

BEING AN ACADEMIC: PERCEPTIONS OF EXPATRIATE ACADEMICS

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DECLARATION

This thesis results entirely from my own work and has not been offered previously for any other degree or diploma.

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Abstract

The focus of this thesis is to explore how expatriate academics perceive the meaning of being an academic in higher education. In this study, I sought to contribute to the extant literature on expatriate academics and the construction of their academic identities, which has been under-researched, particularly in relation to how multiple contributing factors such as the motivations to expatriate and the experiences of academics influence the development of the identities of expatriate academics.

An interpretive approach to research guided the design of the study. In order to answer the research questions, a qualitative study was undertaken, and the data was generated using semi-structured interviews with 18 expatriate academics at a higher education institution in Oman. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

The findings of this study show that the expatriate academics reflected four core identities of the meaning of being an academic: traditional teacher, integrated academic, academic freelancer and academic leader. The findings draw attention to the complex nature of academic identities and that the academics expressed a wider range of academic identities such as academic freelancer (practitioner/vocational) and academic leader (leadership) in addition to being a teacher or a researcher. This thesis contributes to original knowledge by relating the influences of motivations to expatriate and the experiences of expatriation on the development of the core academic identities of expatriate academics. This thesis argues that the expatriate academics' perception of being an academic has been evolving over time and the academics were seen as building on and extending their core academic identity influenced by their past experiences, considering their present and likely future experiences. The findings revealed that the expatriate academics were able to construct positive and agentive narratives of academic identity development within the higher education environment in Oman taking into account the diversity of the academic profession and context.

The findings have implications for policy makers and managements of HEIs as a better understanding of how the expatriate academics perceive the meaning of being an

academic, will enable them to reimagine the HE environment in their institutions and countries so that the expatriate academics are offered opportunities and space to develop their academic identities and future identity trajectories. This will enable the academics to develop and thrive in the academic profession. The findings also have implications for academics globally that have expatriated or are considering expatriation to understand what to expect when deciding to expatriate and the related experiences.

Table of Contents

1	CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	9
1.1	Clarifying terms	10
1.2	Origins of the study	10
1.3	Purpose of the study.....	11
1.4	Context of the study	11
1.5	Higher Education in Oman	11
1.6	Rationale for study	13
1.7	Research questions.....	14
1.8	Structure of the thesis	15
2	CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	18
2.1	Self-Initiated Expatriates	19
2.2	Academic Expatriates	20
2.2.1	Importance of expatriate academics	22
2.2.2	Previous research on expatriate academics.....	23
2.3	Motivations to expatriate.....	24
2.4	Experiences of Expatriation	27
2.5	Academic identities	30
2.6	Identity Trajectory Framework	41
2.7	Conclusion	46
3	CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS	48
3.1	Introduction	48
3.2	Philosophical approach.....	49
3.3	Methodology and Research design	51
3.4	Case study approach.....	51
3.5	Data Generation - Semi-structured interviews	53
3.5.1	Methodological reconsiderations - virtual interviews	56
3.6	Participants and sampling method.....	57
3.6.1	Sample selection	57
3.6.2	Gatekeepers.....	58
3.7	Pilot interviews	61
3.8	Data analysis	61
3.8.1	Thematic analysis.....	62
3.8.2	The steps of Thematic Analysis.....	63
3.8.3	Application of TA to my research.....	64

3.9	Research Ethics.....	68
3.10	Methodological issues	70
3.11	Limitations	72
3.12	Conclusion	72
4	CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS: CORE IDENTITIES OF ACADEMICS.....	73
4.1	Identity as a Traditional Teacher.....	74
4.2	Identity as an Integrated Academic.....	77
4.3	Identity as an Academic Freelancer.....	80
4.4	Identity as an Academic Leader	82
4.5	Conclusion	86
5	CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS: EXPLORING THE ACADEMIC IDENTITY CHANGES OVER TIME THROUGH IDENTITY TRAJECTORY	87
5.1	Traditional Teacher – Commitment to teaching with a future inclination towards research.....	87
5.2	Integrated Academic – Reconfirming and strengthening commitment to research.....	89
5.3	Academic Freelancer – Recommitting to professional practice.....	90
5.4	Academic Leader – Commitment to leadership	92
5.5	Conclusion	93
6	CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS: CONTRIBUTING FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE IDENTITIES OF EXPATRIATE ACADEMICS	96
6.1	Motivation – decision to expatriate	96
6.1.1	Life change	97
6.1.2	Career opportunities	98
6.1.3	Adventure	99
6.1.4	Other factors that motivated expatriation	100
6.2	Experiences as factors influencing academic identity	103
6.2.1	Alienation	103
6.2.2	Resilience	104
6.2.3	Disengagement	106
6.3	Conclusion	108
7	CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION	111
7.1	Introduction	111
7.2	The meaning of being an expatriate academic	111
7.2.1	Core identity of Traditional Teacher	114
7.2.2	Identity Trajectory of Traditional Teachers - Commitment to teaching with a future inclination towards research.....	115
7.2.3	Core identity of Integrated Academic	116
7.2.4	Identity trajectory of Integrated Academics - Reconfirming and strengthening commitment to research.....	118
7.2.5	Core identity of Academic Freelancer	119

7.2.6	Identity Trajectory of Academic Freelancers - Recommitting to professional practice	121
7.2.7	Core identity of Academic Leader	122
7.2.8	Identity Trajectory of Academic Leaders - Commitment to leadership	123
7.3	Agency and horizons for action of the expatriate academics	124
7.4	Motivation to expatriate as an influencing factor on academic identity	126
7.5	Experiences as influencing factor on academic identity.....	129
7.6	Conclusion	135
8	CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION.....	136
8.1	Introduction	136
8.2	Addressing the research questions	136
8.2.1	What are expatriate academics' perceptions of the meaning of being an academic?	136
8.2.2	What are expatriate academics' perceptions of how their understanding of being an academic has changed over time?.....	139
8.2.3	What are the contributing factors that influence the identities of expatriate academics?.....	140
8.3	Originality and contribution.....	142
8.4	Limitations	143
8.5	Implications.....	144
8.6	Recommendations for future research.....	147
9	References	149
10	Appendix 1 - Participant Information sheet	175
11	Appendix 2- Consent form	178
12	Appendix 3 - Ethics Approval	179
13	Appendix 4 - Interview Questions	180
14	Appendix 5 - Example of coding using Excel.....	181
15	Appendix 6 - Example of code clusters	182
16	Appendix 7 - Themes and sub-themes related to factors influencing academic identity 183	
17	Appendix 8 - Distinct Characteristics of Academic Identities	184

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List of Abbreviations

EA	Expatriate academic
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
OE	Organisational expatriate
SFE	Self-initiated foreign experiences
SIE	Self-initiated expatriate
TA	Thematic Analysis
UAE	United Arab Emirates

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Academic Identity Trajectory Dimensions.....	46
Figure 2: Research Conceptual Framework.....	48
Figure 3: Concept map with the code clusters and initial themes.....	67
Figure 4: Core Academic Identities	86
Figure 5: Academic identities and the influencing factors- motivations to expatriate and experiences.....	110
Table 1: Summary of definition of expatriate academics	22
Table 2: Sample characteristics of research participants	60
Table 3: Present and future identity trajectories of expatriate academics	95
Table 4: Main motivations of expatriate academics in relation to their core identities	103
Table 5: Experiences of expatriation in relation to the core identities of expatriate academics.	108
Table 6: Impact of motivation to expatriate and experiences as influencing core identities of expatriate academics	109
Table 7: Core academic identity, the trajectories and the factors influencing academic identity observed in this study.....	110
Table 8: The link between the motivational factors to expatriate, the experiences of expatriation and academic identity of expatriate academics in this study	132

1 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Academics have become more mobile in recent times and expatriate academics are a fast-growing group about whom relatively little is known about (Froese, 2012; Luring & Selmer, 2015; Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2010). The numbers of expatriate academics have been increasing as a result of globalization; internationalisation agenda of higher education institutions and increased mobility of academics (Trembath, 2015). There is an increasing need to understand the experiences of this group of academics as higher education institutions are dependent on them for their success in attracting students, building a strong international brand, to compete in the global higher education market and climb university rankings (De Wit, 2020).

The aim of this study is to investigate how the expatriate academics perceive the meaning of being an academic in higher education. I argue that there is a need to understand how expatriate academics understand their academic identity as it is key in explaining and understanding almost everything that happens in and around higher education (Brown, 2015). To develop this argument further, my aim is to discover how multiple contributing factors such as the motivations to expatriate and the ensuing experiences influence the identities of the expatriate academics. This study aims to close some gaps in the literature on expatriate academics and to warrant a better understanding of the perception of expatriate academics of their identity as Trembath (2015, p. 26) has identified that there is 'a critical deficiency' in the literature on expatriate academics' professional experiences and that there is a 'lack of a systematic approach' to the development of the body of knowledge.

The aim of this section is to outline the context for this doctoral research study. First, I will introduce the topic and the key words, the rationale for the study and the research setting. The aims of the research will be developed, leading to a statement of the research questions, and will end with an overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 CLARIFYING TERMS

For the purposes of this thesis, the term 'academic' refers to a qualified individual employed within higher education in their various relations to the higher education institution and not only employed in teaching and research roles. Similarly, the term higher education institution (HEI) is representative of the college where this study was conducted and will be used interchangeably in this thesis. 'Omanisation' is a nationalisation policy that aims to bring down Oman's dependence on expatriate manpower and replace it with local/national manpower. The policy has been in place since 1988 (Das & Gokhale, 2010) and it is mandated by the Ministry of Manpower. 'Core academic identity(ies)' denotes the central meaning of being an academic as constructed by the expatriate academics.

1.2 ORIGINS OF THE STUDY

The context of this study is highly specific since I originate from India, immigrating specifically for professional purposes. The environment has been both challenging and rewarding and I have gained important insights teaching and learning in an Arab culture. At some point, I became interested in exploring what it means to be an academic and an expatriate one at that. I was interested to investigate if academics construct singular, static meanings of being an academic or whether they are constantly negotiating and reconstructing their academic identities. For myself, this foregrounded questions about 'what?' an academic is, how I think of myself as an academic, and who or what factors influence it. This has to a certain extent made me engage in a reflexive evaluation of my own academic identity and positioning. I have an advantage that I am both familiar with many of the experiences of the participants in this study and sensitive to many of the themes that have surfaced in their discourse. As (Clegg & Stevenson, 2013, p. 7) may put it: "She is a fish in the water, part of the habitus, with a feel for the rules of the game." However, I am aware that my familiarity could also lead to bias and loss of objectivity which I needed to be cognizant of. I have tried to mitigate this by being reflexive and maintaining a neutral stance while conducting the research, during the coding of the data and the generation of themes during the qualitative analysis of the data.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate how expatriate academics identify themselves as an academic. The meanings associated with what 'being' an academic encompasses are always shifting and changing (Archer, 2008a; Vandeyar, 2010). Hence, it has become pertinent to understand what makes an academic today as the roles and responsibilities of academic staff are constantly being reframed and revised and there is a need to understand how they perceive their academic identities (Billot, 2010). This research takes into consideration the perspectives of academics who have relocated to Oman for work. I attempt to understand how these expatriate academics make sense of their academic identities and how they negotiate, adapt and position themselves in the HE environment as influenced by factors such as their motivations to expatriate to Oman for work and the associated experiences as a way to address the gaps identified in the scholarship on the identity construction of expatriate academics in HE.

