

Master Thesis

Identity tensions in the academic world?



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Introduction

The governance and decision-making processes in institutions of higher education have undergone a considerable transformation in adopting managerialism (Deem, 2001).

University leaders and administrators have embraced a more business-like strategy, placing a focus on performance measurements, strategic planning, and outcome-oriented assessment systems (Deem, Hillyard, & Reed, 2007). Universities all around the world have noticed an increasing movement in recent decades towards adopting managerialist practices, mimicking the corporate sector (Gumport, 2000). Numerous factors, including rising rivalry for funds and resources, increasing responsibility, expectations from outside stakeholders, and a preoccupation with efficacy and efficiency, can be attributed to this trend (Marginson, 2000). Despite managerialism's increasing significance in the academic setting, there is little insight into the processes of how managerialism affects academic identity, and the potential tensions between academics' professional identities and managerialist practices. While the bulk of studies focus on macro-level consequences of managerialism on higher education institutions, the individual experience, reflection and identity tensions within this shifting environment need further attention. Previous work has called for further insight into how managerialism interacts with academic identity to, eventually, be able to address the well-being and motivation of academics in the contemporary university setting (Shepherd, 2018; Winter & O'Donohue, 2012). Indeed, there is a major vacuum in the literature (Henkel, 2005; Shams, 2019), hence this study aims to provide insight into how managerialism impacts academic identity, and how academics deal with the ensuing identity tensions, by examining the experiences and viewpoints of academics.

It has been identified that managerialism in higher education institutions leads to an organizational culture of audit and surveillance, prioritizing corporate ideals, and undermining the long-standing norms of academic work (Shams, 2019). Because of these ongoing developments and reforms in the higher education sector, academic staff faces increased demands and expectations in terms of their responsibilities and work (Arvaja, 2017; Billot & King, 2017; Laiho et al., 2022). Academic labor has become more fragmented as a result of shifting higher education policy contexts and so-called "new managerialism," which places a strong emphasis on accountability, control, productivity, and efficiency (Arvaja, 2017). This has also led to fierce competition for funding, decreased autonomy, and an increase in administrative responsibilities (Churchman & King, 2009; Yang et al., 2022; Ylijoki & Henriksson, 2017).

Earlier research found that managerial discourses and values, largely derived from the corporate world, conflicted with the professional values of academia (Brembs et al., 2013; Kallio et al., 2016; Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013) and they harshly criticised the use of managerialist approaches in higher education (Churchman & King, 2009). To be able to further explain the tension that may occur with regards to identity, this study will further investigate the experience of identity tensions. This study draws on Henkel's standpoint on identity, derived from Brown (2015), which includes "people's subjectively constructed understanding of who they were, are, and wish to be." Focussing this towards the academic world the academic identity, according to Billot and King (2017) and Taylor (1989), is a sophisticated social construct that affects how academics see themselves and the roles they play in the academic world. Inherent to this definition is the alignment (or tension) between who academics are versus how they want to be – in the academic context (Brown, 2015). Tensions between professional identities and practices they must comply to can result from a misalignment between institutional and individual beliefs (Arvaja, 2017; Laiho et al., 2022). Given this situation, it is important to learn how academics experience the change in logic resulting from managerialism. Changes may be interpreted and reflected upon in light of their identities (Van Lankveld et al., 2017).

A few recent articles which have started to unpack such identity tensions (e.g. Laiho et al., 2022; Shams, 2019), have shown that teaching still is perceived as rewarding and, although students were frequently viewed as demanding clients, interaction with intelligent pupils was one of the fundamental components that formed the academic identity (Laiho et al., 2022). The question still remains what conditions or incidences shape or influence one's academic identity (Shams, 2019).

To gain insight into the identity tensions resulting from the influence of managerialism in higher education an interpretivist abductive approach will be used, allowing for the integration of prior knowledge when applying theory to the empirical data (Bamberger, 2019). In order to identify these critical incidents leading up to the experience of identity tension, the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) will be applied to the design of this study (Flanagan, 1954). CIT aims to investigate and analyze significant events or incidents through qualitative inquiry, focusing on people's subjective interpretations and the underlying social dynamics at play (Jennings & Skovholt, 1999; Woods & West, 2010). This is how CIT provides a fitting method for gaining insight into specific incidents that define the experience of identity tension resulting from managerialism in higher education (Butterfield et al., 2005).

By using CIT, this study can delve into the meaningful and impactful incidents that have shaped academics' identities in the face of managerial practices. This method allows for a deep exploration of academics' viewpoints, meanings, and social interactions within particular circumstances, shedding light on the intricate relationship between managerialism and academic identity (Viergever, 2019). As a result, CIT is well-suited to capture the complexities and diversity of human experiences, providing valuable insights into how academics negotiate their professional identities amidst the evolving higher education landscape.

This study has important applications for academics and those who are involved with it as well. Previous work has shown that academic teaching jobs, with a demanding workload and mounting publication pressure, are not highly valued in academic hiring (Ylijoki & Henriksson, 2017). A shortage of academic staff is, thus, a serious threat (Boyle et al., 2011). By gaining insight into the events leading up to the experience of identity tensions, and the complexities around the interactions between managerialism and identity is highly relevant with regards to HR-managers and -policymakers. First, the study gives educational institutions a clearer knowledge of the possible effects of management practises on faculty well-being, motivation, and work satisfaction by illuminating the complex link between managerialism and academic identity (Shepherd, 2018). Second, the knowledge gleaned from this study can guide the creation of focused initiatives and regulations meant to reduce identity conflict and promote a more encouraging and inclusive academic atmosphere. Thirdly, a greater understanding of how managerialism affects academic identity may help institutions make better decisions by ensuring that administrative changes are carried out with adequate regard for their impacts on the many identities and functions within academia. At the end, this study not only enhances academic discourse but also equips organisations to better navigate the changing higher education landscape, fostering the success and well-being of academic professionals at a time of shifting management objectives.

