what the significant contributions of this study are to the existing body of knowledge will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0   Introduction

Chapter 4 presents the details of the research findings based on the data obtained through semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. This chapter focuses on a discussion of the results by comparing the findings of this study with previous research and existing theory. The discussion addresses the five specific research questions of this study which cover the themes of how academics interpret the meaning and purposes of performance management; the effectiveness of current performance management processes; the ability of academic managers to perform the performance management role; the impacts of performance management on academics' working lives; and the areas that require improvement in order to make performance management work in this particular university context. The chapter concludes with a summary of the contributions made by this case study to the existing theory and body of knowledge based on the comparison of the results.

5.1   Research Question 1: How do academic participants perceive the purposes and values of the performance management system?

The extent to which university management and academics share the same view or have a common understanding of the term "performance management" is of strategic importance to the implementation of the programme. Any gap or mismatch will result in scepticism among the academics about the intention of introducing performance management. Despite the University having spelled out the intended objectives for the performance management system in its human resources strategy paper (UoL, 2002), the study reveals that not all participants are clear on what exactly the purposes and meaning of performance management are. Some participants interpret the term based on what they have read and others judge it based on their previous experience with a performance management system. Similar to the literature findings, the lack of a universal definition seems to be a contributory factor for this confusion, resulting in a wide range of different interpretations depending on individual beliefs or values

(Williams, 2002; Fletcher, 2004; Brown, 2005). What further complicates the matter in the case School is a multiplicity of processes operating in tandem under the umbrella of the performance management system. These processes, which include an appraisal scheme, a research monitoring process, mentoring and probation reports, teaching evaluation and reward programmes, are varied and each is inherent with a polarised policy value between professional development and managerial control (Reeves et al., 2002). While appraisal, mentoring and probation reports, and teaching evaluation are clearly linked to professional development to develop individual practice, the design of the research monitoring process and reward programmes is seen as a managerial approach focusing on the attainment of organisational objectives. Despite there being conflicting values among these processes, they function in an uncoordinated manner, as criticised by LG2. The fragmentation of the system (LG3) with mixed values further confuses academics on the intention of introducing performance management.

While the term 'performance management' is ambiguous to most participants, the results of this study identify three themes as related to the purposes of performance management: professional development, control of work allocation, and goal-setting. However, upon closer examination of each theme, the study reveals the dominant view of the purpose of the performance management process is for professional development. How each of these categories links to professional development will be discussed in the following sections.

5.11   Professional Development versus Managerial Control

As revealed by the earlier studies conducted by Haslam et al. (1992), Rutherford (1998), and Simmons (2002), professional development is typically viewed by academics as the main purpose for introducing performance management in the context of higher education. This stereotyped view, however, has, according to Shelley (1999) and Haynes et al. (2002), incrementally shifted with more teachers sharing the perception of performance management with other groups of public employees as a result of the government's decision to extend the discourse of managerialism into the education sector. As with the surveys of public service employees, the belief about the use of performance management to control the work of teachers to achieve organisational performance has become more pervasive. The RAE and TQA

118

programmes, which are government-driven to direct what universities need to achieve, have a significant impact on how universities design their performance management strategies (Pugh et al., 2005).

While the case University has introduced some control elements in its performance management strategy, for example, the measurable targets in response to the RAE requirements, the results of this study seem to suggest that participants are still inclined to believe that performance management is for professional development. This belief seems to be firmly formed by two major and intertwined factors: performance appraisal system and professional identity. Preoccupied with the experience of the traditional performance appraisal system in the education sector, which is individual development focused and concerned with academic identity, which is self-regulated, most research participants tend to either disagree or neglect the other important aspects of performance management such as attainment of organisational targets and rewards. As noted earlier, the research monitoring process and reward programmes are the components that could be seen as the rhetoric of managerial control. However, the findings indicate that participants do not feel the research monitoring process is used for surveillance purposes (LG1). Rather, the process is viewed as a forum for professional discussion to help academics to move forward with their research work (CG3) or as a reminder of what they need to do (LG3). With regard to the reward programmes, the scepticism of the link between the performance and rewards (LG2; RG2) and the interests in intrinsic rewards seems to lead academics to neglect the concept of financial incentives and thus the intention of the programmes to align their interests to the organisational goals.

For these reasons, only three participants in the leadership group explicitly mentioned that performance management could be used to control work allocation (LG1; LG2; LG4). However, upon further review of findings from these three respondents, the study notes that the underlying factor that determines their view does not seem to come from the perspective of organisational efficiency, it is largely influenced by the work intensification issue currently experienced by the case School.

119

5.12   Control of Work Allocation and Work Intensification

The work intensification concern does not seem to be unique to the case School and has plagued most higher education institutions in the context of new public management. Factors contributing to the increased workload include the proliferation of teaching quality assurance mechanisms; the reduction of clerical and secretarial support; and the encouragement of 'entrepreneurial' activity among academic staff in order to secure external funding (Anderson, 2006). While the work intensification issue has been widely discussed and published in the literature, the focus is largely centred on either the psychological impacts on academics (Houston et al., 2006; Ogbonna & Harris, 2004) or the work allocation model (Hull, 2006; Burgess et al., 2003). Little attention has been paid to the potential link between work intensification and performance management.

Consistent with the literature findings, the results of this research confirm that academics have been stretching their time to address increased workload due to those factors highlighted by Anderson (2006). Two participants (RG1; RG2) involved in the co-ordination of QAA audits and Ofsted inspections report that their workload has increased. Almost all those interviewed raised a concern about the increase in workload due to the additional administrative load. As the School is closely involved in entrepreneurial activity in the form of distance education, the overseas travel plus related administrative work inevitably further increases the workload for those academics engaged in the programme.

In line with the view of Dillon (2007), the participants in this study are concerned that the increasing workloads could potentially take them away from their core purpose, that is teaching, research, and their commitments to students, and would affect their overall performance as university teachers. Similar to the findings of the research study conducted by Anderson (2006), the biggest concern raised by participants of this study is their inability to find sufficient time for research, which inevitably affects their research productivity and in turn jeopardises their prospects for promotion (Houston et al., 2006).

Assuming that time availability is critical to academics in the current context and has a direct impact on their job performance, it is evident from this study that the work intensification concern has led at least three participants (LG1; LG2; LG4) in the study to believe performance management should be used as a means to control the work allocation to ensure that workload is equitably allocated among academics so that each individual academic will have an equal opportunity to focus on research.

5.13   Goal-Setting Process

This study confirms that all participants view performance management as a means of providing a forum for goal setting to agree on targets and work priorities. Indeed, the case School has established at least three processes to facilitate goal setting, which include appraisal, research monitoring, and mentoring. This view, along with the arrangements set up by the University, seems to be consistent with the conventional conceptualisation of performance management which aims at creating a shared vision of the purpose and goals of the organisation, helping individuals to understand the organisational goals and recognise their contributions, and developing an action plan to achieve the agreed goals (Fletcher & Williams, 1996). As it is conveyed from the model, an effective performance management system requires alignment of individual goals with organisational objectives, and therefore goals should be cascaded down from the top.

However, the idea to cascade objectives top down does not meet with the approval of participants. Given that academics view themselves as experts in a subject discipline (Parker & Jary, 1995; Henkel, 1997), at least two participants have explicitly pointed out that the goal-setting process should be approached in the form of negotiation or collaboration (LG1; CG1). This view is consistent with the term "integrative bargaining" used by Marsden and Belfield (2006) to describe the goal-setting process for school teachers in the UK, a process that is built on the same belief that "management is dependent on the knowledge and expertise of their staff in order to define appropriate performance goals, and especially to identify the steps necessary for their achievement" (p.3). While the terms used in these two different contexts are conceptually alike, how those involved in the negotiations view the extent of power asymmetry seems to be different. As revealed from the study conducted by Wragg et al.

(2004), individual objectives in schools are typically agreed through discussion between teachers and their team leaders within a framework identified by the school, and at least one objective must be linked to the school's objectives. This indicates that school teachers have only limited bargaining power during the negotiation process. In contrast, the participants in this study consider the goal setting a self-identification process (RG2; LG1). Responses such as "self regulated" (LG6), "We know what we need to achieve" (LG3), "I don't know what the appraiser can advise me except what we have agreed to in our last review" (RG2) reflect a gross power asymmetry in favour of academics as appraisees. This dominant position of power may create a belief among academics that the design of performance management is simply for their own personal development.

Contrary to the intention of the University's performance management strategy (UoL, 2002), the findings of this study illustrate that academics in the case School continue to assimilate the meaning and purposes of performance management primarily in terms of how the concept applies at the individual level and to neglect the organisational aspect as espoused in the policy. This phenomenon seems to suggest that academics have a set of their own underlying shared values that determine how they perceive, think and feel about performance management. Schein (1996) defines these shared values as culture and points out that it manifests itself at three levels: artifact and creation (rules, stories, norms); espoused value (strategies, goals, philosophies); and basic assumptions (unconscious and taken-for-granted beliefs). As pointed out by authors such as Parker and Jary (1995) and Henkel (1997), academic identity, which is characterised by specialisation and freedom at work, is the core value shared by most academics. This identity, particularly autonomy at work, has been internalised in the personal value systems of academics (Pritchard, 1998) and has been taken for granted by most academics (Harley, 2002).

By applying Schein's cultural perspectives, it becomes clear in this study that the basic assumptions made by academics could have led the participants unconsciously to ignore the managerial control aspect of performance management. In addition, the culture is further manifested by the impact of artifacts found in the University's documents on various performance management components such as appraisal, student evaluation, and peer-observation programmes, which tend to focus on individual development with a minimal emphasis on organisational efficiency. This cultural

analysis seems to indicate that the combination of the shared assumptions and artifacts that currently exist in the case School is forceful enough to overcome the impact of new managerial intervention and continue to guide how academics perceive the meaning and purpose of performance management. This is not a surprising result with reference to an educational institution, according to Sergiovanni and Corbally (1984). They explain that educational institutions which are loosely structured and characterised by a great deal of latitude for individuals, ambiguous goals, and wide spans of control that allow cultural factors to come into play more readily and will become more consolidated than tightly controlled organisations. Given this context, it appears that any attempt to seek academics' agreement on the purpose of performance management and their commitment to the implementation will require a change in the current culture. As pointed out by Schein (1996), "Culture arises through shared experiences of success" (p. 12). In other words, whether or not the academics experience the current performance management system as an effective and successful system could have a significant impact on how they consider the purposes of the system.

5.2 Research Question 2: How do academic participants view the effectiveness of current performance management processes in the department?

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Goal-Setting Theory and Expectancy Theory (in Kelley & Protsik, 1997) underpinning performance management suggest at least three important questions about the effectiveness of the performance management process. First, can clear individual goals be formulated? Second, is commitment to performance measures likely to be sought? Third, are financial incentives effective in motivating academics? These three questions will be discussed in turn.

5.21 Can Clear Individual Goals Be Formulated?

Goal-Setting Theory posits that setting clear, specific, challenging, and achievable goals can motivate employees to higher performance (Latham & Locke, 1979). According to various studies of schools in the UK, the use of a performance management system can help clarify goals for teachers. Having reviewed the changes in how classroom teachers and head teachers perceived performance management in the UK between 2000 and 2004, Marsden and

Belfield (2006) confirm that there is a growing perception that the system has improved the clarity of goals.

Given that the case University is research-led, the expectation of research from the University seems to be relatively clear to most academics. Almost all the participants in the study are aware of the expectation that they should be research active and undertake research of international and national quality to meet the RAE requirements. Consistent with the view of Talib (2003) and Bence and Oppenheim (2004), the findings confirm that the introduction of the RAE has provided clarity of research goals. If all academics in the case School are appointed for research only, it is plausible to argue that clear goals can be formulated for academics in higher education consistent with the findings for the British schools in the UK (Marsden & Belfield, 2006). However, academic work is multidimensional, involving teaching, research, mentoring, outreach, and administration. Added to this traditional role are entrepreneurial activities to generate funding from the private sector and other non-traditional educational programmes (Bok, 2003).

How to formulate clear goals and set priorities for these various dimensions is a challenge for two reasons. The first challenge is about articulating clear strategic objectives to guide academics to set their own individual goals. The findings of this study indicate that the School aims for "too many things in undirected ways" (CG2) and thus triggers the concern raised by Clark (1983) that the university is left with no chance to achieve all the goals which are inherently broad and ambiguous.

Another factor contributing to the reduction of goal clarity as pointed out by Richardson (1999) and Adams and Kirst (1999) is a multiplicity of competing goals from various stakeholders. The concern about multiple and sometimes conflicting demands seems to be particularly acute in the case School environment. Not only are academics subject to the demands from the University senior management, they also need to satisfy requirements such as teaching quality assessments that include both QAA audits and Ofsted inspection; RAE to ensure research funding and maintain the University's reputation; and commitment to distance education internationally. Another increasing demand, as echoed by Ogbonna and Harris (2004), is from students, 'who as "customers" in an increasingly "enterprise culture" are ever more aware of their

"rights" to demand greater levels of service' (p. 1188). This view is consistent with the finding of this study, which reveals that the case University aims to shift its culture towards a more responsive, more customer-oriented approach (UoL, 2002). This increasing demand from the students is also experienced by the participants as reflected in the following comment:

> The relationship between students and tutor has changed – in the way they become your clients or your master. So there is a sense in which the University has to provide good services to ensure meeting the needs of students in a much more explicit way' (LG6).