1.4 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The context for any study that aims to explore academic life, roles and work 'is always local, in that while the particular position of an institutional site(s) can be read across national and global hierarchies, they also operate at the micro level of difference' (Clegg, 2008, p. 332). This study is based in a single Omani private higher education institution. This institution has over 1500 students and a total of approximately 150 academic staff out of which 40% are expatriates hailing from different nationalities. The case study higher education institution is ranked among the top HEIs in Oman and offers undergraduate, postgraduate and professional programmes across disciplines.

1.5 HIGHER EDUCATION IN OMAN

The higher education system in Oman was established around 35 years ago which was around the same time that HEIs were being established in other Gulf states (Coffman, 2003). In Oman, the first higher education institutions were established in 1977 that were aimed at training Omanis to be school teachers (Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2012). The higher

education sector witnessed tremendous growth in the 1980s and 90s with the establishment of a number of public HEIs, including fourteen Health Institutes, seven Technical Colleges, six Colleges of Education which later got renamed as Colleges of Applied Sciences and one Institute of Banking and Financial Sciences. The establishment of the first state university – Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) in 1986, became the lynchpin of the HE landscape in Oman. In 1995, the government responded to demands for more access to HE by allowing investments from the private sector to establish private colleges to meet and fulfil the demands of the job market by producing qualified and well-trained workforce (Al-Lamki, 2006; Ministry of Higher Education, 2005). According to the Higher Education Admission Centre (HEAC), by 2015-16, the number of Omani HEIs had increased to 63 (Higher Education Admission Centre, 2016).

The Ministry of Higher Education was established under the Royal Decree No. (2/1994) and is responsible for promoting higher education in both the government and public sectors in Oman (Education Council, 2020). In 2018, the National Strategy for Education 2040 was prepared as a primary source to bring about the development of policies to reform the educational sector in Oman. The main objectives of the National Strategy for Education 2040 are to ensure effective management and governance in the educational sector, providing quality education to students that will enable the graduates to enter the labour market, improve the quality of education that delivers high quality outcomes in line with international standards and build research capacities in HEIs to contribute and build a knowledge-based economy.

Oman relies heavily on expatriate academics as the expansion of the higher education sector has been so fast paced that there is a deficit in the available pool of talent available in terms of qualified academic staff, leading to increased student-teacher ratio, hiring of less qualified instructors and the recruitment and employment of expatriate academics (Asian Development Bank, 2011). As of 2018, there are 5,247 expatriate academic staff working in HEIs in Oman (National Centre for Statistics and Information, 2021). However, the National Strategy for Education 2040 has set a long-term plan to increase the Omanisation in Higher Education Institutions to 60% by the year 2040.

1.6 RATIONALE FOR STUDY

This research is timely as well as important for the following reasons. Expatriate academics are becoming pivotal in the higher education sector due to the increased proclivity of universities to develop an internationalisation agenda (Ball & McCulloch, 1993; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2006; McDonnell & Boyle, 2012; Ryan et al., 2013; Vance et al., 2011), reflecting to a certain extent the ongoing globalization of higher education more generally (Bunnell, 2005; MacDonald, 2006).

More and more academics are relocating to countries in search of better prospects (Altbach et al., 2019; Knight, 2004; Leong & Leung, 2004; Schermerhorn, 1999; Welch, 1997). Despite the ever-increasing internationalisation of universities, expatriate academics as phenomenon has remained under-researched in business studies (Richardson & McKenna, 2000) as well as in educational research (Mamiseishvili, 2011; Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2010).

As universities are complex and distinct organisations, different constructions of the 'academic' coexist (Fitzmaurice, 2013, p. 613). Hence, 'there are multiple, expanding and conflicting ideas about what it is to be an academic' (Pick et al., 2017, p. 3). Although academic identity is an important area of study in higher education, it remains a 'slippery' concept (Billot, 2010, p. 1; Lawler, 2015). It is important to understand academic identity, as it not only plays a crucial role in the productivity and well-being of the academic staff, but also has a positive influence on their need to teach, improve their skills, acquire satisfaction from teaching and finally for student learning (Lieff et al., 2012, p. 208).

In order to fulfill student aspirations, accommodate the increasing student admission rates, meet the global standards and deal with the shortage in the number of local Omani academics, Omani higher education has been employing more and more international academics (Kirk & Napier, 2009; Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, 2010; Romani, 2009).

The academic environment in Oman and GCC countries is considerably different from those in western countries (Romanowski & Nasser, 2015). Researchers have found that

academics working in GCC countries were found to have less job autonomy, fewer opportunities to participate in academic governance, tenure system and diverse thinking compared to their western counterparts (Austin et al., 2014; Mazawi, 2003; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015; Schoepp & Forstenlechner, 2012). Additionally, most of the higher education institutions in the Middle East were found to be teaching oriented which does not offer opportunities to the academics to deploy the gamut of skills such as research skills and talents that they have developed over time. Kirk and Wall (2011) contend that the failure of HEIs management and policy makers to acknowledge the importance of academic identity could be detrimental to academics. Hence, it is crucial to understand the expatriate academics' views about what it means to be an academic as HEIs in Oman are striving to widen retention and participation of academic staff as well as attract more students from different backgrounds.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The core argument of this research is to understand the complex nature of how expatriate academics identify themselves as an academic. The research around academic identity and expatriate academics is limited with no known study of how expatriate academics construct and develop their academic identities and the factors that impact the construction of these identities.

The research questions, identified from the gaps in the existing scholarship, are as follows:

1. What are the expatriate academics' perceptions of the meaning of being an academic?
2. What are the expatriate academics' perceptions of how their understanding of being an academic has changed over time?
3. What are the contributing factors that influence the identities of expatriate academics?

The original contribution of this empirical research is to add to the limited research on academic identity of expatriate academics and I show that the rich and detailed qualitative

data will provide insight into the construction, consolidation and development of the core academic identities of the academics. The academic identity development will be captured using the identity trajectory framework (McAlpine et al., 2010) and how the multiple contributing factors have influenced the construction of the identities of the expatriate academics.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of seven chapters.

Chapter 1, introduces the study and provides a context for the study. Then, the key words are introduced. This will be followed by a brief outline of higher education in Oman. Next, the rationale for the study and the three research questions are set out. This chapter will conclude by providing an overview of how the thesis is structured and the content of each chapter of the thesis.

Chapter 2 focuses on literature review to develop an argument about how expatriate academics perceive the meaning of being an academic. The study also aims to explore how multiple contributing factors such as the motivations to expatriate and the experiences of academics have influenced the identities of academics. It first introduces who self-initiated expatriate and expatriate academics are, and then it explores and contextualises the motivations and experiences of expatriate academics in the empirical research. It explains why expatriate academics have become important by locating them within the wider HE landscape. Secondly, it is then followed by an outline of the emerging literature on academic identities – a key concept in this study and how this study provides an original contribution by focusing on the expatriate academics' identities. In order to understand the expatriate academics' perception of how the meaning of being an academic has changed over time, the notion of academic identity trajectories is used. Academic identity trajectory and its three associated dimensions (intellectual, networking and institutional) are introduced as a conceptual tool to shed light on how the expatriate academic identities might evolve over time as a result of their motivations and experiences. The chapter concludes by summarising the research aims and the objectives of this study,

Chapter 3 provides an explanation of the research methodology and methods used to answer the research questions. The philosophical, ontological, epistemological assumptions that provide the methodological underpinning of this study are detailed. The methods section explains the methods used for data collection and generation. Following this the methodological issues are addressed and limitations of the methodology and methods are discussed.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 detail the findings of the study based on the analysis of the empirical data to answer the three research questions. **Chapter 4** focuses on findings related to the meaning of being an academic; **chapter 5** on academic identity development illustrating how the explanatory framework of identity trajectory is applied to analyse the data regarding the perceptions of the expatriate academics about how the meaning of being an academic has changed over time and **chapter 6** on the contributing factors that influence the construction of the academic identities of expatriate academics.

Chapter 7 discusses the main outcomes in relation to the research questions and evaluates its significance against existing literature to show parallels or variations in the interpretations of the phenomena under investigation. First, the construction of the core academic identities are discussed in relation to the existing literature. The identity trajectory will be used to discuss the expatriate academics' perception of how the meaning of being an academic has evolved, relating it to how this conceptual tool has been used in previous studies. The study shows that the identity trajectory provides a useful framework to bring to the fore how changes in the structural settings could impact the expatriate academic's identities illustrating how academic's commitments and affiliations evolved over time. Next, the main motivations of the expatriate academics to relocate is discussed in relation to the existing scholarship. Following which, the motivations to relocate and the core identities of the academics are foregrounded. Then, the main experiences of expatriation of the expatriate academics are discussed and correlated to the literature, highlighting the similarities and differences. Finally, the relation between the experiences of expatriation and the core identities of the academics is highlighted and compared to the existing literature.

Chapter 8 is the final chapter that provides an overall conclusion, bringing together the main findings and arguments reflecting upon the research questions. The significance of the study is delineated, followed by implications for policy makers and management of higher education along with expatriate academics. Finally, the limitations of the research are discussed before recommendations for further investigations that might need to be considered are stated.

2 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the key concepts and arguments are introduced in relation to the importance and significance of the study by situating my research in the context of existing literature on expatriate academics and academic identities. First, the relevant themes in the literature on expatriate academics are identified. Then, I set out the contextual background around the motivations of academics for expatriation and review existing literature around this. It also discusses the literature around the experiences of expatriate academics. Following this, the literature around academic identities is explored and evaluated and variations are identified that also emerge in the findings chapter of this thesis. By identifying areas for exploration, I develop the lines for argument that helped frame the research questions for the research study. The argument develops thinking about the different identities developed by expatriate academics and how the motivations of the academics to expatriate and their experiences influence and relate to development of the academic identities.

Finally, I establish the theoretical framework of the study to develop the lines of argument and establish that the research questions prompt an original contribution to knowledge.

From a comprehensive review of the literature, the research questions emerged that highlighted the gaps in current research, which the current study aims to bridge and contribute to. The three questions that underpin this study are:

1. What are the expatriate academics' perceptions of the meaning of being an academic?
2. What are the expatriate academics' perceptions of how their understanding of being an academic has changed over time?
3. What are the contributing factors that influence the identities of expatriate academics?

The definitions of and existing research on the main concepts such as self-initiated

expatriates, expatriate academics, motivations to expatriate, experiences of expatriation, academic identities and identity trajectory will be discussed in the following sections to draw up links between these areas of previous research and how the gaps in the literature were identified which helped formulate the research questions for this study.