The paper is structured as follows. First, theoretical insights into managerialism in the academic context are developed. Next to that the concept of identity will be further explained as well as the tensions that may arise when managerialist practices are not in line with the academic identity. Second, the research approach and setting, measurement development and analytical strategy are outlined. Third, the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) is used to identify the critical incidents that have shaped academic's identity. Fourth, the results from the interviews are interpreted to draw meaningful conclusion. Finally, the theoretical,

empirical, and practical contributions of this study, its limitations, and opportunities for further research are discussed in the conclusion and discussion.

Theoretical framework

Managerialism in the academic context

Throughout the past few decades, public support for many professional service organizations, including higher education institutions, has significantly decreased as a result of the public sector's process of rationalization (Shams, 2019). This transformation had an impact on the function and character of universities, which had previously operated as fairly independent enterprises in the public sector of many western countries. As a result, colleges were compelled to adopt a market-oriented strategy (Czarniawska & Genell, 2002), depending even more on student tuition fees and engaging in a range of resource-seeking and revenue-generating activities (Deem et al., 2003). This fundamental shift affected the power dynamics between universities, states, and academics and resulted in the creation of a hybrid organizational structure that is partially for-profit and partially non-profit (Filippakou et al., 2012).

A competitive, result-driven culture of competitiveness, efficiency, value for money, and performativity emerged as a result of the introduction of private components into the sphere of higher education (Jarvis, 2014; Knights & Clarke, 2014). Universities are attempting to partially maintain their identity as institutions responsible for training the future workforce and generating knowledge through conducting research while still being increasingly held accountable to their various external stakeholders, including the industry and external funders (Czarniawska & Genell, 2002). The marketization process has also transformed the nature of the relationships between academics and students from one of educator and pupil to one of service provider and client (Bunce et al., 2017).

This shift in academic culture described above has been comprised in the term 'managerialism'. Managerialism is a strategy that upholds ideals and methods focused on effectiveness, efficiency, and economic logic and is strongly intertwined with the terms neoliberalism and 'new public management' (Shepherd, 2018). We define managerialism in terms of ideas related to the application and actual use of values (like effectiveness and excellence), techniques, and practises (like audits, accountability, performance standards, and strong managerial power), all of which are inspired by the private sector (Teelken, 2011). Managerialism comprises a variety of ideas that show how it affects governance and decision-making processes. According to Deem, Hillyard, and Reed (2007), these components include a focus on performance measurements, strategic planning, outcome-oriented assessment systems, and the adoption of market-oriented practices. The introduction of performance-based incentives, a greater emphasis on hierarchical management, and the

professionalization of administrative tasks are other developments brought about by managerialism (Marginson, 2000).

There are numerous important factors that have contributed to managerialism's emergence in academia. First, universities have begun using managerialist practices to increase efficiency and draw outside investment as a result of the increased rivalry for scarce money and resources (Marginson, 2000). The development of managerialist methodologies for performance assessment and evaluation has also been spurred by the rising need for openness and accountability from authorities, funding organizations, and stakeholders (Gumport, 2000). Last but not least, the effect of commercial forces and the marketization of higher education have pushed academic institutions to embrace corporate managerialist practices (Wedlin, 2008).

Managerialism in higher education has had both positive and negative impacts. Undoubtedly, managerialism has increased responsibility and efficiency, which has helped colleges negotiate a difficult external environment (Gumport, 2000). As a result, there has been an increase in competitiveness and responsiveness to social requirements (Marginson, 2000). It has also fostered strategic planning and resource allocation (Hyde et al., 2013). However, there are drawbacks as well. As academics prioritize results that are in line with quantitative indicators, the emphasis on managerialist practices and performance measurements causes a restriction of the study focus (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Additionally, the loss of academic freedom and the rise in administrative burdens made faculty members less motivated and dissatisfied with their jobs (Teelken, 2011).

An academic career consists of two main tasks, teaching and researching. When looking at the effect of managerialism in the academic world, teaching has evolved into a more difficult, problematic, and controlled activity (Laiho et al., 2022). In the first place teaching has complicated since it is now more often focused on a varied group of pupils in rigid learning contexts (Skinner et al., 2019). Teaching has become more problematic regarding the general educational environment, where funding methods are shifting and becoming more focused (Jongbloed, 2008). And finally, audits and other administrative techniques have replaced self-regulation and autonomy in teaching, resulting in a more regulated approach to teaching (Carvalho & Videira, 2017).

The research process has been significantly impacted by managerialism in academia as well, with both beneficial and harmful results. One way in which managerial practices have enhanced research planning and resource allocation is by placing a higher emphasis on efficiency, accountability, and strategic planning (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). On the other hand,

this move towards managerialism has also led to a greater emphasis on quantifiable outcomes, like publication counts and grant revenue, which may unintentionally promote short-term research goals and prevent the pursuit of more creative and riskier research ideas (Deem, 2014). Furthermore, the temptation to publish often may cause authors to prioritize quantity above quality, which may compromise the objectivity and integrity of their study findings (Powell, 2017). Due to concerns about fulfilling performance measures, researchers may be deterred from exploring more experimental and unconventional research pathways, which might unwittingly limit creativity and curiosity (Deem et al., 2007). Universities must provide supportive environments that encourage innovation and risk-taking while maintaining responsibility and effective resource management in order to achieve a balance between administrative efficiency and academic freedom (Gornitzka, 2015). Based on this theoretical framework the main components of managerialism that can be derived and how they are seen in academia are presented in table 1.