5.22   Is Commitment to Performance Measures Likely To Be Sought?

Seeking commitment from academics to the performance measures is critical for the success of the performance management system. This leads to an important design decision for the case School on how to operationalise the performance measures of each component of academic work to ensure they are valid and acceptable to academics.

Measuring research performance

To track the research performance, the case School has set up a research monitoring process. Although this process has been well received by almost all participants, it is viewed as a self-identification process and operates in the context of collegiality as opposed to being a means of evaluating individual performance. Despite the research monitoring process not being perceived as an evaluation system, almost all participants in the study believe that research performance can be measured and quantified. Consistent with the findings of Talib (2003), this belief is seen to be attributable to the impact of the RAE whereby it has provided clarity of research goals with a quantified measure – the "best four" publications – to evaluate research performance. Indeed, it is evident from this study that the use of this measure has successfully put pressure on those underperforming academics in research to make more commitment to research activity (LG3; LG4; LG6). At face value, it seems plausible to conclude that research performance can be measured and quantified. However, consistent with the view of Elton (2002, 2004), two participants in this study

caution that this quantitative focus could potentially elicit unethical behaviour leading academics towards research which could generate short-term results and ignore those which take a longer time to produce research results (RG1; RG2).

Measuring teaching effectiveness

Measurement problems have plagued the evaluation of teaching effectiveness in education for years, and much literature related to the performance management system in UK schools (Behn, 1997; Marsden, 2000; Luntley, 2000; Richardson, 1999) has reported the difficulty of identifying appropriate measures to judge teaching effectiveness. While measures such as observation of classroom practice and student achievements have been widely used in the education sector, both have proved problematic. Consistent with the findings of Wragg et al. (2004) in the school environment, the typical concerns with observation of classroom practice such as 'a snapshot of a teacher's classroom performance' and 'distrust of the person carrying out the observation' (p. 143) are reproduced in this study. Another controversial approach is to assess teacher effectiveness based on student achievements, for example GCSE results. As revealed from the study conducted by Marsden and Belfield (2006), less than half of surveyed head teachers in UK schools believe that this measure will work. The concern about establishing causal links between teacher contributions and student performance seem to be exacerbated in the higher education environment as identified by this study. In terms of teaching and learning, higher education aims to promote independent learning with an expectation that the learners will assume the primary responsibility for learning. The teaching approach is therefore largely based on the andragogical model (Knowles & Associates, 1984) rather than the pedagogical as used by most school teachers. With such a high level of student autonomy in higher education, the issue about holding the teacher accountable for student achievement is seen to be untenable. For this reason, it is not surprising to find that the respondents of this study are in agreement with the criticism made by Taylor (2001) about the validity of using teaching surveys to judge academic performance in higher education.

126

It is evident from this study that academics do not believe administrative work is measurable, reflecting the difficulty in seeking commitment to agreed goals. Indeed, the lack of appropriate measures to recognise the contributions of academics towards the increasing administrative workload driven by the TQA programme (RG1; RG2) and course leadership role (LG4) is a serious concern. These administrative activities seem to be the main contributory factor for the intensification of workload, as discussed earlier, and are viewed as the 'least favourite task' by most academics in UK higher institutions as revealed in the study conducted by Bryson and Barnes (2000) and confirmed by this research (LG1). While the concern about failure of performance indicators to capture all facets of academics' work seems to be typical for the higher education sector (Taylor, 2001), the consequence of not recognising administrative responsibilities could greatly undermine employee commitment to the organisation using the perspective of Psychological Contract Theory (in Stiles et al., 1997). Unlike research and teaching, academics generally do not claim they gain intrinsic satisfaction from the administrative work itself. Without proper measures in place to recognise the contributions from academics to administrative tasks and to maintain a balance of roles to ensure the administrative work will not force them to forgo their opportunity to achieve the performance targets for teaching and research, it is difficult to see how academics will commit to any performance measures adopted by the performance management system.

5.23   Are Financial Incentives Effective in Motivating Academics?

As revealed in this study, academics do not appear to be greatly motivated by the reward programmes of the system. This finding resembles responses from school teachers to the performance management system introduced in the UK (Marsden & Belfield, 2005) and is consistent with research findings identified by Varlaam et al. (1992), Lacy and Sheehan (1997), and Firestone (1991), which all confirm the importance of intrinsic rewards for academics. These intrinsic rewards associated with cultural values of academic professionalism may actually inhibit discussion of extrinsic rewards. Although the financial-incentive element of the system does not seem to motivate academics, the need to ensure academics will not be upset by the extrinsic

reward systems is critical according to Herzberg's Hygiene Theory (Herzberg, 1968). This study reveals two equity concerns associated with the reward programmes, which will potentially cause academic dissatisfaction.

The equity concerns identified in this study are somewhat similar to two types of justice associated with the pay for performance system put forth by Heneman (1992). One is about interactional equity that relates to perceived fairness in the communication of reward programmes. To ensure academics are provided with equal opportunities to receive the award, it is critical to ensure they are provided with adequate information of how the system works and what steps they need to take. As reported by this study, participants at various levels have only a vague idea of various reward programmes. Only those who have actually received the awards could articulate how the programme works. The lack of clear or proactive communication to make the programme transparent to all participants seems to create an interactional equity concern.

Distributive equity is another concern that relates to the perceived fairness on how the awards are made. Prewitt et al. (1991) and Grant (1998) contend that most performance-related pay programmes in academia tend to reward only the quantified measure of publication of research and put teaching and administration as secondary determinants. As a consequence, this biased focus puts those academics whose role is primarily teaching in a disadvantaged position and "will not evoke the correct response from faculty and, indeed, may engender sufficient discontent to be counterproductive," warned Grant (1998, p. 9). The findings of this study concur with the literature discourse and confirm that contrary to what was expressed in the reward policy document (UoL, 2007h) – equal emphasis on teaching and research as the criteria for rewards, the primary determinant for rewards in reality remains research output, particularly for promotion decisions. While this phenomenon seems to be the norm in the higher education sector, particularly in a research-led university, two unique contextual features in the case School are found exacerbating the perception of the inequity concern. Closely related to work intensification discussed earlier, the distributive equity concern stems from the increased workload that undermines the ability of academics to get to do research work in order to receive the rewards. Another contextual factor is that the case School is partly characterised as a teacher training school (in addition to its regular academic masters and doctoral programmes) where

most academics come from a school teaching background, and they see their personal identities as professional teachers (LG4). By rendering teaching effectiveness as a secondary determinant for the reward programmes, the University creates the perception of unfairness, particularly for those academics who are not seasoned in doing research (LG6).

5.3   Research Question 3: How do academic participants perceive the impact of the academic manager on their work performance?

The key ingredient for successful implementation of the performance management system is the line manager, according to the proponents of performance management. As asserted by Williams (2002), the manager should act as a 'communicator' and an 'owner' of the performance management process. The importance of this managerial role is echoed by Wragg et al. (2004) when they stress that the effective relationship between school teachers and their team leaders who are viewed as the line manager in the school is critical for the success of the performance management system. The question – to what extent are managers in the university setting effective in the performance management role? – has been addressed in previous research (Deem et al., 2001; Henkel, 2002; Prichard & Willmott, 1997) based on the views from the jobholders. In sharp contrast to these studies, this research provides evidence from the perspectives of those managed.

Previous research reveals that the effects of the new managerialism have led to the emergence of a managerial class in the university setting titled "academic manager", with a legitimate role in performance management. This new managerial class, however, is not found in this research study. Indeed, the results of this research report that most participants are not aware of the term 'academic manager' and do not seem to support the notion of 'line manager'. In addition, the study also reveals that the case School is still characterised by what Clark (1983) describes as a flat structure of loosely coupled parts. Operating within such an environment, determining who is responsible for performance management proves to be a challenge. In contrast to the school environment in the UK where the team leaders are the sole owners making performance management decisions (Wragg et al., 2004), this study identifies performance management in the case School is carried out by a diverse group which comprises the

head of department and academic leaders such as course leader, academic research director, and appraiser. It is also evident that the involvement of these four stakeholders in the process seems to create two overarching concerns: role ambiguity and role effectiveness, as identified by this study.

5.31   Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity stems from the overlap of activities between these four roles and the lack of clear accountability to define what the expectations of each specific role in performance management are. As a consequence, this ambiguity raises questions of who should ultimately be accountable for the process as expressed by one participant of this study (LG1), and what should be the identity of this group to account for their work. While the head of department in theory should be the owner of this process, almost all participants feel that the wide span of control makes this role almost impossible to take on this ownership. This constraint results in the devolution of performance management responsibility to three different roles of academic leaders: course leader, academic research director, and appraiser. Although participants do not view these academic leaders as 'line managers', the 'double identities' concern raised by Glesson and Shain (1999) for academic managers working in the further education sector seems to be reproduced for this group of people. Similar to the findings of studies conducted by Deem et al. (2001) and Glesson and Shain (1999), academic leaders who are assigned with performance management responsibility retain their academic work as "a parallel strand of their work identity" (Deem et al., 2001, p. 11). Effectively balancing their role in "potentially conflictual relations between professional and managerial interests" (Glesson & Shain, 1999, p. 470) is a challenge. Without a clear expectation of their managerial role, it is evident that these academic leaders tend to emphasise their role as academic advocate and focus less on the managerial stance.

5.32   Role Effectiveness

Role effectiveness is found to be another concern in the present study. The lack of clear accountability and vested authority to make performance management decisions is one of the primary factors contributing to this concern. This study confirms that there is no hierarchical relationship between the academic leaders and academics

130

(LG1). As a result, the academic leaders tend to function as peers relying on their influential power (LG3) that is derived from two sources, characterised by Clark (1983) as personal rulership and collegial rulership – to get academics to perform at the required level. Given that the relationship is dominated by collegial rules, it is therefore not surprising to find the academic leaders in the case School are not taking a harder approach as are the team leaders in British schools to be "more overly focused on reaching targets and rectifying perceived weaknesses" (Wragg, 2004, p. 136). Nor has this study identified any academic leaders in the case School who have made use of "the performance techniques to get academics unsuccessful in research to choose early retirement or teaching-only contracts," as reported by Deem et al. (2001, p. 14). Based on the responses from those managed, the impact of these academic leaders on individual academics is largely perceived as advisory on professional development as opposed to directive towards organisational goals. While this informal managerial arrangement seems to be consistent with the prevailing culture in the case School, there is an emerging concern among the participants about the ability of the system to tackle poor performance and ensure equitable allocation of work.

A further major factor affecting role effectiveness is work intensification. As noted earlier, all academic leaders retain their academic status, with a heavy workload in teaching and research. Closely linked to the impact of the work intensification on academics, it is plausible to argue that the academic leaders in this study face similar tensions between their regular academic work and involvement in performance management as academic managers as reported by Deem et al. (2001), which makes it difficult for academic leaders to decide on their priorities. Because of these tensions, Deem et al. (2001) note that this type of part-time managerial role can only be performed effectively by working long hours. As the academics in this study are already facing difficulty in finding time to work on research, which is viewed as the most critical component of academic work among the others, it is therefore not surprising to find the performance management technique used by the academic leaders to perform their managerial role is largely confined to regular scheduled meetings with those managed to discuss goals and objectives. Other progressive steps such as follow-up action and ongoing feedback that call for a time commitment from reviewers seem to be left out as reported by the participants (LG1; LG6; RG2; RG3; CG2). Based on this finding, it can be argued that the time constraint and unrealistic role expectations

131

(otherwise known as over-extended roles) undermine the ability of the academic leaders to effectively carry out all facets of performance management.

5.4 Research Question 4: How do academic participants respond to the process, measures, and outcomes involved in operating the performance management system?

It is a widely held perception that the managerial principle of performance management is in conflict with university traditions of 'collegiality' and 'academic freedom'. The literature using labour-process perspectives (Dearlove, 1997; Willmott, 1995; Wilson, 1991) and Foucaultian analysis (Findlay & Newton, 1998; Townley, 1993) argues that the potential impact of managerial control will degrade academic work as a result of Taylorisation, proletarianisation, and commodification. The effects of degradation will lead to alienation, causing academics to feel a sense of powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness and isolation; and self-estrangement with respect to their work (Kanungo, 1979; Seeman, 1959).