2.1 SELF-INITIATED EXPATRIATES

Previous literature on expatriates has focused primarily on organizational expatriates (OEs), however, continuous globalisation has resulted in individuals making personal choices and decisions to take up expatriate assignments instead of by the organisations (Halim et al., 2014). Hence, the research is switching to so-called self-initiated expatriates (SIE) (Halim et al., 2014). According to Halim, Bakar and Mohamad (2014, p. 124) self-initiated expatriates are “individuals who initiate their own travel and find work in foreign country”. They are professionals who make the decision to expatriate (Harrison et al., 2004), for an indefinite period of time (Harrison et al., 2004; Suutari & Brewster, 2000) to the country of their choice in pursuit of a job or for entrepreneurship (Jokinen et al., 2008; Saxenian, 2005). SIEs may also have found a job before relocating (Bozionelos, 2009; Suutari & Brewster, 2000; Thang, 2002). Studies (e.g., Doherty et al., 2011; Hugo et al., 2003; Napier & Taylor, 2002) have shown that the number of self-initiated expatriates are greater than those of organizational expatriates. According to Doherty et al. (2011), the ratio of SIEs to OEs of western origin is 65% to 35%.

There are other terms that appear in earlier literature for self-initiated expatriate such as overseas experience (Inkson et al., 1997), self-initiated foreign experiences (SFE) (Suutari & Brewster, 2000), self-selecting expatriates (Richardson & McKenna, 2003a) and self-initiated international work opportunities (Tharenou, 2003). Also, terms like self-expatriates and self-made expatriates (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010) as well as self-initiated movers, self-initiated mobility and self-initiated foreign experiences (Thorn, 2009) have been used in conjunction with the concept of self-initiated expatriates (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014).

Industries such as IT, investment banking and education have been identified as providing the most opportunities for self-initiated expatriates to move as they provide good opportunities for the transference of existing knowledge and skills from one country to the other (Froese, 2012). In addition, the ManpowerGroup (2020), has reported that the global talent shortage is increasing and at an all-time high around the world. The shortages along with the recognition of SIEs as sources of talent (Vaiman et al., 2015) has been creating attractive work opportunities for self-initiated expatriates (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010), especially foreign academics.

2.2 ACADEMIC EXPATRIATES

As has been mentioned above, education is one of the industries that has been most welcoming of SIEs (Froese, 2012). This has resulted in the burgeoning number of academics who expatriate to other countries for work in the university sector (Jonasson et al., 2018; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015; Selmer et al., 2017). This group of expatriates are referred to as academic expatriates or expatriate academics, both terms are used synonymously (e.g. Halim et al., 2014; Harry et al., 2017; Selmer & Luring, 2010).

A review of the literature on expatriates indicates that there is a lack of clarity on the exact definition of the term 'expatriate academics' (EAs) although it has been used more consistently than some of the other synonyms used in its place such as "foreign academics" or "academic migrants" (Trembath, 2016). The term expatriate academic came about rather independently of the above-mentioned debates (Trembath, 2016). The term was published in early literature (e.g. Richardson & McKenna, 2000; Richardson & McKenna, 2002, 2003a) during the time period when the concept of self-initiated foreign experiences were underway (Suutari & Brewster, 2000). More broader terms like "academic migrants", "international academics" or "foreign academics" were used to refer to academics who moved or left one organisation (in one country) to another one (in another country). They are described as self-directed academics by Richardson (2006), as self-initiated expatriates by Thorn (2009) and as independent academic expatriates by Yeo (2012).

According to Richardson (2000), using the construct of expatriate academics creates a “deliberate and with full awareness” attention to the details and scope of the definition that others do not have. In their extensive research on expatriate academics, Richardson et al. (2008); Richardson and McKenna (2003a, 2006), identify expatriate academics as individuals who are highly educated and possess skills and expertise in a particular field. Jones (2000) and Williamson and Cable (2003), from the same perspective, as cited by Richardson and McKenna (2006, p. 8) define expatriate academics as “knowledge workers demonstrating a significant level of confidence in the portability and the transferability of their knowledge”.

Extant literature differs when defining expatriate academics, but there are certain common characteristics used in the majority of studies: (1) The respondent’s nationality is different from that of the host country; (2) employment status is for a long-term or an extendable one, but usually time-bound contract and, (3) the intention of the respondent for relocation is for the purposes of being involved in university sector teaching or research (Andresen et al., 2014; Austin et al., 2014; Isakovic & Whitman, 2013; Richardson, 2000; Richardson & McKenna, 2000; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015; Schoepp, 2011; Selmer & Luring, 2009). The below figure provides a summary of this definition.

All of the following criteria must be upheld	None of the following are included
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have moved from dominant place of residence (i.e. on a contractual basis) 2. Have moved across national borders 3. Employment is legal 4. Employment is time-bound (i.e. no intention to emigrate permanently) 5. Employment is related to teaching and/or research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Travellers (i.e. has not moved dominant place of residence). For example, conference attended, FIFOs, academics on sabbatical or field work 2. Managers or administrators employed in universities whose employment does not include teaching or research

6. Employment is based in an institution of higher education	3. Educators or researchers not employed in this role at an institution of higher education
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Table 1: Summary of definition of expatriate academics

Source: Trembath (2016)

2.2.1 Importance of expatriate academics

Academics have become more transient and are working outside their home countries more than ever in the history of academics (Romanowski & Nasser, 2015). It has been argued by Welch (1997) that expatriation serves two purposes for academic expatriates: first, providing them an opportunity to take advantage of the bargaining power they have in terms of the non-firm-specific human capital and second, the increase in their human and social capital as a result of their expatriate experience. Pertaining to the non-firm-specific knowledge, Selmer and Luring (2010) argue that as this group of expatriates possess highly specific skills, enables them to be extremely mobile in the global labour market. Similarly, Froese (2012); Isakovic and Whitman (2013), explain that the number of expatriate academics have been increasing as the academic profession is perceived to offer a relatively high degree of autonomy and academic work is similar and done in much the same way across the globe. Another reason that has been cited is the shortage and global competition for talent (Isakovic & Whitman, 2013; Selmer et al., 2017; Silvanto & Ryan, 2014). Universities around the world are aiming to gain world-class status and succeed in global ranking, hence the hiring of talented international academic staff is considered as important (Jonasson et al., 2017; Kim, 2015; Munene, 2014).

Expatriate academics are becoming increasingly important to the higher education sector as universities globally are increasingly hiring and retaining international faculty (Mamiseishvili, 2011) due to the increased propensity of universities to develop an internationalisation agenda (Ball & McCulloch, 1993; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2011; McDonnell & Boyle, 2012; Ryan et al., 2013; Vance et al., 2011), which reflects to a certain degree the ongoing globalization of education generally (Bunnell, 2006; MacDonald, 2006). As a result of this, the universities are dependent on self-initiated

expatriates to fill this shortage of professionals (Banai & Harry, 2004; Suutari & Brewster, 2000; West Jr & Bogumil Jr, 2000). The number of expatriate and foreign academics teaching and researching in the Arab world, and especially in the Gulf countries has been increasing at an unprecedented rate (Romanowski & Nasser, 2015) as a result of this. However, expatriate academics is a phenomenon that is vastly under-researched (Selmer et al., 2017; Trembath, 2016).

Oman has been expanding its higher education system over the past two decades and has been recruiting and hiring large numbers of expatriate faculty members since the country lacks a sufficient pool of qualified Omani instructors. This is in common with countries like Canada, New Zealand, Australia and countries in Asia (Altbach et al., 2012). Oman has a shortage of academic professionals and hence, higher education institutions in Oman can be seen as relying heavily on expatriate academics.

2.2.2 Previous research on expatriate academics

The extant literature on expatriate academics has focused on different areas such as the demographics of expatriate academics (Mamiseishvili, 2011; Selmer & Luring, 2011a); motivations to expatriate (Kim, 2015; Richardson & McKenna, 2000; Richardson & McKenna, 2003a; Selmer & Luring, 2012); experiences of expatriation (Froese, 2010, 2012; Richardson, 2009; Richardson & Mallon, 2005; Richardson & McKenna, 2002; Selmer & Luring, 2010, 2013); expatriate adjustment to host country and work environment (Agha-Alikhani, 2018; Alshammari, 2013; Austin et al., 2014; Davies et al., 2015; Fenech et al., 2020; Froese, 2012; Halim et al., 2014; Henha, 2009; Maharaj, 2014; Maharjan et al., 2021; Parnian et al., 2013; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015; Selmer & Luring, 2009); expatriation issues and job satisfaction (Wan et al., 2015); career and workplace experiences (Emmelhainz, 2017; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015; Schoepp, 2011).

Few studies have looked at aspects of identities of expatriate academics but not holistically (Richardson, 2000; Richardson & McKenna, 2003a; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015). The current study aims to bridge this gap by focusing on expatriate academics working at a higher education institution in Oman across all disciplines and career stages,

examining the reasons for their relocation and their experiences of expatriation. The study examines the influence of these factors on the development of the academic identity of these expatriate academics.

In their seminal work, which was one of the first qualitative studies in the field of expatriate academics, Richardson and McKenna (2002), studied the motivations and experiences of 30 British expatriate academics in universities in New Zealand, Singapore, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The findings from this study still continue to be the main source of scholarship and information on expatriate academics. Studies such as Maharaj (2014); Selmer and Luring (2013) have had their findings on motivations to expatriate predicated on the conceptualisations and findings from the study by Richardson and McKenna (2002).

2.3 MOTIVATIONS TO EXPATRIATE

Expatriate academics are motivated to expatriate for myriad reasons that span across demographic groups, host locations, career stages and other unknown variables (McNulty & Selmer, 2017). Previous studies (e.g. Aycan, 1997; Osland, 2000) have looked at the expatriate academics venturing on a 'hero's journey' pursuing a worthy or idealistic goal. In the course of the journey, the academics were seen to overcome challenges, undergo personal growth and transformation and eventually return to their countries changed by the adventure (Richardson & McKenna, 2000; Richardson & McKenna, 2002).

Certain primary factors have been cited as facilitating this academic mobility trend, such as the increased use of English as a medium of instruction in higher education all over the world, advanced means of transportation and communication which has facilitated overseas travel and connecting colleagues and family, attractive salary and benefits, perception of better work conditions and job security in foreign countries and a poor job market at home (Altbach, 2004; Kim, 2009; Lehn, 2016).

As research on academic expatriation is currently like a jig-saw puzzle that is underdeveloped and does not provide the whole picture (Trembath, 2016), the current study, therefore seeks to add to existing literature concerning expatriates working in an

academic workplace context in higher education. This will be done primarily by using the pioneering work by Richardson et al. (2008); Richardson and McKenna (2002, 2003a, 2006) on expatriate academics and their motivations to expatriate and their experiences as a starting point.