Components of managerialism	Managerialism in academia
Monitoring & Control	Accountability and control
Effectiveness & Efficiency	Efficiency & satisfying stakeholders
Performance based evaluation	Individualism & dehumanization
Output	Publish or perish

Table 1: Components of managerialism and how these are shown in academia.

Academic identity

Identity can be seen as a person's source of meaning and experience, according to Castells (2008). Identity often carries deeply held values, offers a framework for action and purpose, and aids in orienting individuals to the social and economic realities, as explored by Billot & King in 2017. These definitions state that academic identity is a reflexive, continuing, and flexible effort that gives academic staff a framework within which to create their own ideas about what it means to be an academic, how to perform their academic job, and how to understand their role in society (Winter & O'Donohue, 2012).

According to the literature now in existence, the determining elements that influence academic identity have been examined using a well-grounded communitarian theoretical framework (e.g. Henkel, 2002, 2005; Whitchurch, 2008). According to this theoretical paradigm, academic identity is rooted on forming communities that serve as the source of important values, give the language needed to interpret the outside world, and help people

create a "normative order" (Henkel, 2005). It has been asserted that the two unique sorts of communities, namely disciplines and institutions of higher education, are the most effective sources of academic identity according to research conducted throughout a wide range of situations and lengthy periods of time (e.g. Hakala, 2009; Henkel, 2002, 2005; Whitchurch, 2008).

The first stage in becoming an academic teacher is to form a self-concept as a teacher—a teacher identity—in the social and professional environment of the university. (Laiho et al., 2022). Adopting and sharing the cultural heritage of the community involves individuals identifying with specific ideals, organizations, and institutions. This is known as identity as a social process (Whitchurch, 2008). Identification refers to the ability to identify oneself and be recognized by others (Billot & King, 2017). According to Taylor (1989), identity is primarily regarded as moral value and those same values are essential for forming an identity. The conventional academic principles uphold the aspirations of becoming a university teacher (Laiho et al., 2022).

Participation in a number of communities, including disciplinary and research communities at the international, national, and local levels as well as university and department communities, is directly correlated with academic identities. (Henkel, 2005; Taylor, 1989). Academics socialize within their discipline communities, which are important sources of values, culture, and language as well as ideas about teaching, research, knowledge, and even society at large, to form their identities. (Trowler, 2014). As a result of managerial influence, academic communities have changed, but the discipline's significance has not. Academics worry that their identity is shaped by governmental and managerialist goals rather than by "scholarly ambitions," as Billot (2010, p. 718) describes. In this paper, we will address identity as identification at several academic levels (Henkel, 2005; Laiho et al., 2022; Taylor, 1989). To form their own sense of self, a person must identify with the ideas, cultures, and behaviours that they see as meaningful, worthwhile, and satisfying.

Identity tensions regarding managerialism

Despite taking place at the macro level of the organizational field, the effect of managerialism has significant effects at the level of the individual academic as well (Shams, 2019). Many academics found that managerial discourses and values were in conflict with their professional values because they were largely derived from the corporate world, leading to identity tensions (Arvaja, 2017; Shams, 2019; Winter & O'Donohue, 2012; Ylijoki & Henriksson, 2017). As academics negotiate the tension between their conventional academic

identity, and the new managerial demands thrust upon them, the adoption of managerial practices has created conflicts and challenges (Arvaja, 2017; Ylijoki & Henriksson, 2017).

One major source of identity tension caused by managerialism is the limitation of autonomy, a crucial component of an academic's academic identity (Knights & Clarke, 2014; Teelken, 2011). Academics frequently cherish having the flexibility to autonomously pursue their academic interests and put their knowledge to use. However, managerial practices, such as the administrative system of audit, monitoring, and control, often weaken this autonomy (Knights & Clarke, 2014; Teelken, 2011). This restriction of academic freedom can lead to a sense of dissatisfaction and conflict with their professional identities, as academics may feel their ideals clash with the managerial demands imposed on them.

Studies examining academics' emotional experiences have revealed how managerialism affects academic identity as well. For instance, Ylijoki and Henriksson (2017) in Finland examined the anxiety felt by academics who sensed a loss of independence and flexibility in pursuing their academic interests. They discovered that academics produced emotional narratives as they struggled to balance their professional identities with the managerial demands placed on them, using terms such as "aspirants," "imposters," and "existentialists" to describe themselves. Similarly, Knights and Clarke (2014) highlighted the existence of unstable academic identities in UK business schools, where academics grappled with competing values and priorities between their academic values and the values of the managerialist practices, which shows the results of the identity tension felt by academics. Their sense of community and belongingness eventually disappeared due to managerialist practices (Ylijoki & Henrikson, 2017).

Another area of tension arises from the "publish or perish" mentality prevalent in academia, where the amount, quality, and impact of academic publications are crucial for career advancement and institutional recognition (Kyvik & Aksnes, 2015). Managerialism's focus on individual achievement and rivalry can create a competitive work environment where colleagues compete with one another (Kok et al., 2010). Academics may experience identity tensions when the institutional constraints to prioritize research efficiency and grant acquisition clash with their individual goals, such as intellectual curiosity and social impact (Gregory & Lodge, 2015).

A fourth element of identity tensions that was deducted from theory is the effect institutional change brought about by managerialism can have on the sense of scholarly ambitions (Deem et al., 2007). Scholars are finding it more difficult to navigate bureaucratic processes and prioritising quantitative outcomes, like publications and grant funding, above

the more comprehensive and reflective components of their study as administrative practises become more deeply embedded in academic organisations (Marginson & Considine, 2000). This change may result in a reduction in the focus placed on interdisciplinary collaboration, a restriction of research themes, and a stifling of intellectual originality. The innate impulses that drive scholars' pursuit of knowledge and understanding may be eclipsed by managerialism's external demands (Shore & Wright, 2015).