When examining how academics respond to change, Trowler (1997) has conceptualised the strategies adopted by academics into four categories, namely swimming, policy reconstruction, sinking, and coping. Swimming and reconstruction signify that academics are content with the changes and are adapting to the new context, whereas sinking and coping indicate those who are sceptical and disenchanted with the change. Upon closer examination of the definition of each category, it seems plausible to admit that academics in the sinking category are closest to the notion of alienation which Trowler (1996) associates with "intensification in workload, decline in resources, deskilling in some cases, increases in student number and general degradation of the labour process have led to weariness, disillusionment and even illness for these academics" (p. 360).

These four response strategies are correspondingly found in this research study, although under different titles: sailing, redefining, struggling, and submerging. However, no participants in the present study are identified as having to adopt the submerging strategy, which is analogous to Trowler's sinking strategy. The results of

this research suggest that participants have managed to adjust themselves to the system. It is also evident that at least two senior and a regular academics (LG3; LG4; RG3) report that the scope of academic work provides them with enough room to adopt a redefining strategy to regain their professional identity. This view is in line with the literature findings that confirm the opportunities available for reprofessionalisation within the context of managerialism. For example, the changing context may call for new teaching skills (Wilson, 1991; Nixon, 1997) which can be used by academics as a source to derive their new identity; and the new performance standards, for example, the RAE results which can provide academics with a source of self-evaluation to demonstrate their professional values (Willmott, 1995; Harley, 2002) and build up their domesticated professionalism (Campion & Renner, 1995). Closely linked with the work intensification concern noted earlier, it is not surprising to find more than half of participants warn that they may be forced to adopt the struggling strategy. However, it must be noted that the concern about struggling identified in this study is mostly related to time constraint that is perceived as a control on what academics can get done as opposed to managerial aspects of the performance management system.

Based on the above discussion, it seems plausible to argue that there is no strong evidence to support the view that academics included in this study are alienated by the performance management system as claimed by the literature using labour process perspectives. However, the simmering resentment of the system that exists seems to be due to the following unique contextual factors found in the case School. First, the performance management system has not been fully implemented in accordance with the Goal-Setting Theory and Expectancy Theory and, therefore, those dysfunctional effects claimed by the proponents of the labour-process perspectives have not been tested. Alignment of individual contributions with the goals of their department and the university at large is a critical component of performance management. This integration, according to authors such as Harris (2005), Dearlove (1997), Harley and Lee (1997), and Worthington and Hodgson (2005), will lead to commodification of academic work putting pressure on individual academics to adjust some of their own goals to comply with the university requirements that are associated with immediate exchange value (Willmott, 1995; Harley & Lee, 1997). As reported in this study, this

vertical integration or the concept of 'cascade objective' is missing and the goal-setting process is predominantly a self-identification process in which academics retain the full autonomy to determine their own goals. In short, the compliance requirement as expected by the conventional performance management system has not yet been imposed. Another key component of performance management is the need to define and measure performance with quantifiable indicators to achieve efficiency through standardisation of work. While the standardisation of activities could facilitate specialisation for increased productivity and the meeting of external goals, it could also lead to a concern about Taylorisation of the academic labour process, according to Dominelli et al. (1996) and Schapper and Mayson (2005). This study confirms the difficulty in identifying and defining performance measures to evaluate academic work. While the use of the RAE as a quantifiable measure has put some pressure on academics to focus on research output, there is no strong evidence to demonstrate that this measure has fragmented the academic labour process into components by forcing individuals to choose between a teaching only and a research only position.

Secondly, the lack of a dedicated manager/leader with the formal authority and commitment to carry out performance management activities is another unique feature of the case School. In the absence of such an individual to exercise managerial control, the academics have yet to experience any real impact of being managed. It is therefore difficult, based on their current views, to determine whether they can adapt to a managerial structure, which should have been set up to support performance management, without a feeling of alienation.

Finally, a further unique contextual factor is that the main recruitment source for new academics for the case School is normally from schools. These newcomers as revealed in this study have less trouble in accepting the control aspects of the performance management system. This is due to their previous background in schools, where a more rigorous performance management has existed for years (CG3) along with their limited experience with traditional academic work and privilege (Symon, 2005).

5.5   Research Question 5: What do academic participants think is an effective performance management system?

Suggestions on how to improve the system are quite specific and are focused on issues identified during the discussion on the effectiveness of the current performance management process and the ability of the academic leaders to carry out the performance management function. In general, there is a high degree of uniformity among participants as to proposed changes, such as the need to ensure the processes adopted by the system are equitable, foster prevailing collegial culture, and call for effective leadership to manage the process. What is striking, however, is the divided view on the need for a more formalised performance management system.

5.51   The Need for a More Formalised System

The findings of this study reveal that at least three academics in the leadership capacity advocate a more formalised system (LG1; LG2; LG4) while one participant explicitly disapproves of this suggestion and calls for an informal system (RG2). The rest of the participants put themselves in a neutral position. This disparate opinion underscores value-based variance in the perceptions of performance management among participants. In addition, the value expressed by the leadership group seems to be at odds with the current wisdom using labour-process perspectives that expect academics to oppose any form of managerial control. How sharp is the dichotomy between these two values? Upon closer examination, it seems plausible to argue that there is not much difference between these two sets of underlying values. Both of them aim to maintain collegiality. As revealed in the findings, the rationale behind the preference for a more formalised system from the leadership group is not derived from the managerial control perspective for increased efficiency and productivity. Rather it is driven by the need to allocate the workload evenly among academics in order to ensure that each individual will have an equal opportunity to participate in research work and that their professional autonomy will not be undermined due to an uneven balance of the workload.

5.52   The Need to Maintain a Collegial Culture

The evidence on the need to maintain a collegial culture is further apparent from the changes to the performance management processes suggested by the academics on the design of the performance management processes. These suggestions include the focus on teamwork (LG3; CG1), involvement in decision-making (CG1), the use of intrinsic rewards to minimise a divisive effect (RG3; LG2), equitable allocation of work (LG6), recognition of all facets of academic work (RG1; LG6), and the transparency of the system (LG1; RG2; LG4). All these suggested changes are in line with the concepts of the collegial model that emphasises providing every academic member with equal authority to participate in decision-making and treating every individual equally (Middlehurst, 1993; Bush, 1995).

5.53   The Need for an Effective Leader

Given the entrenched collegial culture, implementing a performance management system represents a significant organisational change for higher education. To implement the change effectively, the literature suggests that it is important to engage effective leaders (Middlehurst & Elton, 1992) to act as change agents (Kotter, 1996) to facilitate the change process and manage the system once it is implemented. This study concurs with the suggestion found in the literature and reveals the need for someone who is highly motivated to develop people (LG2) and who is effective in management (CG2), someone who can effectively manage the goal-setting and measurement processes (LG1) and who can create a climate conducive to helping academics achieve their objectives (LG2).

While the suggestion to appoint an effective leader to manage the process makes sense and is supported by the literature, deciding who should take up this leadership role to meet the expectations as suggested from the findings is a challenge. As pointed out by Middlehurst (1993), "Leadership can only be exercised effectively in the academic context on the basis of legitimate authority and influence and the willing compliance of organisational members" (p. 74). According to Middlehurst (1993), the legitimate authority to manage academics "must be acknowledged by the individuals in the community and earned by those aspiring to leadership through exemplifying

particular values, by providing benefits to individuals and groups that would otherwise be unavailable" (p. 75). As pointed out by Yielder and Codling (2004), two types of leadership could potentially fulfil the expected roles: academic and managerial leadership. It is evident from this research that academic leaders are often not effective in generating the benefits as described by Middlehurst (1993), and, as noted earlier, the lack of formal authority to carryout the managing role could create disillusionment among academic leaders. Moreover, the growth in administrative demands further makes it more difficult for academic leaders to achieve an appropriate balance of leadership, namely, between teaching and research. An alternative idea is to create a new managerial class, similar to the appointment of 'academic managers' in other universities. However, there are two challenges for creating such a new managerial class. First, unless this position is filled by a full-time professional manager instead of academics on a temporary basis, the tension between managerial and academic work, as identified by Deem et al. (2001), will be reproduced, thus undermining their ability to effectively manage the performance management process. Second, if this position is filled by a full-time professional manager without an academic background or expertise in the discipline, it is questionable whether academics will acknowledge this person has the right to manage them.

5.6   Conclusion

This chapter has presented a discussion of the findings of this study and has employed previous literature to inform the discussion. The results of this study indicate that academics believe the purpose of performance management at the case School is primarily professional development and that the managerial control aspect is largely neglected. This belief is largely linked to the deeply-held values of participants nurtured by a collegial culture and traditional academic identity.

The discussion of the findings on the effectiveness of the current processes provides evidence that academics find difficulty in setting their priorities due to a multiplicity of demands, lack of clear direction from the School, and time constraints. Another concern is about the appropriateness of measures to accurately evaluate their performance. Research on academic motivation confirms that individuals tend to be more responsive to intrinsic rewards than financial incentives, which further undermine

the perceived effectiveness of current performance management processes. The study also reveals that the case School delegates the performance management responsibility to academic leaders. The lack of vested authority, along with the difficulty in stretching enough time to carry out performance management activities in a truly professional way, adversely impacts their effectiveness in performing the role.

Given that the performance management system has been only loosely implemented, most academics do not seem to find difficulty in adapting to the system, thereby explaining why the alienation concern raised by the labour-process theorists is not found in this study. In fact, the findings provide evidence that some academics might easily accept a more control-oriented system due to their previous experience with a more a rigorous system and their creative approach in redefining and reconstructing their professional identity within the context of performance management.

In making recommendations on areas for improvement, a more formalised system is called for to address the work intensification issue in order to maintain equity and preserve collegiality. Another key suggestion is to replace academic leaders with managerial leaders to manage the process. This proposed change, however, raises a concern as to whether such leaders would only focus on managerial interests instead of professional development by imposing more managerial control, thus creating alienation for the academics.

Overall, the results of this study are broadly consistent with the findings of relevant previous studies or theories expressed in the literature. The striking differences identified by this study are related to the debate on the emergence of a new managerial class to take charge of the performance management processes and the replacement of collegiality by more overt line management. At the time this study was conducted, there was no such professional managerial positions identified in the case School and the collegial culture remained strong. Another key finding of this study is that it uncovered an emerging link between work intensification and performance management. The synthesis of findings reveals that work intensification creates an uneven balance of workload among academics. The effect of increased workload imposes a threat to the traditional professional identity as it undermines the ability of academics to meet their

own professional objectives, particularly on research. It also threatens collegiality as there is no time for academics to continue to provide collegial support for each other. These threats cause frustration among academics and change their entrenched perspectives of managerial control aspects of performance management, hoping that it can be used as a means of ensuring fairness in the distribution of work among diverse academics. Given this link, along with the evidence that academics have some room to accommodate more managerial control due to their previous background and their ability to redefine or reconstruct their professional identity, it is plausible to conclude that work intensification presents an opportunity for performance management to take root in British universities. To capitalise this opportunity and provide fertile ground for performance management to grow, the results of this study also provide some evidence to demonstrate the need to appoint effective leaders to implement the change and manage the ongoing process. However, how to structure this leadership role to ensure it will function effectively without undermining collegiality remains an unknown area that will require further research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0   Introduction

The higher education sector in the UK has been subject in the last decade to a range of external performance measures and requirements such as the RAE and TQA. These external accountabilities have led to universities developing internal performance management systems mirroring the external systems to more actively manage academics. The aim of both internal and external systems is to ensure that individual interests and goals match and align with the goals of universities to meet all requirements (Broadbent, 2007; Brennan & Shah, 2000; Middlehurst & Kennie, 2003). Previous literature points out that introducing such a policy, which is embedded with a managerial discourse, is, however, at odds with the traditional relationship between university management and academics which emphasises self-regulation, collegial accountability, and self-improvement (Deem, 1998; Brennan & Shah, 2000). The purpose of this study is to seek an in-depth understanding of how a small group of academics perceive and experience the values of the performance management system in the context of a School of Education in an older British university, established before 1992. Drawing on data from in-depth, semi-structured interviews and documentary sources, the researcher shaped a contextual account of the performance management system in the case School of Education. The findings of this study were reported in Chapter 4 and discussed in detail in Chapter 5 by comparing them with relevant previous studies and theories reported in the literature. In this concluding chapter, the main contributions of this study will be summarised. The implications of the findings and recommendations for future policy development will then be explored. Finally, the chapter concludes with a statement of the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

6.1   Conclusions

This study was guided by five research questions that were posed at the outset. The discussion below summarises the key findings corresponding to each research question and demonstrates the contributions of this research to the body of existing

knowledge on performance management in the context of UK higher education. Throughout the discussion, any unique contextual factors affecting the perception of the system and any significant issues that could potentially affect the successful implementation of the system will be fleshed out. It is hoped that the experiences drawn from this study may help university management identify improvements needed to their system in order to make it more effective in meeting the expected aims and outcomes.

6.11   Research Question 1: How do academic participants perceive the purposes and values of the performance management system?