Richardson and McKenna (2002) and Richardson (2009) have done comprehensive work on the motivations to expatriate that has laid a foundation for work on this subject. Richardson and McKenna (2002) identified four categories of motives to become an expatriate using 'metaphors'. These are: an explorer is someone who undertakes international mobility as journey of self-discovery, personal fulfilment and development; a refugee is someone motivated to expatriate for a better quality of life either personally or professionally, for example to escape a bad relationship, situation or experience and reinvent themselves; a mercenary is someone who is driven by monetary benefits and is motivated by financial rewards above all else; lastly, an architect is someone who is motivated by career building prospects to expatriate and international experience was thought to enhance their future career prospects and marketability.

Richardson and McKenna (2003a, p. 774) in their study identified the main motivator for their expatriates as the opportunity to travel and experience adventure. The participants in their study used "hero talk" when they described challenges that they overcame by "fighting to survive". The participants in their study attributed this partly to the lack of support systems at the host institutions. However, this lack of support served the purpose of helping the academics to learn and make the best of the situation and in the process discover their true selves (Richardson & McKenna, 2003a, p. 781).

Another study conducted by Richardson and Mallon (2005) also explored the incentives of academics to expatriate and found motivations similar to those discussed above. The main motivators were the desire to experience adventure and travel (similar to explorers), family reasons, better career opportunities (architects), financial benefits (mercenaries) and need for a life change or escape from situations in home country (refugees).

There are several studies that have used and built on the four metaphors of motivation to expatriate that have been developed by Richardson and McKenna (2002). Froese (2012) found that expatriate academics in South Korea were mainly motivated by refugee and explorer metaphors, while Parnian et al. (2013), found that the motivations of the academics to relocate to Malaysia could be equated to the architect, explorer and refugee metaphors. Maharaj (2014) described the motivations of the academics in her study to relocate to South Africa as 'architect'. However, a later study by Harry et al. (2017) in South Africa identified the "desire to access educational opportunities in South Africa as a basis for improvement and the worsening economic and political conditions in the home country" (refugee) as one of the main motivators (p.7) followed by architect motivation. Refugee motivations to relocate to a country for work were found to have a negative impact on the work adjustment of expatriate academics, whereas, it was found that explorer, architect and mercenary reasons did not have an influence on the adjustment of the expatriate academics to their work environment (Selmer & Luring, 2012).

A study in the Middle East by Romanowski and Nasser (2015) found that academic freedom was limited in Qatar as the regime imposed strict regulations on the academic environment, hence, they stipulated that while these restrictions could lead to academics choosing to leave the environment, while others chose to relocate and work in Gulf countries as they paid the highest salaries in academia. They felt that the primary motivation of academics appears to be mercenary when they choose to move to Gulf countries. This finding is relevant to the current study, as it would be interesting to compare if monetary benefits are what is regarded as the main motivator for the academics in this study to move to Oman which is one of the GCC countries as the higher education policies and work conditions in these countries are similar.

It has also been argued that although the categorizing of expatriate academic motivations by Richardson and McKenna (2002), provides a useful framework, later research has indicated that many expatriate academics are motivated by more than one of the above categorisations of motivations – most often by architect, explorer and mercenary motivations (Selmer & Luring, 2012, 2013). The refugee motivation as one of the core motivations for expatriation in research conducted (e.g., Froese, 2012; Richardson, 2000;

Richardson & McKenna, 2002) has been debated in recent times as to whether this motivation is still reliable. However, a study by Kim (2015) on expatriate academics in China substantiated that most of the participants were driven to an international assignment in China due to the poor labour market conditions in their home country (refugee motivations).

In reality, an individual might be influenced by a range of these motivators simultaneously for expatriating. For example, the individual may wish to improve his or her life by achieving career growth, higher pay, experience adventure and new cultural experiences while trying to escape the poor work conditions in his or her home country (e.g., greater workloads and fixed term contracts), and in some situations, poor weather conditions too (Cai & Hall, 2016; Jepsen et al., 2014; Kuzhabekova & Lee, 2018; Richardson & Zikic, 2007).

Most of the studies on the motivation of academics to venture on international career experiences, used a qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of the drivers of expatriation. The current study, also follows suit and aims to use a qualitative methodology to identify and understand the motives for undertaking international mobility among a unique sample of expatriate academics in Oman and explore the influence of these motivations on the academic identities of these academics, which fills a substantive gap in the body of scholarship.

The motives for expatriation as identified by Richardson and McKenna (2002) has been used as a framework to compare and corroborate the motivations of the academics to relocate to Oman in this study and relate it to the construction of their academic identities.

2.4 EXPERIENCES OF EXPATRIATION

The previous section established the importance of expatriate academic's motivation to expatriate. In this section the literature pertaining to the expatriation experience of academics will be examined. Richardson and McKenna (2002) classified the experiences of being expatriate academics as explorers, outsiders, tightrope walkers and students based on how they perceived their expatriation. As explorers, expatriate academics

viewed their experience as an adventure and negative experiences were also viewed as part of an adventure. whereas, as outsiders, the expatriate academics had difficulty in integrating themselves into the local communities and felt isolated from the host country. Tightrope walkers experienced precariousness and concerned that they might lose their jobs which could lead to repatriation. Finally, as students they experienced personal and professional transformation and experienced expatriation as a continuous learning experience.

Other authors have also used this framework to study the connections between work-related attitudes of expatriate academics and their work outcomes. Schoepp (2011) in his survey on EAs in the UAE, found that the academics continued to stay in their universities in spite of concerns regarding the lack of intellectual environment as they felt the experience offered them an opportunity to learn more about the world and also themselves. Thus, in the study, the academics were found to support the notions of explorer and student experiences of expatriation. The academics were seen to value the cross-cultural interactions that the multicultural environment of the university afforded and this encouraged them to stay employed in the university despite other disadvantages. These findings were consistent with Jepsen et al. (2014) who in their qualitative study which comprised of three Western and three Eastern expatriate academics reported that the expatriate academics felt that the opportunity to meet and work with people from different cultures, collaborate and build international research networks and in the process develop an appreciation of the needs of the students in their home country universities outweighed the stress and frustration of expatriation. These findings imply that those expatriate academics who experience expatriation as student or explorer may have reduced intentions to leave the organisation and higher commitment towards it.

There is consistency in the literature that indicates that expatriate academics who experience expatriation as an outsider feel distant or isolated from the host country's culture (e.g., Garson, 2005a, 2005b; Richardson & McKenna, 2006) in their comparative study between expatriate and local academics working in Malaysia public sector universities found that expatriate academics had lowered levels of job satisfaction and commitment towards the university. The respondents in Austin et al. (2014) study felt that

the university leaders in the UAE thought of the expatriate academic workforce as expendable. This in turn had led to decreased organizational commitment with participants on the look-out for the next best opportunity. Romanowski and Nasser (2015) in their study on expatriate academics in Qatar found that the expatriate academics lived in fear and anxiety due to the lack of job security as a result of the nationalisation policy and that this negatively impacted both their teaching and research behaviours. The fear was found to regulate their behaviours but it also meant that the academics were constantly job hunting and this in turn affected their productivity and creativity. These findings are in line with the work of Richardson and Zikic (2007) which identified the lack of job security and the concern over the perceived value of their international experience upon repatriation as the two major risks of expatriation as identified by the expatriate academics.

As can be seen, most studies have used the expatriation experience framework of Richardson and McKenna (2002) to study the relationship between the experiences of expatriation and work outcomes, adjustment and organizational commitment of the expatriate academics. I argue that most of the academics living outside their home countries experience one or more of these attitudes at some point after expatriation. Hence, in this research, this framework by Richardson and McKenna (2002) has been used to explore the connection between the experiences of the expatriate academics and its influence on the construction of their academic identities which has not been explored to date.

Whilst there is a considerable body of knowledge that has developed since (Richardson and McKenna's 2002) foundational work on motivations to expatriate and their experiences, these predominantly focus on work outcomes, adjustment and organizational commitment of the expatriate academics; there has been less of a focus to date on developing this work in relation to the academic identities of the expatriate academics. Having established a gap in previous research in relation to motivations to expatriate, the experiences of the academics and the construction of academic identities of expatriate academics, I explore the literature on academic identities in the next section.

2.5 ACADEMIC IDENTITIES

This section will situate the notion of academic identities and the main academic identities considered in this study.

Pick et al. (2017) have observed that there have been three waves of scholarly work within the body of academic identity work that is ever expanding. In the first wave from late 1900s and early 2000s, academic identity was considered as a critical phenomenon. During this period, the academic identities were seen as ‘fragmenting as a result of emerging conflicts of values, multiple functions, and loosening of institutional boundaries’ (p. 1176). From around 2005, the second wave of studies into academic identities followed, where researchers alluded to the social construction of academic identities as influenced by the interaction between agency and structure. This was seen to produce deep tensions in much of the literature and it was seen as threatening the academic’s sense of agency significantly. The third wave as described by Pick et al. (2017) emerged in the second decade of this century where there has been an increasing focus on the individual academics (over structures) ‘and how they can build more robust responses to higher education reform’ (p. 1177). This presents a more hopeful and optimistic view despite the changing realities that seem to ‘create tensions between emerging multiple identities’ (p. 1178). Here academic identity is seen as an ongoing, unfinished project where the individual academic exercises agency to present resistance to the pressures and damaging effects of the structural changes that are present.

Being an academic has been likened to ‘working in a hall of mirrors’ (Pick et al., 2017) as academics tend to find many different imagines looking back at them as they reflect on their work and who they are (Pick et al., 2017). Academics are said to have multiple, expanding and conflicting ideas about what it is to be an academic in higher education (Guzmán-Valenzuela & Barnett, 2013). Research on academic identities shows that the ongoing changes occurring in higher education institutions around the world are putting considerable pressure on how academics view themselves. A number of studies have provided evidence for this trend (e.g. Billot, 2010; Churchman & King, 2009; Guzmán-Valenzuela & Barnett, 2013; Leibowitz et al., 2014; Rhoades, 2007; Whitchurch, 2012a;

Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013). This has been attributed to the globalization of higher education and the rise of the 'supercomplex' universities where exist myriad contestable frames of understanding, action and self-identity (Barnett, 2000). Universities are becoming 'liquid organisations' that have no durable structures nor offer long term career building prospects for academics within a single organisation (Bauman, 2013) in order to fit into the surroundings of this 'runaway world' (Giddens, 2003). Delanty (2007, p. 127) comments that as universities have become 'liquid', academics have been placed 'in a constant state of being repositioned'. This has resulted in tensions increasing between the management of higher education organisations that want academics to conform to identities constructed and influenced by the neoliberal/managerial discourses (Harris, 2005; Henkel, 2005) and the way in which the academics view and define themselves (Winter & O'Donohue, 2012; Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013). Two opposing forces have arisen out of these tensions, one is fragmentation of academic identities which is referred to as the splitting of an individual's academic identity into a number of variegated and shifting notions of the self (Alvesson et al., 2008); while the other is coherence which pertains to the maintenance of a sense of wholeness and self-expression across a set of identities over time (Ashforth et al., 2008). Taking into consideration these forces, Churchman and King (2009) observe that the inner academic identity of an individual which provides them with a sense of coherence is itself often under pressure. This has resulted in the academic identities being under threat (Clegg, 2008), becoming fragile (Knights & Clarke, 2014), unstable (Guzmán-Valenzuela & Barnett, 2013) and fluid (Leibowitz et al., 2014).