All four elements that make up an academic identity and leads to tensions when exposed to managerialist practices are present in table 2 and will be used for the analysis of the transcripts.

Academic identity values
Academic freedom/autonomy
Community and belongingness
Intellectual curiosity
Scholarly ambitions

Table 2: Academic identity values of an academic

In summary, the clash between traditional academic norms and the growing emphasis on managerial practices within the academic environment has led to identity tensions for academics. These tensions arise from the limitation of autonomy, emotional struggles to reconcile professional ideals with managerial demands, and conflicts between institutional priorities and individual academic goals. The complex interplay between managerialism and professionalism in higher education's institutional logics contributes to the emergence of identity tensions among academics (Henkel, 2005). Therefore, the question that will be studied in this research will be: **How do academics experience the identity tensions created by managerialism on their professional identities?**

Method

The main focus of the master's thesis, which analyses how academics experience managerialism in relation to their academic identities, is laid out in this chapter along with the technique utilized to conduct the research. The research approach uses interviews as the primary data source and analyses the data using the Critical Incidences Technique (CIT). The techniques for choosing participants, gathering data, and analyzing that data are all thoroughly described in this section as well.

The research methodology used in this study is a qualitative approach. In an endeavor to provide the reader a complete understanding of the topic being investigated, this methodology is especially well suited to analyze the complex and delicate phenomena of managerialism and identity tensions that academics have to deal with (Creswell, 2013). By investigating participants' experiences and perspectives, qualitative research offers valuable insights into the intricacy of academic identity in the context of managerialist practices (Merriam, 2009).

The research will involve academics from several academic disciplines and institutes. A purposeful sampling method will be employed to ensure that the persons selected have experienced managerialism and identity challenges related to their professional identities (Patton, 2015). The purposeful sampling method, usually referred to as purposive sampling, is frequently employed in qualitative research. It is especially well suited for studies looking for an in-depth knowledge of complex phenomena since it entails purposefully choosing persons or instances that have certain traits or experiences relevant to the study issue (Palinkas et al., 2015). In order to ensure that the sample is suitable for addressing the study objectives, researchers might use purposeful sampling to choose participants who can offer rich and varied views on the topic of interest (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). To find and recruit people who have personally experienced or confronted such issues during their academic careers, intentional sampling will be used in the context of this study on managerialism and identity tensions among academics. The study can acquire a thorough grasp of these problems and their influence on academic identity development by purposefully choosing individuals who have experienced managerialism and identity-related challenges. With this approach, the researcher is able to dive deeply into the experiences, viewpoints, and coping methods of persons who have left the academic community, guaranteeing that the insights gathered are pertinent and meaningful for the study's objectives. The researcher will use institutional contacts and email invitations to get in touch with potential participants. A crucial need for volunteers to qualify was that they had to have

left the academic setting since they would have left a wealth of experiences to draw from (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

Interviews that are semi-structured will be used to gather data (see appendix 1). Participants can communicate their experiences and thoughts freely in semi-structured interviews, while the researcher can stay focused on the study topics. All the interviews will be done by video conferencing, through Microsoft Teams. Each participant will also provide their informed consent before the interviews. Additionally, participants will be guaranteed the privacy and anonymity of their answers. The general questions regarding the respondents' professional history, both inside and outside of academia, were asked at the beginning of each interview. They were also questioned about the main motivating elements that triggered their interest in a career in academia. The interview is then focused more on how they view academic work in general and how they carry out their assigned role in particular. Managerialism and its alternatives is deliberately omitted to prevent prejudice (see appendix 1).

The interviewing procedure will be organized, and the data will be analysed using the Critical Incidents Technique (CIT). CIT is a qualitative research method that aims to identify and explore specific incidents or situations that highlight participants' encounters with managerialism and identity tensions (Flanagan, 1954). Participants will be invited to describe pivotal moments from their academic careers that involved disagreements, difficulties, or moral quandaries related to their professional and personal identities in the context of managerialism. The critical incidents technique gives a clear advantage in revealing the nuanced details of how managerialism affects academic identity in comparison to traditional qualitative research methods and earlier studies focussing on this same phenomenon. This method goes beyond surface-level observations and explores the world of human experiences, feelings, and reactions by focusing on specific, key events as they are related by participants. By revealing both managerialism's covert and overt consequences, it reveals a deeper and more unbiased knowledge of how the two interact. This deeper degree of investigation adds a special dimension to the research, bringing to light ideas that would be hidden in more general qualitative methodologies and enhancing our understanding of the complex interactions between managerialism and academic identity.

Analysis

Research Approach

This study is grounded in the interpretivist philosophy (Klein & Myers, 1999) and an abductive research approach will underpin this study. An interpretivist philosophy is predicated on the premise that reality is a social construction that is subjective, varied, and multifaceted (Klein & Myers, 1999). That is to say, we can only comprehend another person's reality by their own experience of it. This experience may be distinct from another person's and influenced by the latter's historical or social context.