The extent to which university management and academics share the same view or have a common understanding of the term 'performance management' is of strategic importance to the implementation of the programme. Any gap or mismatch could result in scepticism among academics about the intention of introducing performance management. At the case School, the performance management system is designed to serve multi-level purposes to accommodate the need to fulfil the external accountability requirements, the need to meet the University's mission as an organisation, and the need of individual academics for professional development. To meet these multi-level purposes, the case School operates five processes under the umbrella of the performance management system that include a development-oriented appraisal scheme, a research monitoring process to meet the RAE requirements, mentoring and probation reports for newly-joined academics, teaching evaluation in the form of peer observation and student feedback surveys, and reward programmes such as a promotion and an achievement bonus scheme to recognise outstanding performance.

While this system appears to have many good characteristics, at least in principle, to support the University's needs to meet the accountability requirements and the individual needs for professional development, the term 'performance management' is regarded by participants of this study as ambiguous. As revealed from the findings, three out of 12 participants included in this study have explicitly claimed that the term is either confusing or non-existent in the University. In addition, almost all of the academics interviewed were not well-versed in the reasons for the University introducing performance management. Two participants speculated that the purpose of performance management was for managerial control, based on what they had read

from the literature. This speculative view was also supported by the other three senior academics, but their judgement was based on their personal belief on what the system should do rather than their understanding of the University's policy. Confusion is also found among the remaining participants. Their perception of performance management was largely influenced by their experience with the appraisal scheme leading them to believe that the purpose of performance management is primarily for individual professional development.

What has led to the present confusion? Previous literature argues that the term 'performance management' is elusive, due to its open approach, which tends to serve multiple purposes (Williams, 2002) and involves a range of varied activities that are not necessarily coherent with each other (Den Hartog et al., 2004; Brown, 2005). For this reason, the literature has yet to come up with a universal definition, resulting in a wide range of different interpretations depending on individual beliefs or values. Consistent with the literature, the system set up at the case School is characterised by a similar mixture of multi-level purposes, operating with multiple processes, thus making it difficult to reach an agreement on a precise meaning of performance management in the case School.

What complicates the matter further is that each process of the system can be used to serve two conflicting functions: an evaluative purpose which is seen as 'managerial control' to meet the organisational needs and a developmental purpose which is focused on 'collegial relationship' to meet individual needs for professional growth (Reeves et al., 2002; Middlewood, 1997). For example, while an appraisal scheme itself can be used for professional development, it can also be interpreted as a technology to covertly control how well individuals perform their job (Findlay & Newton, 1998; Townley, 1993). Similarly, peer-teaching observation can be perceived as managerial control despite the fact that the assessment is done by peers rather than line managers, according to Casey et al. (1997). As pointed out by Middlewood and Carno (2001), the dual function of each process, along with the need to meet a number of purposes, will increase potential conflict between the university and individual academics on how they view the purpose of each process. Within the case School, it is apparent that the research monitoring process and the reward programmes serve the University's mission and meet the external accountability requirements; while the

appraisal scheme, teaching evaluations, and mentoring and probation reports elements are seen as collegial processes meant to enhance professional growth. While there was no division between the values of the policy and academics on the developmental focused processes such as the appraisal scheme, teaching evaluation, and mentoring and probation report, it is evident that a disparate view was found over the research monitoring process. As revealed from the findings, only two participants out of 12 could see the evaluative aspect of this process. Others used the lens of individual development.

What further increases the present confusion in the case School is that a multiplicity of processes is operating in tandem and is managed by different evaluators. The incompatibility between developmental and evaluative purposes seems to justify having separate processes, managed by different persons to ensure that employees can receive accurate feedback about their strengths and meet their developmental needs (Beer et al., 1978; Middlewood & Cardno, 2001). However, the ambiguity concerns might then be exacerbated by involving multiple persons in the evaluation process. The persons involved in the two processes may come with different values derived from the variation in the policy rhetoric. For the appraiser, the focus is centred on professional development, emphasising what needs to be done to facilitate individual growth in the job. In contrast, the academic research director is more concerned about the expected output such as the number of publications. With this difference in focus, the view on how the academic performs and the feedback provided by the appraisers are not necessarily consistent with the feedback given by the academic research director. Consequently, academics may be confused about which direction they should follow, thereby casting doubt on the credibility of the whole performance management system.

The above discussion signals the importance of ensuring the multiple processes of the system are well-integrated as a package of measures, and that the policy value of each process is clearly distinguished and articulated. However, the findings of this study confirm that this co-ordination is lacking in the case School. At least three senior academics openly criticised the system as fragmented with no co-ordination between processes. One academic voiced the complaint that the overlap between appraisal and research monitoring processes was irritating to academics as they had to provide and discuss the same research information at least twice, once with the appraiser and again

with the research group director. Furthermore, two other participants questioned the link between the performance and reward programmes. The lack of co-ordination seems to add confusion among academics about what the real purpose of performance management is, the result of which leads them to interpret it in their own way, based on their personal values. Guided by entrenched academic identity (Pritchard, 1998; Harley, 2002) regarding personal values and the past experience of traditional values of an appraisal scheme, it is evident that the small group of academic participants in the case School still believes that performance management is primarily for professional development. This result challenges the conventional view that performance management is a manifestation of managerialism focusing on increased efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability (Middlehurst & Kennie, 2003).

Taken together, it is plausible to argue that it is the confusion and uncertainty about the meaning of the term performance management and the purpose of implementing multiple programmes that contribute to the gap between the University's intention and the views of the participants. The lack of concordance raises a concern about whether academics will accept and commit to the performance management system.

6.12 Research Question 2: How do academic participants view the effectiveness of current performance management processes in the department?

According to conventional Goal-Setting Theory and Expectancy Theory (in Kelley & Protsik, 1997), performance management systems can raise motivation if three requirements are met: work objectives and appropriate work priorities are clarified and specified; assessments are fair and accurate; and a clear connection between financial incentives and academics' efforts is established. This study, however, reveals that the system implemented by the case School has not been effective in meeting these three requirements.

Goal setting

Considerable concern is raised in the literature about setting clear goals in the higher education sector (Clark, 1983; Adams & Kirst, 1999). Three participants asserted

that the mandate of the School is so broad and ambiguous that it is almost impossible to determine specific and achievable goals, a finding consistent with Clark's study (1983). While part of the internal performance management system is geared to preparing for the RAE – a part that has provided clarity to research as a major goal – research is just one of the many goals that the case School aims to achieve. Not only does the case School operate a wide range of masters and doctoral programmes – mostly but not exclusively by distance learning – to meet its core functions of knowledge creation and knowledge transmission (Houston et al., 2006), it also has a major role in initial teacher preparation for both primary and secondary sectors. Further diversifying the mission of the School is its entrepreneurial activities. The involvement in these diverse activities, together with the need to meet the external accountabilities such as TQA and RAE, and increasing expectation from students, makes the task of goal setting complex.

Indeed, almost all participants included in the study indicated that they had received very little information about the organisational goals from appraisers at the goal-setting meetings. Arguably, the goal-setting exercise at the case School could be perceived as a self-identification process as pointed out by one senior academic. This arrangement, however, did not seem to create problems for the academics. Based on responses from five participants, their professional identity and enthusiasm enabled them to know what they individually needed to achieve. What seems to be of concern, however, for more than half of those interviewed is the intensification of academic work fuelled by administrative work for accountability purposes; the reduction of clerical and secretarial support in helping them achieve administrative goals; and their involvement in 'entrepreneurial' activities. This 'overwhelming' workload could potentially force most of the participant academics to "muddle through" the various activities imposed on them, rather than rely on a more organised work schedule to determine their goals and work priorities.

Performance measures

Unsurprisingly, seeking valid and reliable measures to accurately determine the performance level of academics in research, teaching, and administration has proved to be a challenge. All participants in the study, including the newly hired

academics, agreed that research performance is measurable based on a number of quality publications – the "best four" publications. Consistent with Talib's (2003) research, the tone set by the RAE requirements seems to have been accepted by academics as the key measure for their research performance. Only two participants voiced Elton's (2001; 2004) concern as a caution that the use of simple productivity measures to judge their research performance could encourage changes in short-term behaviour resulting in unintended and detrimental consequences such as eschewing research that takes a longer time to complete. This cautious concern does not seem to provide enough evidence to argue that the current research performance measure is problematic, while it may be worth future investigation.

While the case School has put in place a peer-observation and a student-feedback scheme to measure the quality of teaching, about half of the participants concurred with the conventional view that the lack of valid measures to evaluate teaching effectiveness was still a concern. At least two participants argued that the observation of classroom practice could only produce a snapshot result and its validity was subject to the honesty and the ability of the observer, a finding consistent with Wragg et al.'s research (2004). Furthermore, the perception that peer observation may be ineffective led to participation in the scheme being on a voluntary basis and its infrequent use made it seem like a less formal measurement. In addition, this study underscores the difficulty in using student achievement to judge teaching performance. Despite all participants being proud of their teaching skills, two participants voiced a concern about establishing causal links between teacher contributions and student performance, due to many uncontrollable factors. This reservation is in line with the Marsden and Belfield's research (2006) on the school environment in the UK. Moreover, it is conceivable that the emphasis on independent learning in higher education exacerbates the difficulty in holding the teacher accountable for student achievement (Taylor, 2001).

Administration was viewed by most participants as a chore and was characterised as the 'least satisfying task' (LG1). However, this dimension of work has recently intensified, largely driven by increased co-ordination activities for the TQA programme and increased involvement in course leadership as experienced by most participants. Identifying appropriate measures to quantify the performance in

146

administration seemed to be a challenge according to the findings. With the intensification of administrative work and the fact that academics generally claim they do not gain intrinsic satisfaction from the administrative work itself (Bryson & Barnes, 2000), the consequence of not having appropriate performance indicators to recognise the contribution to this dimension of work could greatly undermine the commitment of academics to the organisation, according to the perspective of Psychological Contract Theory (in Stiles et al., 1997). In addition, administration is one of the criteria for promotion and bonus awards. The absence of performance indicators to quantify achievements in this area may put those academics whose involvement in administration overwhelms teaching and research at a disadvantage for promotion and receiving rewards.

Financial incentives

Consistent with the existing knowledge base (Varlaam et al., 1992; Lacy & Sheehan, 1997), this research confirms that academics tend to be more responsive to intrinsic rewards such as professional competency and autonomy than financial incentives, a fact that further undermines the perceived effectiveness of the current performance management processes. Three participants criticised the tenuous link between performance and reward in the case University, and one of them further argued that the reward system could create a divisive and counterproductive environment (LG2; Kohn, 1993). Another three participants described their reward experiences, but felt that the reward programme could only bring limited impact. While the academics were not in favour of financial incentives, it appears that reward programmes are generally viewed as hygiene factors and must be maintained to avoid dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1968). Based on the responses from five participants, a source of dissatisfaction is the lack of clear or proactive communication to make the programmes more transparent to all participants to ensure they understand the steps needed in order to increase their opportunities to qualify for the rewards.

A further concern is linked to the academics' belief as to whether they have the ability and opportunity to engage in activities that qualify for the rewards. Being a research-led University, the key determinant for rewards, particularly for promotion, is research performance. Prewitt et al. (1991) and Grant (1998) contend that this bias

towards research and against teaching puts those academics whose role is primarily teaching at a disadvantage. In this study, the research emphasis in itself, however, does not seem to be a source of disagreement for many of the academics as they are well aware that they work in a research-led University. It was a particular concern, however, for the teacher-training staff who could claim little opportunity to engage in research, as opined by five participants. Another emerging concern is that most academics are burdened with heavy teaching and administration loads that impair their ability to complete the targeted research work and thus undermine their chance to receive the expected rewards (LG5; RG2).

6.13   Research Question 3: How do academic participants perceive the impact of the academic manager on their work performance?

The successful implementation of performance management requires the manager to be properly equipped for the role and to have the necessary resources and time to discharge the performance management responsibilities. This study underscores the dilemma in relation to appointing the appropriate personnel to manage this process.

The research identified four key stakeholders involved in the performance management processes. Half of the participants felt that HoD was their line manager and should therefore have a vital role in performance management. However, it was generally agreed that the otherwise flat structure, with a wide span of control, made it almost impossible to have the HoD carry out the performance management activities for more than 40 academics in the School. Indeed, the role of HoD in the School is limited to overseeing the processes to ensure they adhere to the University's policy and guidelines. The actual performance management responsibilities have devolved into three different roles of academic leaders (course leader, academic research director, and appraiser) who take on this role in addition to their academic work. While the involvement of three different people can address the needs of each separate process, that is, accountability versus development, academics may become confused with the feedback they receive from each stakeholder. Such feedback and advice could be varied and conflicting. A further significant concern raised by two participants centred on who should have the ultimate responsibility to monitor the performance of all facets of academic work. Given that each academic leader is only responsible for one aspect of

academic work, it raises a question of who is the central person with the accountability for collating all performance information together from various processes and deciding on an overall rating for each academic.