Different writers have used a variety of definitions for academic identities situated within the context of higher education (Quigley, 2011). This symbolizes that the definition of identities has been developing from fixed and predetermined, to socially constructed and evolving over time (Barker, 2004; Cohen, 2006; Quigley, 2011; Stier, 2001; Stones, 2007). Academic identities are representative of the individual's subjective experiences, commitments, values and affiliations of the academic, contextualising them in light of the ongoing changes in higher education at the national and international levels (Archer, 2008a, 2008b; Barnett & Di Napoli, 2008; Beijgaard et al., 2004; Clarke et al., 2013; Fanghanel, 2011; Hall, 2002; Henkel, 2000, 2010; McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010; Taylor,

2007; Taylor, 1999; Ursin et al., 2020). Fanghanel (2007) reports that the perception of academic identity, “has moved from a pre- 1980s understanding of academics as experts in their field of research who appeared ‘de facto’ qualified who pass on their knowledge to future generations, to the more recent construction of the professional teachers in a university” (cited by Andrew, 2012, p. 846). Boyd and Smith (2016) state that academic identities are central to understanding the academic being and practice and lie at the intersection between the self and the social world. Concurrently, the tasks undertaken by the academics have also diversified. Academics have become ‘multi-taskers’, who need to manage paperwork, funds, emails, meetings, supervision, teaching and research in order to be successful in academia (Osbaldiston et al., 2019). Academic identity is negotiated and actualized in relation to everyday work practices, the institutional surroundings of the academics and their own backgrounds as well as that of others (Ursin et al., 2020). Academic identities can also be understood as individual stories of academics being created and recreated over time through cultural, social and historical processes (McCune, 2019; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). As a result, academic identity is regarded as not fixed but something that is constantly reshaped and redefined influenced through interactions, time and ever-changing contexts (Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013).

Academic practice is said to influence academic identities. The way the academics approach and inhabit their roles, practices, roles and responsibilities and memberships reflect their underpinning beliefs, values which is central to the descriptions of their academic identities (Clarke et al., 2013; Fanghanel, 2009; Kogan, 2000; McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010). The term practice is not confined to the tasks or responsibilities detailed in job descriptions or the titles held by an individual academic (McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010; Taylor, 1999). According to McAlpine and Åkerlind (2010, p. 3), academic practice 'brings into play the underlying, sometimes implicit, purpose(s) that motivate us to be academics and through which it is possible to integrate an array of multifaceted duties, responsibilities, skills and knowledge into a coherent sense of academic identity'.

A common theme in the literature on academic identities is the way in which academics identify themselves as a teacher and/or a researcher. Becher and Trowler (2001) and Henkel (2000) differentiate between the teaching and research identities; which are

generally recognised as the two main domains of academic practice that lie at the heart of higher education (Blaxter et al., 1998; Clarke et al., 2013; Skelton, 2012b; Taylor, 1999). Most of the academics appear to identify most strongly with teaching and/or research roles (Billot, 2010; Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Churchman & King, 2009; Delanty, 2007; Dugas et al., 2020; Fanghanel, 2011; Feather, 2010; Fitzmaurice, 2013; Henkel, 2000, 2004; Murphy, 2011; Nixon, 2001; Rosewell & Ashwin, 2019; Whitchurch, 2008), some academics regard themselves primarily as researchers (Archer, 2008b; Henkel, 2000; Jawitz, 2007; Kolsaker, 2008; Ylijoki, 2013), or others as teachers (Kreber, 2010; Skelton, 2012b), while some see their roles integrated in both teaching and research and the arrangement of the two provide a coherent sense of academic identity (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Clarke et al., 2013; Feather, 2010; Hall, 2002; Henkel, 2000, 2004; McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010; Whitchurch, 2008). Studies have shown that although previously there existed a symbiotic relationship between teaching and research, massification of higher education, policies and practices placing value on metrics for research productivity and funding have created tension between these two academic roles (Brew, 2012; Robertson, 2007; Robertson & Bond, 2005). The relationship between teaching and research have become complex as a result of diverse and complicated interplay of multiple discourses and the beliefs about teaching and learning and the understandings of the nature of knowledge (Brew, 2012; McCune, 2019; Robertson, 2007). Most of the studies on academic identities have tended to focus on teaching and/or researcher identities and I argue that the expatriate academics in this study identify with a wider set of academic identities not restricted to just teaching and/or researcher identities.

Next, I will discuss the literature pertaining to academics who have moved into higher education teaching from previous careers with professional experience in the fields in which they have become lecturers. HEIs in the pursuit of developing their brands are focusing on emphasizing their vocational excellence and links with practice (Chapleo, 2004). The literature indicates that the 'industry-university collaborations' (Rybnicek & Königsgruber, 2019) have a positive impact on the economy and the wider society (see, for example, (Ankrah & Omar, 2015; Barnes et al., 2002; Myoken, 2013). HEIs are

recruiting 'those who have occupied significant positions as both academics and practitioners' (Posner, 2009, p. 16) to deliver their strategic goals such as preparing students to meet the need for a skilled workforce. Additionally, the expansion of higher education has brought into the world of universities, many subjects like nursing, teaching and business studies that were previously considered 'non-academic' (Findlow, 2012). These academics called 'pracademics' include both former and/or current practitioners who are currently working in HE (Dickinson et al., 2020; Posner, 2009). Being an academic is often framed in relation to both teaching and research, although the differential status of these core activities with the latter being granted more primacy within individual careers and departments is widely acknowledged (Fitzmaurice, 2013). The career trajectory of a pracademic has been compared to the 'revolving door' metaphor as these academics are seen to be transitioning between academia and practice (Dickinson et al., 2020; Murphy & Fulda, 2011, p. 279). For academics based within new subjects that are vocationally oriented with a relatively recent history in the university, developing an academic identity is perceived as challenging and uncomfortable as they strive for legitimacy and acknowledgement within academic circles that gives priority to disciplinary knowledge and research productivity (Medcalf, 2014).

Academics within practice or vocationally oriented subject areas often come into academia through diverse routes other than those of traditional discipline-based areas, and include individuals who are industry practitioners, hold PhDs or formal academic qualifications. This could lead to the blurring of the notion of academic identity of academics within these subject areas. Individuals with industry backgrounds may be wrought with insecurity and may feel a lack of status and legitimacy in academia, even though they may be regraded highly by students, and gain prestige from their practice based experience (Findlow, 2012; Jawitz, 2009). These academics within their teaching roles are able to support their students to become 'knowledge-able, not knowledgeable' by using their practitioner experience, encouraging students to be responsible for their own learning (Wilson, 2015).

Academics with PhDs or from traditional academic backgrounds may have credibility within the academic circles, but students and some practically oriented colleagues might not regard their knowledge as relevant (Ek et al., 2013). Therefore, although the practice-based academics may suffer the same anxieties reported above, they may also feel additional conflicting demands to be both practically oriented in their vocational domain and also be academically rigorous.

Research on academics from vocational backgrounds suggests that they are unlikely to develop an academic research identity as the emphasis for them is on vocational expertise and teaching practice (Orr & Simmons, 2010; Sinclair & Webb, 2020; Springbett, 2018). The term 'Blended professional' coined by Whitchurch (2009b) refers to someone who crosses internal and external institutional boundaries, creating a third space between professional and academic domains to refer to 'an activity that may not fall explicitly within formal organizational structures, in environments that are more complex and dynamic than organization charts and job descriptions might suggest' (Whitchurch, 2015, p. 3). In the past, the third space concept has been explored concerning public service and market agendas, however, in this study, third space could be of relevance to understand the academic identities of academics who have come from professional/industry backgrounds. Whitchurch (2009b) argues that blended professionals are able to take advantage of a sense of 'belonging' and 'not belong' entirely to either the professional or academic domains, often working in "ambiguous conditions" (p.408). The academics in this study who have industry or vocational backgrounds may feel similar instability with regards to belonging (or not), and often have to work in ambiguous conditions, negotiating both the academic and industry contexts. This has implications in relation to the construction of academic identities of these academics.

Academic identity as denoted by the identities of 'academic manager' (values that are in congruence with the managerial discourse) and 'managed academic' (values that are incongruent with the managerial discourse) (Winter, 2009) have also been discussed in the literature. Academic managers identify strongly with values and goals of corporate managerialism such as budgetary control, hierarchical management, income

maximization, commercialization and performance management indicators (Deem et al., 2008) and see their interests as tied to these values. On the other hand, managed academics emphasise and defend their professional identity and that of their institution through collegial practice, values of self-regulation and maintaining educational standards (Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Churchman, 2006; Randle & Brady, 1997).

Bolden et al. (2012, p. 42) in their study on academic leadership in UK higher education highlighted the value of a 'hybrid' (Gronn, 2009, 2010) and 'blended' (Collinson & Collinson, 2009) leadership approach where there was congruence of formal, hierarchical processes and informal, emergent processes which could be referred to as 'distributed leadership' (Laing & Laing, 2011). This approach suggests that there is no single 'best practice' nor a set of clearly defined leadership competencies for the academics working in the sector. Instead, it focuses on the different people and processes as providing essential and integral contributions to the achievement of academic work. Some academic leaders exert their influence as role models, mentors, guardians, acquirer or ambassadors for their colleagues which are roles that have been identified by Macfarlane (2011) as central to senior academics in professorial positions. Other academic leaders, create an impact by contributing to the acculturation of students and colleagues into the academic profession which is an extension of the roles described by Macfarlane (2011) that could be applied to PhD supervisors, academic collaborators and colleagues. Bolden et al. (2012) also discussed academic leaders who enacted 'thought leadership' where the academics focused on developing their academic discipline or area of activity through their academic work. And finally, other academic leaders who led by working and collaborating across institutions, disciplines and professional boundaries and hence attracting resources, generating revenue, raising profile and impacting policy and practice through their boundary spanning roles. In the context of this study, it would be interesting to see whether or not the expatriate academics construct a core leadership identity that would fall into any of the above-mentioned categories or whether there exist schisms in leadership identity.

The definitions of academic identities have focused on the continuities that academics derive from academic cultures that are foregrounded in disciplinary and professional

communities (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Henkel, 2000, 2005). Disciplinary background has been identified as an influencing factor on academics' understanding of their roles. Some research has foregrounded discipline as a primary feature of academic work and identity and the institution as secondary (Becher, 1994; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Clark, 1997; Delanty, 2007; Henkel, 2000, 2005; Malcolm & Zukas, 2009; Välimaa, 1998). The discipline is seen as a place where 'a sense of academic identity flourishes' (Kogan, 2000, p. 209).