Abduction

The logic of abduction, which offers a third option between inductive methods and the hypothetical-deductive model, will be at the heart of the design (Bamberger, 2019). By using an abductive strategy, you look for the "best" answer among a variety of possibilities to explain "surprising facts" or "puzzles" found at the beginning of the research process (Saunders et al., 2008). The researcher can mix both numerical and cognitive thinking while explaining "surprising facts" or "puzzles.". This does also entail that switching between theory and empirical data is allowed (Mueller, 2018). By using this approach, it helps to interpret what we discover, to show plausible connections, and to provide what I believe to be the best explanation according to the current social norms. This method is very effective for revealing fresh viewpoints and developing theories based on newly discovered facts from the data. The approach used in this study is particularly fitting because by combining it with CIT, the weaknesses of prior research regarding the identity tension experienced by academia can be overcome (Shams, 2019). Adding to the fact that the framework of identity tension with academia has been established and researched upon already, the aim of this study is to extend the current knowledge and shedding new light on the identity tensions academia are facing today, instead of testing hypotheses (Bamberger, 2019).

Research Design

To ensure a rigorous analysis, the CIT data will be subjected to several steps. First, the interview transcripts will be thoroughly reviewed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the material and immerse the researcher in the participants' experiences. Next, open coding will be employed to generate a list of potential themes and patterns relating to managerialism and identity tensions. Subsequently, these themes and codes will be organized into meaningful categories that capture the essence of the participants' experiences.

Using the narratives of these critical incidents, the researcher will employ the CIT to identify significant triggers, actions, and effects associated with identity tensions and

managerialism. The focus on these specific incidents allows for a deeper exploration of the phenomena and their complexities, enabling the identification of recurring patterns and inconsistencies within the narratives. Despite being a well-established research technique, CIT continues to offer valuable insights and remains relevant in contemporary research settings (e.g. Butterfield et al., 2005; Mahajan, 2010).

Method and analysis

Before doing the analysis, the whole interview transcripts will be arranged and coded. These actions will be taken throughout the analysis process:

1. A thorough comprehension of the material will be attained by the researcher by immersing themselves in the data and reading and rereading the interview transcripts.
2. Open coding will be used for the first coding, which will result in the creation of a list of prospective themes and patterns pertaining to managerialism and identity tensions.
3. Categorization: To capture the core of the experiences provided by the participants, themes and codes will be arranged into insightful categories.
4. CIT Analysis: Using participant narratives of crucial occurrences, the Critical Incidents Technique will be used to identify important triggers, actions, and effects connected to identity tensions induced by managerialist practices. The incidences mentioned by the respondents during the interviews, will then be categorically presented in the results, drawn at step 3.

Several techniques have been used in this qualitative study to strengthen the validity of the results. A crucial component of this study's validity is member checking. Participants will have the chance to examine and confirm the interpretations of their experiences after the initial data analysis. The accuracy and validity of the results are improved by including the participants in this verification procedure. The researcher's self-reflection and knowledge of potential biases and prejudices have been taken into account throughout the study process. Reflexivity guarantees that the interpretations are not disproportionately influenced by the researcher's point of view. The researcher's ideas and reflections during data collection and analysis can be transparently recorded by keeping a reflective journal.

The generalizability of the results outside of the study's particular environment is known as external validity. The generalizability of this study may be constrained due to its qualitative character. The purpose of this study is not to draw generalizations, but rather to offer detailed, deep insights into academics' experiences in the particular context of their identity tensions and managerialism. The findings can still make significant additions to the body of knowledge already available on this subject.

The following step is taken to assure reliability in this qualitative study:

The stability and consistency of the study findings are referred to as dependability. The study technique will be carefully recorded, with thorough records of data gathering methods, analytical phases, and decision-making processes. Maintaining a transparent audit trail will promote transparency and make it easier for other researchers to replicate or confirm the results you find.

In order to better understand how academics experience managerialism in connection to identity tensions between their professional and personal identities, this methodology chapter has provided an overview of the study design, participant selection process, data collecting, and analytic techniques. A thorough and nuanced understanding of the phenomena will be made possible by the combination of qualitative research, the Critical Incidents Technique (CIT), and an abductive research technique, adding to the body of knowledge in the fields of academia and management.

Results

This section presents the outcomes of the study, delving into the contradictions between the values of an academic identity and the values brought about by managerialism. The data analysis has revealed a multi-faceted array of challenges that significantly impact the emotional well-being and sense of worth of academics in contemporary academia. The pressures arising from performance-oriented measurement, a metrics-driven culture, and a competitive environment have collectively contributed to a deep-seated emotional suffering among participants. Moreover, the perception of being treated as disposable commodities, dehumanization, and the erosion of work-life balance have further exacerbated this emotional distress. The imposition of power structures and the erosion of autonomy have also played a pivotal role in shaping academics' experiences, underscoring the profound implications of managerialism on their identities. Through an exploration of these dimensions, this section illuminates the intricate web of identity tensions that academics grapple with (table 3).

Academic identity	Vs.	Managerialism
Academic freedom & Autonomy	Vs.	Accountability & Control
Intellectual curiosity	Vs.	Publish or perish
Community & Belongingness	Vs.	Individualism & Dehumanization
Scholarly ambitions	Vs.	Efficiency & satisfying stakeholders

Table 3: Components of academic identity conflicting with managerialism.

Academic freedom & Autonomy vs. Accountability & Control

Managerialism in academia has the potential to strengthen established power structures and hierarchies, which affects how academics see their identities inside the organisation. Their academic identity may be impacted by the existence of power disparities and a lack of autonomy. The academic hierarchy and the lack of decision-making independence are criticised by interviewee 4:

"On the university, we pretend it's a free place of ideas where you can decide everything yourself. But at the end of the day, the professor is the boss, and it's often a competition of ideas where the best idea wins."

This quote sheds light on the power dynamics within academia and how the hierarchical structure can stifle academic freedom and autonomy. The constant competition for recognition and approval from higher-ranking academics can lead to identity tensions and feelings of disempowerment.