Added to this ambiguity is a concern about the effectiveness of each academic leader in performing their role as a manager. There were two issues here: formal authority and double identity. In the absence of formal authority (course leaders, for example, might not be senior academics), two senior participants confirmed that course leaders tended to function as peers, relying on their influential power that is derived from two sources, characterised by Clark (1983) as personal rulership and collegial rulership, to get academics to perform at the required level. Similarly, according to one senior participant (not necessarily shared by others), the academic research director ended up using the collegial leadership style as opposed to a more hierarchical and management-centred approach to ensure academics completed the expected publications on a timely basis, despite the fact that the process is designed for managerial control. With respect to the appraiser, the variation in skills and commitment to perform the role of appraiser led to a divided view on the effectiveness of this role. Three participants found the appraisers assigned to them had provided effective support while three others felt the opposite. Further affecting the effectiveness of academic leaders to perform the performance management role is the need to deal with the tension of trying to be a manager, remaining an academic member, and continuing to do research and teaching (Deem, 2001; Deem et al., 2001; Glesson & Shain, 1999). Already overloaded with academic work, the lack of clear accountability and vested authority to make performance management decisions undermine the ability of academic leaders to effectively carry out the role of performance management to address poor performance (RG3), provide ongoing feedback (RG2), and ensure that appropriate remedial or career development action is taken (LG1).

The above findings demonstrate two overarching problems: role ambiguity and role effectiveness faced by academic leaders when carrying out the performance management activities in addition to their regular academic work. This raises a question of whether this role should be instead taken up by full-time professional managers. If this is the choice, it raises a further question of whether the appointment of a full-time professional manager without an academic background or expertise in the discipline

would be accepted and acknowledged by academics as having the right to manage them (Middlehurst, 1993).

6.14   Research Question 4: How do academic participants respond to the process, measures, and outcomes involved in operating the performance management system?

Three different response strategies were identified among the participants in this study: a 'sailing' strategy, a 'redefining' strategy, and a 'struggling' strategy, as explained below.

Nine academics interviewed felt that the current performance management arrangements have minimal impacts on their working lives and thus they have made no change to their working practices. The entrenched collegial culture in the case School and the personal pride in their self-efficacy seem to lead them to believe they can continue their usual practices ('sailing' strategy) to contribute their best to the job, regardless of measures and processes imposed on them under the umbrella of performance management. Another factor contributing to this belief is linked to their relative experience with performance management. Two newly-hired academics in this group indicated that they had been subject to a more rigorous performance management system in their previous employment, for example, in secondary or primary schools, and therefore had less trouble adapting to the system in the case School.

Three participants used a lens through which they saw the positive aspects of the system and the scope of the academic work that would provide them with enough room to reconfigure their job focus (redefining strategy) to regain any loss of professional identity due to the control aspects of the system. This view is in line with the literature findings confirming that the context of managerialism could potentially create new opportunities for re-professionalisation including new teaching skills (Wilson, 1991; Nixon, 1997); new performance standards as a source of self-evaluation (Willmott, 1995; Harley, 2002); and domesticated professionalism (Campion & Renner, 1995).

While all participants included in the study felt they could adapt to the system, more than half of them were unhappy with the current system and claimed that they might be forced to adopt a struggling strategy to cope with the situation. Their concern,

150

however, is not linked to managerial control. Rather, they blamed the School for adopting a laissez-faire approach to performance management, which has created a culture of 'you can do your own thing' to avoid accountability (LG2), resulting in an uneven workload among academics (LG1; LG5). With the intensification of work, particularly in teaching and administration, and a perceived imbalance in workload, it is not surprising to find some academics are struggling to find time to get on with their research work (RG2).

Based on the above findings, it is plausible to argue that there is little evidence to support the conventional view (Simmons, 2001) that the performance management system in the School has undermined academic freedom. However, it must be cautioned that this conclusion is based on the premise that some of the control-oriented components of performance management, for example, cascade-down goal setting, have yet to be introduced, and participants have yet to experience any real impact of being managed, because the approach adopted by the appraiser is largely based on influential power as opposed to managerial control. Whether or not future changes in context will affect this conclusion will require further investigation. While this is an unknown factor, the findings confirmed two individual attributes that could significantly moderate how academics respond to the control aspects of performance management. One is linked to the main recruitment sources for new academics, for example, where most of those who have come from primary or secondary schools have gone through a more rigorous performance management system there. The other attribute is linked to the ability of academics to adopt a redefining strategy.

6.15   Research Question 5: What do academic participants think is an effective performance management system?

Need for a more structured system

The suggestions offered by participants to improve the system are quite specific and focused on those issues identified above. What is strikingly identified by this research is that, instead of finding that academics argue for the elimination of the performance management system in defending their professional autonomy, it is evident that some participants included in the study call for a more structured and integrated system. To address the concern about the fragmentation of the current

151

process, at least three senior academics argued for a more structured system to integrate various components of performance management by using appraisal as a central tool to pull all information together (LG2) and have a more structured management team with clearly defined accountabilities to manage the processes (LG1). This suggestion, however, is not driven by the organisational aspects of efficiency and effectiveness. Rather, it stems from the perspectives of individuals hoping that a more structured performance management system can help prioritise the goals of the School and of individuals to make time available for academics to focus on research and scholarship – those things that are the key motivators for career success, especially in a research-led university.

Need to maintain collegial culture

While calling for a more structured performance management system, the need to maintain the collegial culture was also underlined in the suggestions made by the participants. The suggestions included: the need to focus on teamwork (LG3; CG1), involvement in decision making (CG1), the use of intrinsic rewards to minimise a divisive effect (RG3; LG2), equitable allocation of work (LG6), recognition of all facets of academic work (RG1; LG6), and the transparency of the system (LG1; RG2; LG4). All these suggested changes are in line with the concepts of the collegial model (Middlehurst, 1993; Bush, 1995), signalling that academics still uphold the value of academic identity and do not want to see it fade away. In addition, this finding showcases that collegial culture remains strong in the case School and is deeply held by participants, which is contrary to other relevant research studies that claim the collegial culture in higher education institutions has already been replaced by the managerial culture (Deem, 2001).

Need for more effective leaders

To successfully implement an integrated and structured system while maintaining collegiality, at least three participants underscored the importance of effective leadership. As stressed by one senior participant, "The system will become worthless unless we have an effective leader to run it" (LG2). They characterised an effective leader as someone who has a high degree of motivation to develop people, is

effective in communication, and has the ability to create a climate conducive to helping academics achieve their objectives. In addition, there was also an expectation that this leadership role should be appointed in a managerial capacity (LG2) with full commitment to helping academics set targets, maintain the process, provide ongoing support, and follow up (LG1). Finding a qualified person to meet these expectations, however, is more than challenging. The expected profile means that the chosen leader should have the necessary academic credentials to act as a 'mentor' to provide ongoing support and feedback to academics and the necessary leadership attributes to perform the roles of 'facilitator', 'communicator' and 'manager' to effectively manage the processes. The question raised earlier about the possibility of hiring professional managers with no academic background to fill this role does not seem to be a viable option. This means that the ideal profile of the person needed to fill this critical role is a willing academic with leadership attributes.

6.2   Implications and Recommendations

What are the key implications of these findings? Consistent with previous studies, this research has identified several long-standing problems associated with the performance management system such as difficulty in defining unambiguous goals (Clark, 1983), identifying valid measures to recognise all facets of academic work (Taylor, 2001), and motivating academics through financial incentives (Varlaam et al., 1992). However, what seems to be significant and unique in these findings is how academics view the values of performance management in relation to their research work. There appears to be evidence that almost all the academics interviewed, including those who recently joined the School, are keen on research and they look forward to the improvement of the performance management system in order to remove those impediments that could undermine their ability to get on with their research work. To the extent that this observation is accurate, it would mean that if the performance management system could be used to create a supportive environment for academics to do research, the experience of success could increase the possibility of obtaining academics' agreement on the purposes of performance management and their commitment to the system. Building on the findings of this study, there are three areas that require immediate attention from university management to improve the

153

effectiveness of the performance management system. These include integrating various processes to address the gap or mismatch on the purpose of introducing performance management between the policy rhetoric and individual view of academics, seeking an effective leader to manage the process, and addressing the work intensification issue.

6.21   Integrating Various Processes

According to Fletcher and Williams (1996), performance management adopts the premise that "multiple intervention programmes could have a greater combined impact than individual programmes" (p. 178). Indeed much performance appraisal literature further suggests that organisations may be better served by separating developmental and evaluative performance processes to avoid role conflict (Bear et al., 1978). The findings of this study, however, challenge these two propositions. As discussed earlier, operating multiple processes on a separate basis in fact creates divergent perceptions and confusion among participants about the actual meaning and purposes of the system. To address the issue, there seems to be a case to limit the number of processes in the system for two reasons. First, there is no conclusive evidence to show "whether employees react or behave differently when evaluation and development are combined within one PA (performance appraisal) process versus when they are separated", according to Boswell and Boudreau (2002, p. 392). In fact, their research confirms that the separation of these two processes has no material effect on employee attitudes. Second, as revealed from this study, most participants, particularly those mature academics, have highly-perceived self-efficacy and thus do not find the current appraisal process useful. Indeed, some participants only see it as a ritual exercise with no tangible outcomes from the discussion, while others feel that it is only beneficial for those newly-hired academics in their early career as a university teacher who need more guidance from their seniors. To the extent that these two perceptions are correct, one suggested approach is to consolidate the research monitoring process with the appraisal system. Such change would mean the appraisal scheme would be used for both development and evaluation and act as a primary means for formulating goals, monitoring performance, providing feedback, and providing information for reward decisions. This consolidation could ensure that all key areas of academic work would be taken into account when formulating goals and work priorities. Through this centralised goal-setting exercise, appropriate time could be allocated to each individual academic

for research work. In addition, it might also eliminate the need to involve multiple stakeholders in the evaluation process and thus reduce the potential source for confusion.

6.22   <u>Seeking Effective Leaders</u>

No matter how well the system is designed, this research underscores that the success of performance management in the higher education sector is not automatic. Implementing successful systems requires the appointment of willing academics with leadership attributes to manage the process. Such appointment, however, raises the question of how to attract able academics who are willing to change their career for this leadership role and retain them in the job. Given that most academics working for the university are keen to develop their research career, there is a concern about a shortage of people willing to take the leadership role (Normore, 2004). Compounding the shortage concern is that most higher education institutions pay little attention to the preparation of academics for assuming leadership roles (Wolverton et al., 2005; Deem et al., 2001). According to Wolverton et al. (2005), the lack of this focus is largely due to a faulty assumption made by most higher education institutions that "if you are good at being a faculty member, then you are bound to be good (or at least adequate) at being a department chair" (Wolverton et al., 2005, p. 229). Deem et al.'s (2001) research confirms this problem; it reveals that only one-third of the surveyed academic managers have received any formal management training and the rest were engaged in ineffective informal learning from their experienced colleagues. The lack of a training focus contributes to the shortage of able academics to fill leadership positions.

Attracting aspiring academics to change their career path from academic to leadership is a challenge. As mentioned by Deem et al. (2001), creating such a leadership/ management career route for academics is still considered uncharted territory in the pre-1992 universities. Added to the uncertainty is that academics may be concerned that there is no easy route back to an academic career once they have chosen the management path (Deem et al., 2001). To tackle this concern, the University should demonstrate it values the contributions made by this leadership role as much as it values teaching and research. This may require reviewing relevant human resources policies to ensure the contribution of the leadership role is explicitly recognised and rewarded. As

revealed by Deem el al.'s (2001) research, one of the key reasons for academics to choose a management role as their career in the post-1992 universities is in pursuit of higher salaries. This leads to another consideration: the need to create a new salary structure for career track managers to make it more in line with the pay practices for management jobs in the business sector. In addition, consideration should also be made to ensure that job design contains elements that provide job satisfaction and a feeling of fulfilment.

To address the training concern, university management should pay particular attention to leadership preparation (Normore, 2004). The transition from an academic to a leader is an intricate process. As pointed out by Wolverton et al. (2005), the skill sets needed to be a good researcher are quite different from those of an effective leader. The former requires slow, deliberate, and measured acts to build up an in-depth knowledge base that makes the researcher an expert in the field, while the latter calls for interpersonal skills, the ability to communicate, and the willingness to respond rapidly to situations. To address this gap, it is critical that university management should invest in leadership training to groom those willing academics who have the potential to become effective leaders. Such training as asserted by Normore (2004) must begin long before the academics take on a leadership role.

6.23   Addressing the Work Intensification Issue

As revealed by this research, academics are frustrated with the intensification of work in teaching and administrative activities. The overload not only leads to a situation where academics have to work excessively long hours during the week, but also limits the time available for research and scholarship. What further frustrates academics is the apparent inability of the performance management system to address poor performance and abuses of the current hands-off approach to regulate how work is allocated, resulting in an uneven workload. While performance management is not a panacea for the work intensification issue, it can at least help address the overload situation by maximising the capacities and skills of existing staffing resources in the case School through the reallocation of work and staff development for improved efficiency. There are three areas where performance management might add value to address the workload concern. First, the performance management system might assist with the

identification of individual skills and capacities in teaching, research, and administration. This information might help senior management determine the differential loads in these three areas for each individual academic, based on their abilities and strengths in respective areas to maximise the existing resources to meet the School's mission. As a result, those who are strong in teaching may take on more teaching, while those academics who have demonstrated their productivity in the areas of research and scholarship may be assigned fewer teaching hours. This specialisation can help increase the overall productivity and thus potentially alleviate the overload concerns. Another value that performance management can bring is to identify neophyte researchers and scholars and provide them with encouragement and support to help them grow and increase their productivity in the research area. Finally, the performance management system might address poor performance through counselling or necessary disciplinary actions, including the replacement of underperforming academics with better performers in order to revitalise the productivity level for those underutilised resources.