However, recent research has challenged the role of discipline as ascribing to the meaning of being an academic, and have found that some academics do not conceptualise themselves in terms of discipline or do not identify themselves with one particular discipline and hold different views of the discipline (Brew, 2001, 2008; Clegg, 2008; Fanghanel, 2011; Sikes, 2006; Spurling, 2012). As academic roles are constantly being learnt and relearnt, the same may be applicable to the meaning of discipline and hence generalizing about disciplinary culture could be problematic. This warrants the current study, as it explores the disciplinary affiliation of the expatriate academics in their accounts of being an academic.

Research has also shown that early career academics experience significant tension pertaining to teaching and research (Adi Badiozaman, 2021) and they are more likely to show an affiliation to research and define the meaning of being an academic in terms of research (Acker & Haque, 2010; Janke & Colbeck, 2008; Shin, 2011). However, these academics experienced heavy and stressful workloads (Laiho et al., 2020) and cited reasons such as heavy teaching workloads (Gumbi & McKenna, 2020) and onerous finance and procurement procedures (Garraway & Winberg, 2019) as deterrents to undertake and engage in research.

Moreover, it has been suggested that academics in the later stages of their career show an increasing affiliation for teaching (Becher & Trowler, 2001). This suggests that the academics could construct different meanings of being an academic depending on their career stage. It would be interesting to explore if career stages have an influence on the

core meanings of being an academic constructed by the expatriate academics in the current research.

A tension existing in the identity literature is between views that support individuals as having multiple identities or that they have a 'core' identity (Trede et al., 2012), the aspects which are enacted in various roles and contexts differently (Oyserman et al., 2012). Paterson et al. (2002) contend that a core identity is the starting point for an individual in developing as a professional. This is echoed by Hall (2004):

One's identity can be thought of as that particular set of traits, beliefs, and allegiances that, in short- or long-term ways, gives one a consistent personality and mode of social being (cited in Taylor, 2007, p. 3).

However, it has been argued by other researchers that people have "performances of identity, or multiple identities" (Land, 2007, p. 141). Pearson et al. (2011, p. 539) argue that it's important to recognise "that people have multiple identities that may change over time". Walton et al. (2012) posit that, "Different contexts, roles and identities can evoke different working selves ... that in turn guide people's attitudes, judgements and behaviours" (p. 141).

Gee (2000) echoes similar sentiments, however argues that while multiple identities may arise out of different contexts or "performances in society", we still have a "core identity" which comes though in discourse:

Discourses can give us one way to define ... a person's "core identity." Each person has had a unique trajectory ... That is, he or she has, through time, in a certain order, had specific experiences ... some recurring and others not. This trajectory and the person's own narrativization of it are what constitute his or her (never fully formed or always potentially changing) "core identity" (p. 111). Gee's work shows that there is a reciprocal link between the external and internal influences and that identity formation is negotiated "through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others ... My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others" (Gee, 2000, pp. 112, 113).

A common theme across literatures related to identity is the importance of these 'dialogical relations' to identity formation. Bamber (2012) observes that, "Discourses and identities are intimately connected" (p. 159).

Dialogue and discourse also comprised of the stories we tell about ourselves: Over time, individuals weave together their autobiographical memories in stories they tell about themselves and their lives. They construct these self-narratives subjectively and selectively to make meaning out of the events they experience, integrate their goals, make sense of conflict, and explain how and why they change over time (Morf & Mischel, 2012, p. 34).

Taylor (2007) notes the links between types of data and the discourse they capture:

Interview transcripts and oral histories provide contexts within which identities are rehearsed ... remembering and sharing aspects of personal experience and perspective are themselves creative, rather than objective acts (p. 29).

In light of this, in this study, the interviewing of expatriate academics is seen as a way to engage them in self-narrative offering them the opportunity to demonstrate aspects of their academic identity.

It is evident that the higher education landscape is changing and evolving, with changes occurring in the academic profession with the development of many heterogenous and diverse pathways into, within and out of it (Henkel, 2010; Macfarlane, 2011; McInnis, 2009; Strike, 2009; Taylor, 1999; Whitchurch, 2008, 2009a). Apart from success in research and professional practice, teaching and learning, and academic leadership can also be considered as sources of identification (Clarke et al., 2013; Henkel, 2010; McInnis, 2009). This has led to the reconfiguration and reconsideration of academic identities as no longer being stable entities but 'complex, personal, and shaped by contextual factors' (Clarke et al., 2013, p. 8). The definitions of academic identities have begun to reflect this with reference to the contemporary reflective interpretations (Bourdieu, 1987; Giddens, 1991), and are seen as being shaped and influenced by the individual, as he or she adapts to the evolving academic and professional context

(Henkel, 2010; Krause, 2009; Lopes & Dewan, 2014; Macfarlane, 2011; McInnis, 2009; Strike, 2009; Whitchurch, 2008, 2009a).

Mc Alpine and her colleagues (2007) are of the opinion that academics can occupy a number of roles and positions within the universities that they are employed in. (Barnett & Di Napoli, 2007), also echo this view, who observe that individuals employed in universities now have an array of roles available and could occupy 'horizontal and 'vertical' identities at the departmental, faculty and/or university level. Miller (2007), however, feels that although the recent developments in the university should have offered greater flexibility in terms of academic identities, she posits that the power of market forces could undermine the integrity and autonomy of academics and in turn neuter or divest academic performances of moral purpose.

So, it can be seen that these authors argue that individual academics can create their identities through the choice of activities that they engage in. In relation to the identity making processes, McAlpine et al. (2007, p. 120) note that: "The investment that the lecturer makes... will vary depending on the extent to which the purpose and the role are congruent with his/her personal identity goals, and whether they are institutionally mandated or personally chosen." On the other hand, Delanty (2007) describes that a number of 'subject positions' (ie. roles and positions) have emerged as a result of the governance and influence on identities through the technologies of higher education (eg. funding streams, rewards, resources). This suggests that the identities may be formed through an ongoing process of political maneuverings and as a consequence for Delanty, identity making is not very clear cut for example as through the lens of discipline, and is more the result of the individual's response to a constantly changing organisational context than the individual's volition.

Academic identities are no longer considered fixed, predetermined or stable entities but 'are complex, personal and shaped by contextual factors (Clarke et al., 2013, p. 8). Academic identities have been defined by Barnett and Di Napoli (2007, p. 6) as a 'process of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction' situated in a context of the higher

education environment that is complex and continuously evolving. Taylor (2007) also echoes these sentiments- "Identity work is ongoing work. It is work that is constituted by history and by the conditions within which we live and work" (p. 27). According to Geijssel and Meijers (2005) "Identity is a configuration of meanings. But this configuration will change constantly when new elements are given a place and are related to experiences" (p. 425).

McAlpine et al. (2014) opine that in this ongoing process, priorities also change over time. The idea of 'trajectories', that is, changes over time and/or location (both intellectual and geographic), are strongly aligned with identity development as 'becoming' and 'belonging', instead of simply 'being' (Tonso, 2014, p. 270). Anikina et al. (2020), in a similar vein, state that as the individual experiences are different, which lead to unique individual identities and hence there is no universal trajectory of identity construction.

Despite these complexities, this study considers that there can be sufficient coherence in identity construction over time to provide the individual academic an ongoing narrative about what it means to be academic that can drive their personal choices and motivations and ways of being (Archer & Archer, 2000; Taylor, 2007). This research considers the underpinnings of the expatriate academics as being agentic to explain the academics' choices and the construction of their identities. It aims to provide insight into the influence of the motives for expatriation and the experiences of expatriate academics by exploring the processes of interpretation and negotiation of their existing academic identities. It is important to explore how the academic identities of the expatriate academics may develop and this will be done under the aegis of the second research objective.

2.6 IDENTITY TRAJECTORY FRAMEWORK

One of the research objectives of the study is to bring to the fore the perceptions of the expatriate academics on how their understanding of being an academic has evolved over time. McAlpine and associates developed the notion of the identity trajectory (McAlpine, 2012a, 2012b; McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2016; McAlpine et al., 2014) in order to understand and investigate how the identities of academics evolve over

time and how the academics negotiate their ambitions in relation to social structures. Identity-trajectory highlights the desire to enact personal hopes and intentions over time; to maintain a momentum in constructing identity despite the detours and challenges; and to envision possible futures (McAlpine et al., 2010, p. 139).

An interpretive research approach has been adopted while investigating identity trajectories to understand and describe how doctoral students and early career academics develop, evaluate and negotiate their identities in view of their desired and possible career trajectories (Brew et al., 2018; Gardner & Willey, 2018; Hancock et al., 2016; McAlpine, 2012a, 2012b; McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010).

The work of McAlpine and Åkerlind (2010) and McAlpine and Amundsen (2016) focused on doctoral students, early career academics or non-academic post PhD professionals and their identities more broadly to understand the directions into as well as out of the academic profession. This study is concentrating on identities in the academic context and the target group is across all career levels – early career, mid-career and late career academics.

The notion of identity trajectory is representative of not merely jobs, titles or appointments but more importantly, it brings to the fore the underlying values, commitments, purposes and alliances that motivate academics (Åkerlind & McAlpine, 2010). The academic accolades, job titles, milestones and responsibilities are representative of the way in which the academics have shaped their salient, core and desired trajectories tackling the constraints and other contingencies within the structural arrangements (McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2016). The process of negotiation and reconstruction of a particular (set) of identities that shape professional trajectories becomes clear when past-present, and desired future alliances, affiliations, commitments and beliefs are considered (Hancock et al., 2016; McAlpine, 2012b). A commitment or affiliation to a particular academic identity is considered to evolve over time. According to (McAlpine et al., 2010, p. 129), a trajectory 'emerges through and is embodied in cumulative day-to-day experiences of varied and complex intentions, actions and

interactions with others that may include setbacks as well as unexpected detours and opportunities'.

To understand the development of the expatriate academics' identities, the notion of the identity trajectory will be used. By using an interpretive approach to research, that takes into account the past-present and desired future trajectories, the influence of the motivations to expatriate and the experiences of the academics on their academic identities will come into view and understandable.

This conceptualization of identity foregrounds individual agency and that the personal circumstances of the academics influence their decisions regarding academic work within the structured environment of the university. Personal agency refers to the ability of an individual to set a goal and deliberately move towards it despite the personal or institutional constraints and "attending to individual agency is essential in understanding academic practice" (McAlpine & Lucas, 2011, p. 705). The decision that each individual academic makes regarding their academic work is as a result of their past and present personal context, agency and development as academics which interact to create their 'horizons for action'. Each individual describes these 'horizons for action' as what is possible and desirable. Horizons for action include how an academic negotiates 'opportunity structures' (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997), which are comprised of "organisational hierarchies, employment possibilities, government regulations, workplace networks, etc." (McAlpine & Turner, 2012, p. 538). Though the expatriate academics working in the higher education institution in Oman may have common or similar opportunity structures, the horizons for action are personal as they are particular to that particular academic's agency and circumstances. Horizons for action are a functional aspect for framing the development of identity as they suggest that an individual may see and evaluate a number of options as desirable and possible and that these horizons may change over time (McAlpine & Turner, 2012).