The next quotation highlights once more how illusory academic independence may be. The reality of restrictions imposed by people in positions of control runs counter to the rhetoric of unrestricted freedom and inquiry. As a result, rather than being allowed to really follow their intellectual inclinations, academics may find themselves navigating a system where they must prioritise particular activities and adhere to certain expectations. Interviewee 6 mentioned this strikingly in the following quote:

"They don't really care about you and they sell this as a good thing like, but you have all the freedom in the world. It's like you are free [in the savannah]. Do what you want. But where can I get food? It's like you are free. Explore. How about water? Why do you have to, you are free? How to protect myself from the lions trying to eat me? You're free. Enjoy. Bye."

The sharp contrast between the independence that has been promised and the real constraints that academics must deal with in the managerialism-driven academic environment is brought home by this vivid illustration. When academics must overcome difficulties and limitations, analogous to surviving in the savannah without basic supplies, the idea of freedom loses its meaning. The quotation highlights the contradiction that exists between the idealised perception of academics and the complicated reality moulded by managerialist practises.

Intellectual curiosity vs. Publish or perish

The strong competitiveness and culture of overwork present in the academic work environment due to the entry of the publish or perish culture are intimately related to the pressure to satisfy performance criteria. Interviewee 4 suggests a problematic practise of matching data with anticipated hypotheses to increase success rates by describing the discomfort of generating hypotheses after receiving results:

"One of those things is this they call it HARKing—hypothesizing after results are known. All hypotheses were correct, just say what you did."

This comment illustrates how the pressure to provide favourable results may lead to a distortion of scientific integrity. Academics may have identity tensions as a result of the pressure to adapt outcomes to assumptions, which can foster a toxic workplace culture that places achievement above real scientific investigation. Furthermore, the culture of overwork is made worse by the fierce rivalry for scarce resources like research funds and important posts.

The pressures of performance-oriented measurements and responsibility imposed by managerialism left participants feeling anxious, frustrated, and disillusioned. They described feeling pressured to satisfy quantitative measures like research productivity and teaching evaluations as overwhelming. The information brought to light instances of emotional conflict between academics' internal goals for seeking knowledge and the outward demands imposed by managerialist practices. Participants discussed how the demand for high research output and grant acquisition frequently overshadowed the pursuit of personal passions and intellectual curiosity.

The adoption of a metrics-driven culture, which puts enormous pressure on academics to attain quantifiable objectives like research papers and grant funding, is one of the salient characteristics of managerialism in academia. For instance, interviewee 1 discusses the emotional cost of always being judged and scrutinised for performance:

"I started to see what life would look like as a professor, and yeah, a lot of grant writing and a lot of being overworked and not getting paid enough, and also started to just hate the idea of getting my life writing paper after paper after paper that no one cares about."

This quotation emphasises the tension between the professional academic identity and the managerial demands that academics experience as a result of the persistent danger posed by the culture of "publish or perish." The interviewee wants to have an influence on society, but is constrained by the requirements for publishing in order to become a professor. Identity tensions have resulted from being obliged to create without the underlying internal motivation. This identity tension includes feelings of inadequacy and damage one's academic identity to worry about not attaining performance goals.

Community & Belongingness vs. Individualism & Dehumanization

The emotional suffering and dehumanization that academics face as a result of managerialist practices is another important element that emerged from the data.

The perception of being devalued and dehumanised when academics are reduced to insignificant figures on performance reports is another facet of the emotional discomfort brought on by managerialism. This opinion is expressed by Interviewee 6 who says:

"I was making more money because I was German, and I was making less money because I'm Brazilian. It's like they pay you the bare minimum, hoping that you don't leave,

but at some point, they don't really care because they churn out too many PhDs. It's a little pyramid scheme."

The interviewee here emphasises how academics may feel undervalued and treated like disposable commodities as a result of managerialist practices, which can cause emotional pain. Interviewee 6 further elaborated on this lack of support and disposability when he tried to talk to his superior about this:

"I tried to talk to my boss about the lack of acknowledgement about work, and he literally told me it's not my job to give you acknowledgement. You get these from your papers published and for the review of your students."

Additionally, the devaluing of components of academic work that do not fit within the managerialism paradigm frequently results from managerialism's single concentration on performance measures. Interviewee 9 considers the effects of this isolated environment:

"It's much more productive to work in a team. The university is a bit closed, at least that's how I experienced it. Everyone was basically busy with their own topic, and there wasn't much collaboration."

This quotation emphasises how academics compete with one another rather than working together and how often they work alone. The emphasis on individual success and the lack of resources foster a culture where teamwork is disregarded, which results in an increase in burden and isolation.

Scholarly ambitions vs. Efficiency & Satisfying stakeholders

The data also revealed the scholarly ambitions that were put on hold in favour of satisfying stakeholders. Interviewee 2 talks on how the benefits of teaching and mentoring was disregarded in favour of research output:

"They only care about research output... It's like teaching and mentoring don't matter anymore. But that's why I became an academic in the first place – to make a difference in students' lives."

This comment exemplifies the identity crisis that academics who are enthusiastic about mentoring and teaching have. Their feeling of purpose and fulfilment inside academics are compromised by the devaluing of these crucial tasks.

The pressure to place the production of research ahead of other areas of academic labour causes identity tensions and a loss of academic identity. Interviewee 8 describes their struggle to juggle their research and teaching obligations:

"When it [the grant] was over, I saw the whole big teaching task coming at me again. There was actually no policy at the faculty for how to give people who have finished such a grant the space to apply for something new or to do research again."

This quotation emphasises the difficulty academics have juggling several jobs and obligations, which can cause identity problems. Academics may feel split between their identities as researchers and teachers as a result of the lack of encouragement and appreciation for their various contributions.