6.3 <u>Conclusions</u>

This chapter is concluded with a statement of the limitations of this study and the potential areas for future research in order to further enhance the existing knowledge of the performance management system in the context of higher education.

6.31 <u>Limitations of the Study</u>

While this study has provided a comprehensive, contextual understanding of the controversial initiative of performance management from the perspective of participants, this single case School has limitations in terms of traditional concerns about generalisability. Research in universities operating in different contexts may arrive at different conclusions. As revealed in the study conducted by Shelley (1999), there is a binary split in appraisal and performance-related pay practices between pre-1992 and post-1992 universities in the UK. According to the findings, the system operating in the older universities is more development-oriented, while the post-1992 universities tend to adopt a more management-oriented approach. The diversity in practices can lead to variation in experiences and thus different perspectives of the

performance management system. The generalisation of the findings of this study to other institutions, particularly to those post-1992 universities, therefore raises a concern. Furthermore, the variation in experiences may also be found between departments within the case University. While all departments in the case University are subject to the same performance management policy, diversity in practice may exist due to different departmental or school cultures and contextual environments. Again, replicating the findings of this research in another department within the same University may not be possible. Despite the above-mentioned limitations, it is important to note that the transferability of qualitative analysis is judged by the reader's perspective of the relevance of a given study to another context (Morrow, 2005; Patton, 1990). The in-depth contextual description provided in this study should allow readers to draw comparisons with their own context and hence to decide whether transferability of findings is possible.

Second, it is possible that the findings and the subsequent conclusions may not be representative of the experiences of the whole case School even, given the relatively small number of participants involved in this study. For example, while the findings reveal no participants to be alienated by the performance management system, the study could have missed someone who may have had such an experience. Including their views may have resulted in a different conclusion.

Third, the appointment of a HoD at the case School is on a fixed-term and rotational basis. These data were collected at a particular time when a particular HoD held the post. The leadership style of a HoD could have significant implications on how the performance management system operates and thus the findings of this study. This raises a question of whether the conclusions of this study can be generalised to when the next HoD is appointed, given that he/she might adopt a different leadership style.

Fourth, while the design of this study was to focus on the five research themes, it ended up with more themes than originally anticipated. These additional themes include the impact of work intensification on how academics view the purpose of performance management and the relationship between leadership style and performance management. While the findings of this study imply the significance of these two themes on the success of performance management, they have not been

explored in detail. Each of these themes, in fact, warrants a separate in-depth study. Future research in these areas should help further enhance the existing knowledge of performance management in universities.

6.32   Suggestions for Future Study

Based on the limitations of this study, there appear to be several areas worth further study. First, this case study focuses on one department of a pre-1992 university. Given that managerial styles in older universities may be different from post-1992 universities, a comparative analysis of academics' perspectives of the performance management system between pre-1992 and post-1992 universities is suggested to determine the differences.

Second, the case School introduced a new managerial structure involving a management team approach to replace sole leadership from the HoD after this present research was conducted. This change may alter how the participants included in this study now view performance management, as pointed out earlier. Conducting a follow-up study of the case School may help determine how the changes of leadership or structure have changed the values of the performance management system.

Third, this study identifies those newly-joined academics who seem to be more adaptable to a managerial-oriented performance management system. Further, research could be conducted with younger and newer academics to seek a more in-depth understanding of their beliefs, values, and perceptions of performance management, and how younger members' views of performance management differ from older members in the case School, and also those across the university among departments and Schools.

Finally, this study has also created new questions suggesting at least four areas for further research: these questions provide a fitting agenda on which to end. To what extent can performance management help address the work intensification concern?; What is the appropriate degree of formalisation of performance management which will not undermine collegiality or professionalism and autonomy in the context of higher education?; What is the appropriate leadership style to manage the performance

management process in academic settings?; and How can good academic leaders be secured to overcome the shortage of aspirant leaders and managers in higher education?

Appendix I

<u>**Interview Questions**</u>

Research Question 1: How do academics perceive the purposes and values of the performance management systems?

1. What do you think are the purposes of performance management?
2. Please describe the arrangements that should form part of performance management.
3. What do you think performance management should accomplish? (If the responses just focus on accomplishments for the university, probe for views on personal development)
4. To what extent do you understand the purposes of implementing performance management in this University?
5. Are your views expressed on the values of performance management based on your current experience with the University or drawn from elsewhere, for example, your previous employment?

Research Question 2: How do academics view the effectiveness of current performance management processes in the department?

6. Please describe the process of setting your individual goals and standards. Probing questions include: When does it take place? Who is normally assigned as the reviewer of your performance? What information do you receive before the goal setting session to assist you in establishing goals? How would you describe the process of reaching an agreement on the goals and related performance standards with the reviewer? Is it through collaborative effort or negotiation? To what extent do these processes enhance the clarity of your role and enable you to link your own performance to the performance of the wider organisation, for example, the School or University as a whole? Do you feel the agreed goals adequately reflect the key accountabilities of your job?

7. Do you feel the assigned reviewer is qualified or adequately prepared for measuring and managing your performance?

8. How do current processes monitor the progress of your performance against your goals and objectives? How adequate and effective are these approaches to reflect your performance? Probing questions include: What is your view on Ofsted inspection or peer review on the quality of teaching? What process is currently in place to monitor the progress of your research?

9. How often do you receive feedback on your performance? How effective is this feedback for improvement of your job performance and or personal development?

10. How effective are the processes in linking the results of your performance to various reward programmes such as promotion, the bonus achievement programme, and accelerated salary increase programme? How transparent and fair are the current programmes in rewarding your performance?

Research Question 3: How do academics perceive the impact of academic managers on their work performance?

11. Who would you consider as your academic manager?

12. How do you view the role of academic manager in the performance management process?

13 To what extent does your academic manager affect the way you get your job done?

Research Question 4: How do academics respond to the process, measures, and outcomes involved in operating the performance management system?

14. Do you think the agreed measures of performance used for the assessment are observable, measurable, and/or demonstrable? How do these measures affect the way you organize and perform your work?

15. How does the performance management system affect the quality as well as output of your work?

16. To what extent do you feel your discretion at work has been taken away due to the ongoing monitoring and the need to meet the performance standards?

17. Overall, to what extent has performance management changed your attitudes toward your job? If so, how?

Research Question 5: What do participants think is an effective performance management system?

18. What do you perceive to be the significant issues with the current performance management system?

19. What changes need to be made to the current system in order to make it equitable, comprehensive, unbiased, and motivational?

REFERENCES

Adams, J. & Kirst W. (1999). New demands and concepts for educational accountability: Striving for results in an era of excellence. In Murphy, J and Louis, K (Eds.) *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration*, (463-489). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Akerland, G. & Kayrooz, C. (2003). Understanding academic freedom: The views of social scientists. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 22(3), 327-344.

Anderson, G. (2006). Carving out time and space in the managerial university. *Journal of Organisational Change Management*, 19(5), 578-592.

Armstrong, M. & Baron, A. (2004). *Managing performance: Performance management in action.* London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Atkinson, P & Coffey, A. (2004). Analysing documentary realities In Silverman, D (Eds.) *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*, London, Sage.

Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: An analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 1(3), 385-405.

Barnetson, B. & Cutright, M. (2000). Performance indicators as conceptual technologies. *Higher Education*, 40(3), 277-292.

Barnett, R. (1992). *Improving Higher Education: Total quality care*. Buckingham, UK; Philadelphia, PA: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

Barry, J., Chandler, J. & Clark, H. (2001). Between the ivory tower and the academic assembly line. *Journal of Management Studies*, 38(1), 87-101.

Bassey, M. (1999). *Case study research in educational settings*. Buckingham, UK; Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Beck, J. & Young, M. (2005). The assault on the professions and the restructuring of academic and professional identities: A Bernsteinian analysis. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 26(2), 183-197.

Becker B., Huselid, M. & Ulrich, D. (2001). *The HR scorecard, linking people strategy, and performance*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Beer, M., Ruh, R., Dawson, J., McCaa, B., & Kavanagh, M. (1978). A performance management system: Research, design, introduction and evaluation. *Personnel Psychology*, 31, 505-535.

Behn, R. (1997). Linking measurement and motivation: A challenge for education, in Thurston P. & Ward J. (Eds.). *Advances in Educational Administration: Improving educational performance: Local and systemic reforms*, Volume 5; Greenwich, CT: JAI Press Inc., 15-58.

Bence, V. & Oppenheim, C. (2004). The Influence of Peer Review on the Research Assessment Exercise, *Journal of Information Science,* 30, 347-368.

Berdahl, R. (1990). Academic freedom, autonomy and accountability in British universities. *Studies in Higher Education*, 15(2), 169-180.

Berry, R. (1998, 17-20 September). *Conducting a piece of educational research: Choice of topic, adoption of suitable research methodology, and narrowing down of investigative focus*. Paper presented to the Conference of the European Educational Research Association, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Bett, M. (1999). *Independent Review of Higher Education, Pay and Conditions*. An independent committee chaired by Sir Michael Bett. [The Bett Report.] London, UK: The Stationery Office.

Bok, D. (2003). *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education*. Princeton, NJ; Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press.

Boland, T. & Fowler, A. (2000). A systems perspective of performance management in public sector organisations. *The International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 13(5), 417-446.

Boswell, W. & Boudreau, J. (2002). Separating the developmental and evaluative performance appraisal uses. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 16(3), 391-412.

Brannick, T & Coghlan, D (2007). In Defense of Being "Native": The Case for Insider Academic Research, *Organizational Research Methods*; 10; 59-74.

Brennan, J. & Shah, T. (2000). *Managing Quality in Higher Education: An international perspective on institutional assessment and change.* Philadelphia, PA: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.

Bridges, D. (2001). The Ethics of Outsider Research. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 35, 371-386.

Broadbent, J. (2007). Performance management systems in and of higher education institutions in England. *Research Papers from the School of Business and Social Sciences*. London, UK: Roehampton University.

Brown, A. (2005). Implementing performance management in England's primary schools. *International Journal of Productivity*, 54(5/6), 468-481.

Brown, R. (2000). The new UK quality framework. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 54(4), 323-342.

Bruneau, W. & Savage, D. (2002). *Counting out the scholars: The case against performance indicators in higher education*. Toronto, ON: James Lorimer & Company Ltd.

Bryson, C. (2004). What about the workers? The expansion of higher education and the transformation of academic work. *Industrial Relations Journal*, 35(1), 38. 57.

Bryson, C. & Barnes, N. (2000). Working in higher education in the United Kingdom. In Tight, T. (Ed). Academic work and life: what it is to be an academic, and how this is changing. *International Perspectives on Higher Education Research*, *Volume 1*, 147-185.

Burgess, T., Lewis, H. & Mobbs, T. (2003). Academic workload planning revisited. *Higher Education*, 46, 215-233.

Burke, J. (2005). *Achieving accountability in higher education: Balancing public, academic and market demands*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Bush, T. (1995) *Theories of Educational Management*, *Second Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA; London, UK: Sage Publications & PCP.

Campion, M. & Renner, W. (1995). Goal setting, domestication and academia: the beginning of an analysis. In Smyth, J. (Ed.), *Academic Work: The Changing Labour Process in Higher Education*. Buckingham, UK; Bristol, PA: Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.

Cardno, C. (2001). Managing dilemmas in appraising performance: An approach for school leaders. In Middlewood, D., & Cardno, C., *Managing Teacher Appraisal and Performance: A comparative approach*. London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer, 143-160.

Casey, J., Gentile, P., & Bigger, S., (1997). Teaching appraisal in higher education: an Australian perspective. *Higher Education*, 34, 459-482.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). (2005). *Performance management*. Survey report. London, UK: CIPD. Available at http://www.cipd.co.uk/surveys.

Clark, B. (1983). *The higher education system*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Cohen, L., Duberley, J. & McAuley, J. (1999). Fuelling discovery or monitoring productivity: Research scientists' changing perception of management. *Organisation*, 6(3), 473-497.

Cohen, L. & Manion, L. (1998). *Research Methods in Education*. London, UK; New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer.

Connell, J., Lynch, C. & and Waring, R. (2001). Constraints, Compromises and Choice: Comparing Three Qualitative Research Studies. *The Qualitative Report*, 6(4), 1-14.