The academic elements of identity trajectory develop within the overarching influences of personal history, agency and context. These elements consist of the 'three distinct strands of experiences', or the intellectual, networking and institutional dimensions

(McAlpine et al., 2010, p. 139) and the development of identity trajectories is analysed through these strands. The three dimensions are situated within the frame of agency and structure shown in Figure 2 (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2016; McAlpine et al., 2010; McAlpine et al., 2014). The dimensions highlight the individual's agency and freedom with reference to their academic practice within the settings of the institution and situations that may enable or guide the academics in certain directions (Brew et al., 2018; McAlpine, 2012b; McAlpine et al., 2010; McAlpine et al., 2014).

The intellectual strand according to McAlpine and Amundsen (2011), represents "contributions to one's disciplinary specialism or field [and] leaves a trail of artefacts, e.g. publications, citations, papers, course/curriculum design" (p. 179). Thus, the intellectual strand exemplifies the individual's opportunities to develop and become associated with a field of interest and inquiry. It emphasises the intellectual affiliations that individuals have with for instance, professional practice or disciplinary research, and the contributions that they have made, are making or wish to make in their disciplines through teaching, research and scholarship.

The networking strand encompasses the opportunities for the individuals to engage in local, national and international networks. These networks could be local within schools, departments, faculties and institutions or beyond the academic community of the individual's university, international and discipline focused. The network strand may be developed intentionally or due to certain circumstances, however in both cases, it is 'essential in establishing the intellectual location for personal contributions' (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2016; McAlpine et al., 2010, p. 142).

The institutional strand represents the interactions that the academic has with their institutional workplaces and is representative of the availability of resources, such as jobs, roles, responsibilities, income, funding for conferences, time for teaching, research, professional development and career advancement. The institutional strand is important as it can 'support or constrain an individual's networking and intellectual strands' (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2016; McAlpine et al., 2010, p. 143). The institutional strand also determines 'how the structural features of the workplace mediate, positively as well as

negatively, the development of the networking and intellectual strands of academic work' (McAlpine et al., 2014, p. 966).

Nevertheless, there is a variation in the individual experience even within the institutional strand. McAlpine and Lucas (2011) reported that even though the participants in their study were from the same department at the same time, "nothing in their accounts signalled similarity of departmental experience" (p. 705). This validates the focus of the individual's experience as an integral feature of the identity trajectory. Brew and Lucas (2009) consider the institutional context as important for academic identity, however, they link it to the ideas of personal agency and horizons for action.

This section has presented the analytical tool that could be used to capture changes in academic identities. The identity trajectory framework will be used to discuss how the expatriate academics perceive their academic identities to have changed over time and the projections of their future identity trajectories using the three intertwined strands: intellectual, networking, and institutional. I argue that the identity trajectory framework is apt to understand the development of the identity of the expatriate academics as it acknowledges the interplay between the individual (the intellectual strand and the agency of the individual) and the social (the networking strand) and the structural (the institutional strand) in developing the core identities of the academics. The strands help acknowledge the tensions in relation to the motivations, experiences of the academics and the prominent aspects of the academic context.

Agency
Individual dimension
Individuals' intellectual affiliation and engagement with teaching, research, professional practice and/or leadership
Network
Individuals' connection and network with colleagues, local, national and/or global networks

Institutional dimension
Organizational roles and responsibilities, providing resources, policies
Provides opportunities and barriers for the institutional and intellectual strands of the individual
Structure

Figure 1: Academic Identity Trajectory Dimensions

2.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have explored and provided a review of the literature relevant to the central concepts of the study which are expatriate academics and academic identities. Upon closer examination, the literature revealed that expatriate academics as a phenomenon, albeit important in today's globalized higher education context, is vastly under-researched. In the literature, academic identities have tended to focus on teaching and/or researcher identities and I argue that the expatriate academics in this study identify with a wider set of academic identities.

Furthermore, a gap in the current scholarship on the identities of expatriate academics was identified. Previous studies on expatriate academics have focused on identities as perceived by the participants in relation to people around them and to changes in their professional identities but in this study, the academic identity construction of expatriate academics will be considered in relation to factors such as motivation to expatriate and the experiences of expatriate academics, which have not been explored hitherto.

An investigation into the expatriate academics' perceptions of the meaning of being an academic, needs a model that recognises the discursive and changing nature of identity construction. The identity trajectory framework and its dimensions (McAlpine et al., 2010) are apt for this study as it pays attention to the academic context of the participants and acknowledges the ways that expatriate academics interpret how their past experiences contribute to their present situation and or their future intentions. The identity trajectory framework is based on the concept that the journey of each academic will be unique and that it will be their individual trajectory. As has been reminded by (Taylor, 2007) "There is no such thing as a standard academic career" (p. 30), nevertheless, there are adequate

commonalities in the narratives of the expatriate academics to warrant some kind of generalized observations.

Within the following chapter I set out how the study has been designed to develop answers to the three research questions using an interpretive approach to research, which was used to guide the data generation and analysis methods.

3 CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Within this study, I aim to understand the different identities developed by expatriate academics and how the motivations of the academics to expatriate and their experiences influence and relate to development of their academic identities. In this chapter, I will begin with a brief overview of the research philosophy, followed by the research design, methodology and data generation methods and the effectiveness of these methods chosen to generate appropriate data for the research. A constructivist worldview guided the research and framed the research design as shown in Figure 2:

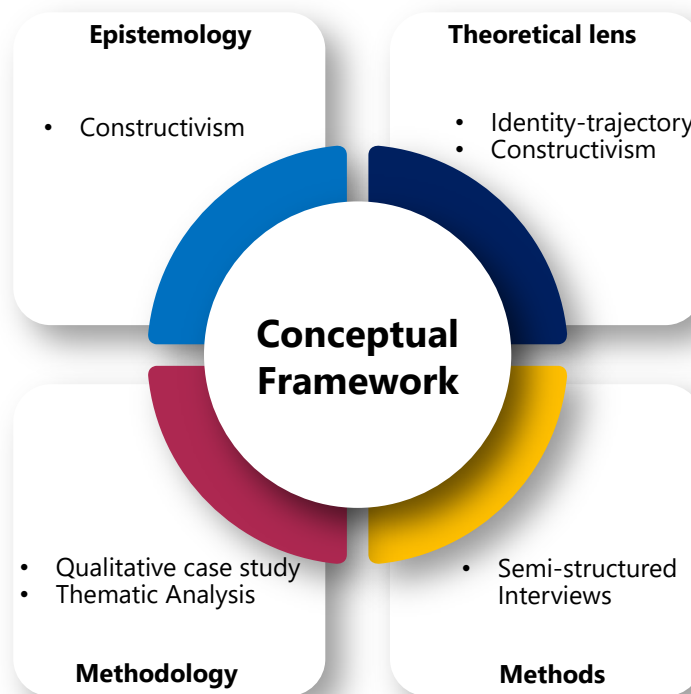


Figure 2: Research Conceptual Framework

The focus of this thesis is to understand the expatriate academics' perceptions of the meaning of being an academic and how factors such as the motivations to expatriate and

the ensuing experiences influence their academic identities. In order to close some of the literature gaps in understanding how the expatriate academics perceive the meaning of being an academic and how the meaning of being an academic change over time, a qualitative study was undertaken. The research design employed is that of a case study, following a qualitative methodology; thematic analysis was conducted on the data collected using interviews. At the very outset of the study, interviews were chosen as the most appropriate research method to collect data as it would be meaningful in describing the experiences and capturing interviewees' self-understanding and perspective on their lived world (Kvale, 1994, p. 105). The interviews were based on Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) seven-step framework as it was seen as ontologically compatible to the study. Other areas discussed in this chapter are the role of the researcher and the ethical considerations incumbent on the researcher while undertaking a study of this nature.

3.2 PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

The research process was guided by my own ontological and epistemological position. These positions and assumptions about the nature of the world and construction of knowledge, underpinned the methodological decisions (Agger, 2007; Delmar, 2010). The alignment of epistemology and ontology is crucial as it helped the decision making, provided rigour to the process including lending credibility to the findings and ethical decision making (Denzin & Ryan, 2007; Jackson, 2013). The aim of this research was to understand the expatriate academics' experience in relation to their academic identity, therefore it was evident that a qualitative approach would be best suited as it was contextually situated and allowed for taking into consideration the perspectives of those involved; the meaning attached to being an academic. Hence, this qualitative study was directed by the overarching belief in constructivism (Crotty, 1998; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

Given that the research aim of the study is hinged on the exploration and contextualisation of perceptions, experiences of the academics and the methods selected for use led me to believe as having an interpretivist epistemology. This is grounded in my view that the social world is subjective and is 'constructed and interpreted by people' (Denscombe,

2010, p. 324). An interpretive approach has been adopted by researchers such as Becher and Trowler (2001), Henkel (2000), McAlpine and Åkerlind (2010) and McAlpine and Amundsen (2016) in their studies investigating academic identities with in-depth interviews as the preferred method of data generation.

The philosophical stance that underpinned this approach was that individuals construct their own meanings and understandings on the basis of their interactions with both their surroundings and other people. 'Knowledge' of academic identity is a product of how the academics understand it – there is no single underlying reality but multiple realities. This reality is being constantly constructed by the academics through their relationships, contexts and personal biographies. Academics perceive of themselves within the academic role in relation to these aspects of identity construction (Gergen & Gergen, 2007), and this has an impact on how they view themselves as academics, constructing a coherent academic identity which influences their actions.

Epistemology guided the research approach as it defines how we gain knowledge, what this is, as well as 'the grounds upon which we believe something to be true' (Oliver, 2010, p. 35). As this study seeks new knowledge and understanding regarding the identities of expatriate academics and the findings were generated by both me as a researcher, interviewer and the participants, my epistemological stance was pivotal in the methodological choice and the overall purpose and goals for the project (Snape & Spencer, 2003). My role in preparing the interview questions and interpreting the dialogue generated had an impact on the data created and presented (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Golafshani, 2003).

Ontologically, my argument is that we socially construct reality and that the social world is produced and reproduced interactionally (Bryman, 2016). Epistemologically, I believe that we construct our own individual understanding and knowledge through our own unique lived experiences and the reflections on that experience. It is my position that people have multiple perspectives of a single event and that the interpretation of one instance of a social phenomenon by different people is diverse (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Building on this argument, I believe that there is no single external truth or reality. I argue that individuals construct their own knowledge around an event or phenomena based on their own experiences and their reflections on these experiences. I am of the opinion that no two individuals experience the same phenomena in the same way, and hence, I do not believe that different people can assign meaning or interpret a shared phenomenon in the same way. Building on my perspective, to ensure the alignment of my personal philosophy and the phenomena under investigation, I adopted a research approach, methodology and methods that reflect my ontology.