In academics, the emphasis on production and performance frequently causes a disparity between work and home life. Academics typically struggle to strike a healthy work-life balance by putting in long hours, giving up personal time, and other factors. Their personal identities and wellbeing may be negatively impacted by this lack of balance. Interviewee 5 explains the difficulties associated with balancing an academic job and motherhood:

"If I work a lot, I'm not a good mother. But if I want to be a good mother, I can't be a good researcher or teacher anymore. It's a constant struggle."

This quotation emphasises the dilemma that parents who are also academics confront as they try to balance the demands of both careers. Identity tensions and emotional anguish can result from the pressure people feel to succeed in their employment and matching stakeholders' demands while still fulfilling their personal ambitions as well.

The results show that managerialism has had a significant influence on academics' lives and identities inside the academic environment. This method's difficulties call for a serious re-evaluation of the existing system. Academic institutions must make an effort to establish a balance between productivity and wellbeing, cooperation and competitiveness, and independence and support. Academia may reframe its identity and mission to actually serve the development of knowledge and the improvement of society by cultivating an atmosphere that values the pursuit of knowledge, intellectual freedom, and the well-being of its members. Academia can only survive and live up to its promise of being an environment

of intellectual curiosity, transformational teaching, and ground-breaking discoveries via such reflection and adaptation.

Conclusion

In this study, we set out to investigate the identity tensions that exist between academics' identities in relation to managerialism. We gained important insights into the impact of managerialism on academics' identities through qualitative interviews. This research clarifies the difficulties experienced by academics in resolving these identity tensions in the higher education sector.

Today's academic world is significantly affected by managerialism and is characterized by a performance-based culture, increasing emphasis on performance indicators, and monitoring and control systems. This research has shown that these managerialism-related characteristics have a significant impact on academics' identities and wellbeing, frequently causing tensions between their identities and the management practices to which they are imposed to.

This study has shown how accountability and control methods have a widespread impact on academics' identities. A perception of being micromanaged is created by the heightened scrutiny brought on by performance assessments, metrics, and audits, which reduces autonomy. Academics' professional identities are directly impacted by this loss of autonomy since it hinders their ability to pursue interdisciplinary research and novel methodologies. Their potential for autonomous thinking and activity is constrained by the externally imposed control-oriented approach, which results in a decreased sense of agency and intellectual engagement. Academics are finding themselves complying to externally determined success criteria more and more, which can be damaging to the integrity of their intellectual endeavors.

The emotional stress that managerialism causes academics to undergo such as anxiety, burnout, and emotional tiredness are caused by increased workloads, unreasonable expectations, and ongoing pressure to accomplish goals, dehumanizing academics. These emotional pressures have an adverse effect on academics' psychological health as well as their sense of self as professionals. The genuine desire and enthusiasm that first drove academics to their studies might be diminished by the continual pressure of reaching performance targets and the fear of failing.

Furthermore, the managerialism-based performance-based culture has a considerable negative influence on the academic identity of academics. The concept of academic success is constrained by the predominance of a competitive environment that places a premium on

quantitative outputs like research funding, publications, and citation counts. This adaptation of accountability and control mechanisms diminishing academic freedom and autonomy is one of the main reasons these identity tensions arise. The limited concentration disregards other crucial facets of academics, such as the caliber of instruction and community involvement. Academics are forced to choose between the pursuit of sincere intellectual endeavors and the pressure to meet performance standards set by outside parties. The identity tensions are made worse by this strain.

The participants in this study shared experiences that show that the tensions between academics' professional identities under managerialism are intricate and multidimensional. Academics have a sense of alienation, disappointment, and a weakened sense of academic identity as a result of emotional stress, loss of autonomy, and the performance-based society as a whole. Higher education institutions must recognize how managerialism affects academics' identity tensions and take proactive steps to lessen such impacts in order to resolve these issues. Institutions may create welcoming settings that put academics' wellbeing and career development first. This may be accomplished through encouraging work-life balance, offering mentorship and support services, and setting up areas for open communication and teamwork. Additionally, universities have to think about implementing more all-encompassing and inclusive methods of evaluating academic success, acknowledging and appreciating many kinds of study and contributions that go beyond conventional criteria.

There are a number of directions for further research, even if this study has given useful insights into the managerialism-related experiences of academics. First, as various academic fields may experience and react to managerialism in different ways, further research is required to study the effects of managerialism on particular academic disciplines. Second, longitudinal research can help us comprehend the long-term impacts of managerialism on the identity tensions and wellbeing of academics. Comparative research across various national settings may also be used to pinpoint the contextual elements that influence academics' perceptions of managerialism within a specific environment.

As a result of the identity tensions, academics experience managerialism in a variety of ways. Academics face substantial difficulties in retaining a strong and satisfying sense of self because of the emotional stress, loss of autonomy, and performance-based culture associated with managerialism. Higher education institutions may foster an atmosphere that

fosters academics' professional development, well-being, and the fusion of their academic identities by acknowledging these problems and adopting proactive measures to lessen the negative impacts managerialism.

Discussion

The study's findings have shed important light on the identity tensions that academics deal with as a result of managerialism in the higher education industry. We have investigated the complex effects of managerialism on academics' identities through in-depth qualitative interviews, shedding light on the emotional stress, loss of autonomy, and performance-based culture that fuel these tensions. Academics began to experience increased levels of anxiety, burnout, and emotional tiredness as a result of increasing workloads and the continuous pursuit of performance goals. Emotional stress evolved as a common result of managerialism. Academics' psychological wellbeing has been negatively impacted by the emotional strain of achieving external expectations, which has also tempered their original enthusiasm for scholarly endeavors.