Currie. J. (2002, 20 September). *Australian universities as enterprise universities: Transformed players on a global stage, Globalisation: what issues are at stake for universities?* Available at http://www.bi.ulaval.ca/GlobalisationUniversities /pages/actes/CurrieJan.pdf.

Cutler, T., & Waine, B. (2000). Mutual benefits or managerial control? The role of appraisal in performance related pay for teachers. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 48(2), 170-182.

Darke, P., Shanks, G. & Broadbent, M. (1998). Successfully completing case study research: combining rigour, relevance and pragmatism. *Information Systems Journal*, 8, 273-289.

Dearlove, J. (1997). The academic labour process: From collegiality and professionalism to managerialism and proletarianisation? *Higher Education Review*, 30(1), 56-75.

Dearlove, J. (1998a). The deadly dull issue of university "administration"? good governance managerialism and organising academic work. *Higher Education Policy*, 11, 59-79.

Dearlove, J. (1998b). Fundamental changes in institutional governance structures: The United Kingdom. *Higher Education Policy*, 11, 111-120.

Deem, R. (1998). 'New Managerialism' and Higher Education: The management of performance and cultures in universities in the United Kingdom. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 8(1), 47-69.

Deem, R. (2001). Globalisation, new managerialism, academic capitalism and entrepreneurialism in universities; is the local dimension still important? *Comparative Education*, 37(1), 7-20.

Deem, R. (2004). The knowledge worker, the manager-academic and the contemporary UK university: New and old forms of public management? *Financial Accountability and Management*, 20(2), 107-128.

Deem, R. & Brehony, K. (2005). Management as ideology: The case of 'new managerialism' in higher education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 31(2), 217-235.

Deem, R., Fulton, O., Hillyard, S., Johnson, R. N., Reed, M. & Watson, S. (2001). New Managerialism and the Management of UK Universities. End of Award Report. Swindon: *Economic and Social Research Council*. Available at http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/ViewAwardPage.aspx?data=aysN 67OSmH%2f4mKibNqyEcPaU2MSTsPt6VIWlBC%2f7QiiZy5R4Ny5FWZ5Z5Q9b7d qmcsFjyRRkdvp3Y4Qs5T20.

DeHart-Davis, L. & Pandey, S. (2005). Red tape and public employees: Does perceived rule dysfunction alienate managers? *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 15(1), 133-148.

DeLyser, D (2001). "Do You Really Live Here?" Thoughts on Insider Research. *Geographical Review*, Vol. 91, No. 1/2, 441- 453.

Den Hartog, D., Boselie, J.,& Paauwe, J. (2004). Performance Management: A model and research agenda. *Applied Psychology: An International Review,* 53(4), 556-569.

DeNisi, A. (2000). Performance appraisal and performance management a multilevel analysis. In Klein, K.J. & Kozlowski, S.W.J. (Eds.), *Multilevel Theory, Research and Methods in Organisations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc., 121-155.

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (1998). *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

DfEE. (2000). *Performance Management in Schools: Performance management framework*. London, UK: Department for Education and Employment.

DfEE. (2006). *Performance Management for Teachers and Head Teachers: Guidance*. London, UK: Department for Education and Skills.

Dill, D. (1997). Higher education markets and public policy. *Higher Education Policy*, 10(3/4), 167-185.

Dillon, J. (2007). All change within the academy: Dissonance and role conflict or the potential for new forms of professionalism? *Critical Review*, 7(1), 27-38.

Dominelli, L. & Hoogvelt, A. (1996, Spring). Globalisation, contract government and the Taylorization of intellectual labour in academia. *Studies in Political Economy*, 49, 71-100.

Doring, A. (2002). Challenges to the academic role of change agent. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 26(2), 139-148.

Down, B., Hogan, C., & Chadbourne, R. (1999). Making sense of performance management: Official rhetoric and teachers' reality. *Asia Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 27(1), 11-24.

Downing, D. (2005). Academic freedom as intellectual property: When collegiality confronts the standardisation movement. *Symploke*, 13(1-2), 56-79.

Drennan, L. (2001). Quality assessment and the tension between teaching and research. *Quality in Higher Education*, 7(3), 167-178.

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. & Lowe, A. (1994). The philosophy of research design. In Bennett, N., Glatter, R. &Levacic, R. (Eds.), *Improving Educational Management Through Research and Consultancy*, London, Paul Chapman.

Ebbs, C. (1996, Winter). Qualitative research inquiry: Issues of power and ethics. *Education*, VI(17), 217.

Elton, L. (2000). The UK research assessment exercise: Unintended consequences. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 54(3), 274-283.

Elton, L. (2004). Goodhart's law and performance indicators in higher education. *Evaluation and Research in Education*, 18(1&2), 120-128.

ESRC. (2006). Research Ethics Framework. *Economic and Social Research Council*. Available at http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images /ESRC_Re_Ethics_Frame_tc_tcm6-11291.pdf.

Ferlie, E., Ashburner, L., Fitzgerald, L., & Pettigrew, A. (1996). *The new public management in action*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Findlay, P. & Newton, T. (1998). Re-framing Foucault: The case of performance appraisal. In McKinlay, A. & Starkey, K. (Eds.). *Foucault, Management, and Organisation Theory, from Panopticon to Technologies of Self*. London, UK; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Firestone, W. (1991). Merit pay and job enlargement as reform: Incentives, implementation, and teacher response. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 13(3), 269-288.

Fletcher, C. (2001). Performance appraisal and management: The developing research agenda. *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology*, 74(4), 473-487.

Fletcher, C. (2004). *Appraisal and Feedback*. London, UK: Chartered Institute of Personnel Development.

Fletcher, C. & Williams, R. (1996). Performance management, job satisfaction and organisational commitment. *British Journal of Management*, 7, 169-179.

Fontanna, A. & Frey, J. (2000). The interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish- the Birth of the Prison*, London, England, Penguin Books.

Fraser, D. (1997). Ethical dilemmas and practical problems for the practitioner researcher, *Educational Action Research*, 5:1, 161-171

Furnham, A. (2004). Performance management system. *European Business Journal*, 16(2), 83-94.

Garrick, J. (1999, March/April). Doubting the philosophical assumption of interpretive research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 12(2), 147-156.

Gay L & Airasian P (2000) *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application, Sixth Edition*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Gleeson, D. & Shain, F. (1999). Managing ambiguity: Between markets and managerialism – a case study of 'middle managers' in further education. *The Sociological Review*, 47(3), 461-490.

Grant, H. (1998). Academic contests? Merit pay in Canadian Universities. *Industrial Relations*, 53(4), 1-21.

Hammersley, M. (2000). The Relevance of Qualitative Research. *Oxford Review of Education*, 26(3/4), 393-405.

Hara, K. (1995, April). Quantitative and Qualitative research approaches in education. *Education*, 115(3), 351-355.

Harley, S. (2002). The impact of research selectivity on academic work and identity in UK universities. *Studies in Higher Education*, 27(2), 187-205.

Harley, S. & Lee, F. (1997). Research selectivity, managerialism and the academic labour process: The future of nonmainstream economics in UK universities. *Human Relations*, 50(11), 1427-1460.

Harris, S. (2005). Rethinking academic identities in neo-liberal times. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 10(4), 421-433.

Harrison, M. & Weightman, K. (1974). Academic freedom and higher education in England. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 25(1), 32-46.

Harvey, J., Pettigrew, A., & Ferlie, E., (2002). The determinants of research group performance toward mode 2. *Journal of Management Studies*, 39(6), 747-774.

Haslam, C., Bryman, A. & Webb, A. (1992, April-June). The introduction of university staff appraisal. *Public Money and Management*, 57-62.

Haynes, G., Chamberlin, R., Wragg, E., & Wragg, C. (2002, September). *Being managed: Performance management form the teachers' point of view*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the British Education, University of Exeter, UK.

HEFCE. (2002). Rewarding and developing staff in higher education: Good practice in setting HR strategies. *Higher Education Funding Council for Education,* Report 2/14. Available at http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2002/02_14.htm

Heneman, R. (1992). *Merit pay- linking pay increases to performance ratings*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley.

Henkel, M. (1997). Academic values and the university as corporate enterprise. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 51(2), 134-143.

Henkel, M. (2002). Emerging concepts of academic leadership and their implications for intra-institutional roles and relationships in higher education. *European Journal of Education*, 37(1), 29-41.

Henkel, M. (2005). Academic identity and autonomy in a changing policy environment. *Higher Education*, 49, 155-176.

Henkel, M. (2007). Can academic autonomy survive in the knowledge society? A perspective from Britain. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 26(1), 87-99.

Herzberg, F. (1968, January-February). One more time: How do you motivate employees? *Harvard Business Review*, 13-35.

Hill, S. (1981). *Competition and control at work*. London, UK: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.

Hitchcock, G. & Hughes, D. (1989). *Research and the teacher: A qualitative introduction to school-based research.* London, UK; New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer.

Hoecht, A. (2006). Quality assurance in UK higher education: issues of trust, control, professional autonomy and accountability. *Higher Education*, 51, 541-563.

Hoggett, P. (1996, Spring). New modes of control in the public service. *Public Administration*, 74, 9-32.

Holstein, J. & Gubrium, J. (1997). Active Interviewing. In Silverman, D. (Ed.), *Qualitative research, theory, method and practice*. London, UK: Sage Publications, Inc.

Houston, D., Luanna, M. & Padwai, S. (2006). Academic staff workloads and job satisfaction: Expectations and values in academe. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 28(1), 17-30.

Hughes, C. & Sohler, C. (1992). Can performance management work in Australian Universities? *Higher Education*, 24, 41-56.

Hull, R. (2006). Work allocation models and "collegiality" in academic departments. *Journal of Organisational Change*, 19(1), 38-53.

Huysament, G. (1997, March). Parallels between qualitative research and sequentially performed quantitative research. *South Africa Journal of Psychology*, 27(1), 1-8.

Jackson, M. (2001). Personnel management in UK universities. *Personnel Review*, 30(4), 404-420.

Jansen, G. & Peshkin, A. (1992). Subjectivity in qualitative research. In LeCompte, M. et al. (Eds.). *The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 681-725.

Jarratt, A. (1985). *Report of the Steering Committee for Efficiency Studies in Universities*. London, UK: Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals.

Jarvis, P. (2000). The changing university: Meeting a need and needing to change. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 54(1), 43-67.

Jary, D. & Parker, M. (Eds.). (1998). *The new higher education*. Stoke on Trent, UK: Staffordshire University Press.

Johnson, D. (1994). *Research methods in educational management*. London, UK: Financial Times Pitman Publishing.

Kanungo, R. (1979). The concepts of alienation and involvement revisited. *Psychological Bulletin*, 86(1), 119-138.

Kelley, C. & Protsik, J. (1997). Risk and reward: Perspectives on the implementation of Kentucky's school based performance award. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 33(4), 474-505.

Knowles, M., et al. (1984). *Andragogy in action*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Kohn, A. (1993, September-October). Why Incentive Plans Cannot Work. *Harvard Business Review*, 54-63.

Kotter, J. (1996). *Leading change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Lacy, F. & Sheehan, B. (1997). Job satisfaction among academic staff: An international perspective. *Higher Education*, 34, 305-322.

Latham, G. & Locke, E. (1979, Autumn). Goal Setting: A motivational technique that works. *Organisational Dynamic*, 68-80.

Laughton, D. (2003). Why was the QAA approach to teaching quality assessment rejected by academics in UK HE? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 28(3), 309-321.

Lewis, P. (1998). Managing performance-related pay based on evidence from the financial services sector. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 8(2), 66-77.

Lippitt, G., Langseth, P. & Mossop, J. (1985). *Implementing organisational change: A practical guide to managing change efforts*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Locke, E. (1978) The ubiquity of the technique of goal setting in theories of and approaches to employee motivation. *Academy of Management Review*, 3(3), 594-601.

Lomas, L. (2002). Does the development of mass education necessarily mean the end of quality? *Quality in Higher Education*, 8(1), 71-79.

Lomas, L (2006). The locus of power in UK universities: Its impact on educational development centers. 2006 *Active Learning in Higher Education*; 7; 243-255.

Lomas, L. & Lygo-Baker, S. (2006, 13-15 September). *The impact of external forces on academic identity*. Paper presented at the European Conference on Educational

Research, University of Geneva. Available at http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/158596.htm.

Lucas, A. (2000). *Leading academic change- essential roles for department chairs*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Luntley, M. (2000). *Performance, Pay and Professionals,* IMPACT Paper, No 2. London, Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain.

Mabey, C., Salaman, G. & Storey, J. (1998). *Human Resource Management: A strategic introduction*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Business.

Marsden, D. (2000). *Teachers before the threshold*. London, UK: Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics.

Marsden, D. & Belfield, R. (2005, August). *Performance pay for teachers: Linking individual and organisational-level targets*. Discussion Paper No. 703. London, UK: Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics.

Marsden, D. & Belfield, R. (2006, August). *Pay for performance where output is hard to measure: the case of performance pay for school teachers*. Discussion Paper No. 747. London, UK: Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics.

McAdam, R., Hazlett, A. & Casey, C. (2005). Performance management in the UK public sector. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 18(3), 256-273.

McCulloch, G (2004). *Documentary Research in Education, History and the Social Sciences*. London and New York, RoutledgeFalmer.

McGregor, D. (1987). *The human side of enterprise*. London, UK: Penguin Books.

McNay, I. (1999). The paradoxes of research assessment and funding. In Henkel, M. and Little, B. (Eds.), *Changing relationships between higher education and the state*. London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Mercer, J. (2007). The challenges of insider research in educational institutions: wielding a double-edged sword and resolving delicate dilemmas. *Oxford Review of Education*, 33 (1), pp.1-17.

Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Meyer, H (1987) How can we implement a pay-for-performance policy successfully? In Gomez-Mejia, L. & Balkin, D. (Eds.), *New perspective on compensation*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Middlehurst, R. (1993). *Leading academics*. Buckingham, UK: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

Middlehurst, R. (2004). Changing internal governance: A discussion of leadership roles and management structures in UK universities. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 58(4), 258-279.

Middlehurst, R., & Elton, L. (1992). Leadership and management in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 17(3), 251-264.

Middlehurst, R. & Kennie, T. (2003). Managing for performance today and tomorrow. In Hall, A. (Ed.), *Managing People (Managing Universities & Colleges: Guides to Good Practice)* Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.

Middlewood, D. (1997). Managing Appraisal. In Bush, T. & Middlewood, D., *Managing people in education, educational management: Research and practice*, London, UK: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.

Middlewood, D., & Cardno, C. (2001). The significance of teacher performance and its appraisal. In Middlewood, D. & Cardno, C. (Eds.), *Managing Teacher Appraisal and Performance: A comparative approach.* London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer, 1-15.

Miles, M. & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *An expanded sourcebook: Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Miller, H. (1991). Academics and their labour process. In Smith, C., Knights, D., & Willmott, H. (Eds.), *White-collar work: The non-manual labour process.* London, UK: Macmillan, 109-137.

Morely, L. (2003). *Quality and power in higher education*. Berkshire, UK: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

Morrow, S. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counselling psychology. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 52(2), 250-260.

Mwita, J. (2000). Performance management model: A system-based approach to public service quality. *The International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 13(1), 19-37.

Nicholson, A. (1996, 12-15 September). *Can we reveal the inner world of teaches? Some research issues*. Paper presented at the 1996 British Educational Research Association Conference, Lancaster University, England.

Nixon, J. (1996). Professional identity and the restructuring of higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 21(1), 5-16.

Nixon, J. (1997). Regenerating professionalism within the academic workplace. In Broadbent, J., Dietrich, M., & Roberts, J. (Eds.), *The end of the professions: The restructuring of professional work.* London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer, 86-103.

Normore, A., (2004). Socializing school administrators to meet leadership challenges that doom all but the most heroic and talented leaders to failure. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 7(2), 107-125.

Odden, A. & Kelley, C. (1997). *Paying teachers for what they know and do: New and smarter compensation strategies to improve schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press Inc.

Ogawa, R. & Collom, E. (2000). Using performance indicators to hold schools accountable: Implicit assumptions and inherent tensions. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 75(4), 200-215.

Ogbonna, E. & Harris, L. (2004). Work intensification and emotional labour among UK university lecturers: An exploratory study. *Organisational Studies*, 25(7), 1185-1203.

Parker, M., & Jary, D. (1995). The McUniversity: Organisation, management and academic subjectivity. *Organisation*, 2(2), 319-338.

Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods, 2nd Edition*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Pfeffer, J. (1998). *The Human Equation*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Pollitt, C. (1993). *Managerialism and the public services, 2nd Edition*. Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell.

Prewitt, L., Phillips, D., & Yasin, K. (1991). Merit pay in academia: Perceptions from the school of business. *Public Personnel Management*, 20, 409-417.

Prichard, C. & Willmott, H. (1997). Just how managed is the McUniversity? *Organisation Studies*, 18(2), 287-316.

Pritchard, R. (1998). Academic freedom and autonomy in the United Kingdom and Germany. *Minerva*, 36, 101-124.

Pugh, G., Coates, G., & Adnett, N. (2005). Performance indicators and widening participation in UK higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 59(1), 19-39.

Punch, K. (1998). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches.* London, UK: Sage Publications, Inc.

Radnor, Z. & McGuire, M. (2004). Performance management in the public sector: Fact or fiction? *International Journal of Productivity*, 53(3), 245-260.

Randle, K. & Brady, N. (1997). Managerialism and professionalism in the 'Cinderella service'. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 49(1), 121-139.

Reeves, J., Smith, P. & Forde, C. (2002). *Performance Management in Education: Improving practice*. London, UK: Paul Chapman Publishing, Inc.

Richardson, R. (1999). *Performance related pay in schools: An assessment of the green papers*. A report prepared for the National Union of Teachers, LSE. Available at http://www.teachers.org.uk/resources/pdf/prp_lse.pdf

Rodwell, M. & Byers, K. (1997). Auditing constructivist inquiry: Perspectives of two stakeholders. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(1), 116-134.

Rutherford, D. (1988). Performance appraisal: A survey of academic staff opinion. *Studies in Higher Education*, 13(1), 89-100.

Sarros, J., Tanewski, G., Winter, R., Santora, J., & Densten, I. (2002). Work alienation and organizational leadership. *British Journal of Management,* 13(4), 285-304.

Schapper, J. & Mayson, S. (2005). Managerialism, internationalisation, Taylorisation and the deskilling of academic work: Evidence from an Australian university. In Ninnes, P. & Hellsten, M., *Internationalising higher education: Critical exploration of pedagogy and policy*. Hong Kong: CERC Studies in Comparative Education.

Schein, E. (1996, Fall). Three cultures of management: The key to organisational learning. *Sloan Management Review*, 9-20.

Scott, John (1990). *A matter of record: Documentary Sources in Social Research*, Cambridge, Polity Press.

Seeman, M. (1959). On the meaning of alienation. *American Sociological Review*, 24(6), 783-791.

Seidman, I. E. (1991). *Interviewing as qualitative research*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Sergiovanni, T. & Corbally, J. (Eds.). (1984). *Leadership and organisational culture*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Shelley, S. (1999). Diversity of appraisal and performance-related pay practices in higher education. *Personnel Review*, 28(5/6), 439-454.

Shore, C. & Selwyn, T. (1998). The marketisation of higher education: Management, discourse and the politics of performance. In Jary, D., Parker, M. (Eds.), *The New Higher Education*. Stoke-on-Trent, UK: Staffordshire UP, 153-171.

Simmons, J. (2002). An "expert witness" perspective on performance appraisal in universities and colleges. *Employee Relations*, 24(1), 86-100.

Slaughter, S., & Leslie, L. (1997). *Academic capitalism – Politics, policies and the entrepreneurial university.* Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Stake, R. (1994). Case Studies. In Denzin, Y. & Lincoln, S. (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc., 236-247.

Stiles, P., Gratton, L., & Truss, C. (1997). Performance management and the psychological contract. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 7(1), 57-66.

Stilwell, F. (2003). Higher education, commercial criteria and economic incentives. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 25(1), 51-61.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. London, UK: Sage Publications, Inc.

Symon, G., Buehring, A., Johnson, P. & Cassell, C. (2005). *The contemporary academic labour process, the institutionalisation of research practices and qualitative research.* Paper for Critical Management Conference 2005: Open Stream. Available at http://merlin.mngt.waikato.ac.nz/ejrot/cmsconference/2005/proceedings/open/Symon.pdf

Talib, A. (2003). The offspring of new public management in English universities. *Public Management Review*, 5(4), 574-583.

Taylor, J. (2001, January). The impact of performance indicators on the work of university academics: Evidence from Australian universities. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 55 (1), 42-61.

Tetlock, P. (1998). Losing our religion: On the precariousness of precise normative standards in complex accountability systems. In Kramer, R. & Neale, M. (Eds.), *Power and influence in organisations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Thomas, H. (2001). Funding mechanism on quality assessment: Responses to the research assessment exercise in English institutions. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 23(2), 171-179.

Thompson, P. (1989). *The nature of work: an introduction on the debate of labour process.* Second Edition, London, UK: Macmillan.

Times Online (2008) Good University Guide. http://extras.timesonline.co.uk/gug/ gooduniversityguide.php.

Townley, B. (1993). Performance appraisal and the emergence of management. *Journal of Management Studies*, 30(2), 221-238.

Trow, M. (1994), Managerialism and the academic profession: The case of England. *Higher Education Policy*, 7(2), 11-18.

Trowler, P. (1997). Beyond the Robbins trap: Reconceptualising academic responses to change in higher education (or….quiet flows the Don?). *Studies in Higher Education*, 22(3), 301-318.

Trowler, P. (1998). What managerialists forget: Higher education credit frameworks and managerialist ideology. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 8(1), 91-110.

Underwood, S. (2000). Assessing the quality of quality assessment: The inspection of teaching and learning in British universities. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 26(1), 73-91.

UoL (2000). *Terms and Conditions of Appointment for Academic Staff. (https://wwwgate.le.ac.uk:8000/personnel/nav/terms.htm; accessed on 25/11/2006).*

UoL (2002a). *Human Resource Management and Development Strategy.* (https://wwwgate.le.ac.uk:8000/personnel/docs/hrstrat2002.pdf; accessed on 25/11/2006).

UoL (2002b). *The University Protocol on Student Feedback.* The learning and teaching committee. (https://wwwgate.le.ac.uk:8000/academic/quality/guidelines/cotlfeed.pdf; accessed on 8/9/2007).

UoL (2006). *Guide on The Development Of Individual Teaching Skills* (Peer Observation Of Teaching).

UoL (2007a). *University Profile.*(https://wwwgate.le.ac.uk:8000/press/profile /profile.pdf; accessed on 11/8/2007).

UoL (2007b). *The School of Education.* (https://wwwgate.le.ac.uk:8000/education/; accessed 11/8/2007).

UoL (2007c). *Mission Statement.* https://wwwgate.le.ac.uk:8000/portals/ mission_stat.html; accessed on 11/8/2007).

UoL (2007d). *The University.* https://wwwgate.le.ac.uk:8000/portals/university.html; accessed on 11/8/2007).

UoL (2007e). *Staff Development and Appraisal Scheme.* https://wwwgate.le.ac.uk: 8000/staffdev/ma/appraisal.html; accessed on 11/8/2007).

UoL (2007f). *Research, The School of Education.* https://wwwgate.le.ac.uk:8000 /education/ research/objectives.html; accessed on 11/8/2007).

UoL (2007g). *The Learning and Teaching Strategy- 2006.* https://wwwgate.le.ac.uk: 8000/ teaching/strategy.html; accessed on 11/8/2007).

UoL (2007h). *Annual Review 2007/2008 Promotion to Personal Chairs, Research Grade 10 and Readerships.* Senior Academic Promotion Guide, October 2007. (https://wwwgate.le.ac.uk:8000/personnel/nav/ar_2007/a&r_ann_review.html; accessed on 5/2/2008).

Varlaam, A., Nuttall, D. & Walker, A (1992) *What Makes Teacher Tick? A survey of teacher morale and motivation.* Centre for Educational Research, LSE, Clare Market Papers No.4.

Welbourne, T. (1997). *Pay for what performance? Lessons from firms using the role-based performance scale.* Working Paper 97-26. Ithaca, NY: Centre for Advanced Human Resource Studies, Cornell University.

Weston, C., Terry, G., Beauchamp, J., McAlpine L., Wiseman, C. & Beauchamp, C. (2001). Analyzing interview data: The development and evolution of a coding system. *Qualitative Sociology*, 24(3), 381-400.

Whipp, R. (1998). Qualitative methods: Technique or size? In Whitfield, K. & Strauss G. (Eds.), *Researching the world of work: Strategies and methods in studying industrial relations*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University.

Williams, R. (2002). *Managing employee performance: Design and implementation in organisations*. London, UK: Thompson Learning.

Willmott, H. (1995). Managing the academics: Commodification and control in the development of university education in the U.K. *Human Relations*, 48(9), 993-1027.

Wilson, T. (1991). The proletarianisation of academic labour. *Industrial Relations Journal*, 22(4), 250-262.

Wolverton, M., (2005). Preparing for leadership: What academic department chairs need to know. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 27(2), 227-238.

Worthington, F., & Hodgson, J. (2005). Academic labour and the politics of quality in higher education: A critical evaluation of the conditions of possibility of resistance. *Critical Quarterly*, 47(1/2), 96-110.

Wragg, E., Haynes, G., Wragg, C., & Chamberlin, R. (2004). *Performance pay for teachers: the views and experiences of heads and teachers*. London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.

Yielder, J. & Codling, A. (2004). Management and leadership in the contemporary university. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 26(3), 315-328.

Yin, R. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods.* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Yokoyama, K. (2006). The effect of the research assessment exercise on organisational culture in English universities: Collegiality versus managerialism. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 12(4), 311-322.