Academics' autonomy has been hampered by the existence of monitoring and control systems in the form of performance evaluations, metrics, and audits, which has created the impression of micromanagement. Academics' feeling of agency and intellectual engagement are hampered by this restriction of academic independence, which also limits multidisciplinary research and novel approaches. Additionally, the corporate culture's emphasis on performance has honed the notion of academic success, prioritizing quantitative results above other worthwhile contributions like excellent instruction and involvement in the community. Academics have had to negotiate identity tensions as a result of the competitive climate, balancing the need to pursue real intellectual interests with the need to meet predetermined success criteria.

This study adds to the body of knowledge by providing a thorough grasp of the complex interactions between managerialism and the identity tensions of academics. This research offers a comprehensive investigation of the emotional and professional issues encountered by academics in modern higher education by relying on ideas from emotional labor, alienation, and the change of academic employment. The knowledge gathered from this study adds to the body of knowledge on managerialism's impacts on academic work environments, as well as its implications on academics' careers and well-being. This research also explores the complexity of identity tensions, revealing the various ways in which managerialism affects the lives of academics.

The results of this study have significant practical ramifications for institutes of higher learning. Institutions should deliberately cultivate a climate that prioritizes academics' well-being and career advancement in light of the negative consequences of managerialism on

their identities. Academics' professional engagement may be improved by promoting work-life balance, offering mentorship and support services, and establishing venues for open communication and cooperation. Institutions of higher learning should also adopt a more inclusive and thorough method for determining academic performance. Reduced identity tensions brought on by the need to meet externally imposed criteria can be achieved by recognizing and praising varied sorts of research and contributions outside typical performance indicators.

While this study provides valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. Firstly, the research was conducted within a specific academic context, and the experiences of academics may vary across different institutional and national settings. Academics may have varying experiences with managerialism and identity tensions due to the distinctive organizational cultures, managerialist practices, and institutional regulations in various nations and academic fields. Therefore, generalizability should be approached with caution. Second, the study's primary data source was self-reported information obtained through interviews, opening the door to the potential of response bias and arbitrary interpretations. The accuracy and dependability of the data may have been impacted by participant replies, which may have been influenced by their own views, recollections, and emotional states. The subjectivity inherent in self-reporting adds the need for careful evaluation of potential biases, even as qualitative research permits in-depth investigation of individual experiences. To increase the validity and reliability of the results, future studies may use more objective metrics, observational data, or a triangulation of methodologies.

Thirdly, a cross-sectional research approach was used in the study, which offers a glimpse of academics' viewpoints and experiences at a particular period. Cross-sectional studies have limitations when it comes to capturing changes over time or determining causation, but they are helpful for examining relationships and trends. Long-term trends, changing institutional dynamics, and shifting policy environments may all have an impact on managerialism and identity tensions in academia. Insights into the long-term consequences of managerialist practices on academics' identities and well-being might be gained using a longitudinal study method, which could provide a more thorough knowledge of how these phenomena unfold and evolve over an extended period of time.

Last but not least, the study concentrated on academics who had left the academic field in an effort to learn from their retrospective observations and experiences. This method,

however, can leave out the viewpoints of academics who are still employed in the higher education sector and are presently battling managerialism and identity tensions. A more comprehensive knowledge of the ongoing difficulties and coping strategies used by people navigating the modern academic landscape may result from exploring the perspectives of both present and former academics.

As a result, this study has shed light on the complex identity tensions that academics deal with when managerialism has an impact on higher education. Academics' identities are affected in substantial ways by emotional stress, loss of autonomy, and the performance-based society. This research adds significantly to our understanding of academic work settings by illuminating the intricacies of identity tensions under managerialism. The real-world ramifications highlight how critical it is to create an academic environment that values academics' wellbeing and welcomes a variety of perspectives.

This study asks for more research to further our knowledge of managerialism's impact on academics' identities and career trajectories by conducting longitudinal studies, comparative analyses, and in-depth explorations of impacts unique to certain domains. Higher education institutions may ultimately establish an atmosphere that encourages the growth and flourishing of both the individual and the academic community as a whole by addressing the problems caused by managerialism and assisting academics in resolving identity tensions.

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Appendix 1: Interview guide

Introduction towards the thesis:

1. Introduce who I am and the topic.
3. Asking for permission to audiotape the interview and explaining what will and will not happen with the audiotape.

Introduction questions:

1. Tell me about yourself and the work you do. What do you do?
2. How did you get to the position you are in today? What are your primary responsibilities?
3. Tell me about your background. Can you make a timeline of the career path you have followed up till now?

Follow-up questions on the academic career:

4. Can you tell me about your personal reasons why you initially started working as an academic? How would you define an academic and academic career?
5. What was asked of you as an academic from the University/manager?
6. What were the contributions you made throughout your academic career?
7. Did you feel limited in your academic work due to policy or people? Please explain.
8. Did you find your academic work to be meaningful? Can you tell me about a specific day or event or time when you found your work to be meaningful? Meaningless?
9. How supportive or sceptical are your friends and family on your career (choices)? How important is their opinion to you?
10. How do you decide when to keep a job or discard it?
11. Do you think you were “pushed” out of an academic career? Please explain.
12. Where there specific moments which defined your (academic) career path? Please mention a few moments.

Comparison between academic work and corporate work:

13. How does your current work make you feel? / How do you feel when you are at work?
14. Are there tensions you feel in your current work life. What are those?
15. Do you think you will stay in this line of work or eventually go back to academics?
16. What are the main benefits of not working in academics anymore?
17. How important is a sense of authenticity in your work? What does work authentically mean to you?

18. Do you feel authentic in your current jobs? Have you ever felt inauthentic in any job?
Can you describe this? How did you handle the experience?

Closing of the interview and thanking the participant