3.3 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The research questions, the context and the relevance of this study in understanding how expatriate academics understand being an academic, determined the choice of the research methodology. Academics who come from diverse backgrounds and disciplines are at the very centre of this study and they bring with them a wide range of knowledge and teaching experience. The academics bring with them varied perspectives and conceptions of what it means to be an academic. This qualitative study acknowledges the multidimensional perspective of how we view certain situations, behaviours and context, and hence, supports the idea “to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimise the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in the study” (Creswell, 2013, p. 48).

3.4 CASE STUDY APPROACH

The rationale for the use of the case study methodology will be explained in this section. As this qualitative study aims to generate an in-depth and multifaceted view ‘of a complex issue in its real-life context’ (Crowe et al., 2011), the case study approach was adopted. A variety of perspectives regarding the use of case study approaches were considered whilst making my decision to use this as my research methodology. The case study approach was deemed most suitable as it allowed for interviewing expatriate academics within a bounded setting in a higher education institution. Case study has been explained as a choice of what is to be studied (a case within a bounded -by time and place- system)

rather than a methodology (Stake, 2013). On the other hand, there are scholars who view case study as a methodology in qualitative design (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). Stake (2013) believes that case study is in itself a methodology for use in qualitative studies and hence is appropriate for qualitative studies. Furthermore, “a case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved” (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). It provides the researcher an opportunity to conduct a more detailed and a richer portrait of the social phenomenon under study than if studying a large population (Gilbert, 2008; Hakim, 2000). This is in alignment with my constructivist epistemological approach. It also highlights the importance of the research as an instrument to interpret the meanings of the case. Additionally, Flyvbjerg (2011) outlined the following four qualities of case studies: Demarcation of the unit’s boundaries; Intensive, rich, depth; Evolve over time and in specific time and place; Focused on the relation to environment or context (p. 301).

In the use of a case study, the social researcher believes that the subset is representative of the broader population (Carter & Sealey, 2009; Hakim, 2000). Within a pragmatic approach there are questions to consider regarding the size of the case study and its selection. (Yin, 2003) suggested the selection of what he termed a ‘typical’ case study, where the chosen example is representative of its wider field. In my research, I adopted this approach, where the higher education institution I selected is representative of the ‘typical’ higher education institutions in Oman that employ expatriate academics.

Supporters of the approach such as Yin (2003) has stated that ‘case studies are the preferred strategy when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context’ (p. 1). Yin also posits that if appropriate care is taken in the research design, then case studies have value and are explanatory and that they are not just the first, descriptive step on a perceived ‘research hierarchy’ where other, ‘stronger’ research methods subsequently take over (Robson, 2011; Yin, 2003, p. 3).

The issue of generalisability has been raised in relation to the case study approach although it may be one that impacts much of qualitative research (Bryman, 2003; Mallick & Verma, 2005; Pring, 2004; Robson, 2011; Walford, 2001; Yin, 2003). This may be so

because, 'the method requires a focus on a very small number of sites, yet there is often a desire to draw conclusions which have a wider applicability' which may be an 'illusory goal' (Walford, 2001, pp. 22, 15). However, in its defense, the case study method has validity as it provides detail and depth of study; focuses on a specific problem or issue; shines light on real life situations; offers the possibility of 'transferability' of research findings and provides 'fine-grain' analysis or an outlook of the world (Deem & Brehony, 1994; Fanghanel, 2009; Pring, 2004; Robson, 2011; Thomas, 2021; Walford, 2013; Wenger-Trayner, 2013; Yin, 2003). These positive perspectives support the continued use of this approach in research. Another perspective was offered by Thomas who suggested that 'concerns about how far we can generalise from a case study are neutralised when we realise how tentative any generalisation might be in social research' (2011, p. 216). Hence, I realize that the research findings do not need to be generalized every time into a wider population and that they afford intrinsic value in themselves.

3.5 DATA GENERATION - SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

In this research the key qualitative method used was 'semi structured virtual interviews' within a case study framework. I interviewed a range of academics working at the case study higher education institution who had expatriated to Oman to gain an understanding of how the academics experienced expatriation and how it influenced their academic identities. To elicit the perspectives of the academics on their experiences of expatriation and their academic identities, I weighed whether to use individual interviews, focus groups or a survey approach (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Robson, 2011; Chadderton & Torrance, 2011). While focus groups afford benefits such as time management, it was dismissed as while all the academics were expatriates, collective interviewing would prove to be ineffective in teasing out (recording and transcribing) the different experiences of the academics. In addition, focus groups tend to exacerbate negative perceptions (Ylijoki & Mäntylä, 2003) which was something I wanted to avoid given the focus on the incompatibility existent between academic work and being an expatriate academic in existing studies.

Therefore, I reached the informed decision that semi-structured one to one interviews would provide me with sufficient rich and worthwhile data. Although interviews are time consuming, it is regarded as one of the qualitative methods that are most appropriate, versatile and common (Brinkmann, 2017; Cook, 2008; Elliott, 2005; King & Horrocks, 2010; Mason, 2002; Ritchie et al., 2014; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Seidman, 2013; Silverman, 2013). As semi-structured interviews are able to capture participants' experiences, motivations and perceptions along with the structural and contextual settings that may have an influence on these, it was considered as the most appropriate method for data generation to explore the experiences of expatriation and contextualise the academic identities within the professional setting (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Henkel, 2000; Knight & Saunders, 1999; McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2016). Interviews within the interpretive paradigm address that the data collected is constructed socially set within an intentional interactional exchange of dialogue and that the findings arise from the data and the theoretical framework (Cook, 2008; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Yeo et al., 2014). Interviews as a method provides flexibility and are open-ended in style, promoting an in-depth conversation about the topic under study which I felt was beneficial given the context (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Robson, 2011).

The semi-structured interview method offered me the flexibility and opportunity to ask specific questions which offered me insight into the professional lives of the participants (Robson & McCartan, 2016) and also to explore other areas that were raised by the interviewees. This method 'provides the best of both worlds' with the 'structure of a list of issues to be covered together with the freedom to follow up points as necessary' (Thomas, 2009, p. 164) and hence was appropriate for this study. The strength of semi-structured interviews as a research method lies in developing a narrative in which the focus is on perceptions, experiences and the meanings given to the phenomenon being explored along with the influence of structural elements, this in turn makes it preferred data generation method to investigate academic identities (Henkel, 2000; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2016).

Thus, it is important to address that although the meanings and interpretations are generated and constructed by participants at the time of the interview, these can be

unfinished, temporal and ongoing (Bryman, 2016; Clair & Wasserman, 2007; Edwards & Holland, 2013; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

Albeit being a commonly used qualitative method, there are potential problems when using semi-structured interviews (Alvesson, 2010; Pring, 2004; Schostak, 2005; Scott & Usher, 1996; Walford, 2001). The reason for this could be partly because the interviewer's understanding of the responses may be influenced by their own beliefs of the world through which the responses of the participants may be filtered in the interview (Pring, 2004; Schostak, 2005; Scott & Usher, 1996). As Schostak posits, 'no individual can step inside the experience of another' (2005, p. 14), but the interpretive approach at least acknowledges the fact that there is a 'double layer' of interpretation by the interviewer of what is being said in the interview. These two levels of interpretation that arise when dealing with the interview outcomes have been called the 'double hermeneutic' (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Procter & Padfield, 1998). However, according to Procter and Padfield (1998), Braun and Clarke (2013) both the researcher and the researched are interpreting the world for themselves with the 'double hermeneutic' and hence are stepping away from any possible 'truths' to be uncovered. However, as qualitative research is positioned within a constructivist epistemology, it is important to be cognizant of the possible impact of this 'double hermeneutic' on any research findings which will impact the claims made by the research and the possible generalisability.

There are concerns about the validity of interviews which is not new (Walford, 2001, p. 89) and the main element of this uncertainty is whether the interview method can uncover the 'truth' or reality or only a perspective of the reality based on the interpretations of those involved in the phenomenon (Alvesson, 2010; Bell, 2005; Farnsworth & Solomon, 2013; Mallick & Verma, 2005; Pring, 2004; Schostak, 2005; Scott & Usher, 1996; Walford, 2001).

It is also noteworthy that the issue of potential researcher bias and subjectivity is one that impacts all qualitative research and is not exclusive to the use of interviews. We can conclude the interviews are no worse or better than other social research methods once these generic limitations of qualitative research are accepted (Procter & Padfield, 1998;

Thomas, 2021). Although interviews are not a perfect research method, they do afford the generation of large amounts of data especially if the interviewer is unable to share directly in the experiences of those being interviewed. Hence, many are of the opinion that it is a worthwhile tool if the interpretivist interviewer is mindful of all these potential issues throughout the interview process (Alvesson, 2010; Denscombe, 2010, p. 176; Pring, 2004; Walford, 2001, pp. 95, 97). However, in this study, direct quotes from the participants were used to demonstrate rigour in the analysis stage of the research, which in turn helps to strengthen validity and the credibility of the outcomes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006, pp. 81, 82).

For the interviews, relevant participants were selected, open-ended questions were used that followed a thematic or topic centered approach using a semi-structured interview guide. I prepared a range of key topics and prompt questions to elicit information while also permitting the interview to diverge into other related areas that were pertinent to the study (Howard, 2019). This helped to record a variety of experiences, responses, attitudes, beliefs, motivations and meanings of the participants along with their contexts in relation to a particular phenomenon. The final list of prompt questions is included in (Appendix 4), and these were developed with the aim of developing relevant data from the interviews. These questions were developed guided by the research aims and also my reflections on pilot interviews that were conducted preceding the data generation. The questions address the key areas of interest and are also flexible enough to further explore related areas. The interview questions enabled me to encourage the participants to reflect on and elicit their professional trajectories and teaching philosophies. The questions encouraged the participants to discuss their relationships with their colleagues, students and institution on an interpersonal level and on an intrapersonal level, the participants discussed their pedagogical, disciplinary and educational beliefs (Trent, 2012). The online interviews typically lasted between forty-five minutes and an hour and a half.

3.5.1 Methodological reconsiderations - virtual interviews

Due to COVID-19 and the restraints of social distancing and to ensure the safety of participants and the researcher, the methodology was redesigned and the interviews

were conducted virtually using Zoom , a video conferencing platform that has been used extensively in research (Archibald et al., 2019; Kite & Phongsavan, 2017; Lobe et al., 2020; Matthews & Cramer, 2008) to conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews. Zoom was chosen as the most suited platform as most of the participants were already using zoom for their teaching and online communications. As a zoom account is not required to attend the meeting, the participants were sent an invitation to the meeting one day in advance of the scheduled meeting, which led them to a link to download the program and enter the meeting. Although issues of privacy and ‘zoom bombing’ have been raised, none of these issues were faced during the meetings with participants. All the interviews were audio recorded using a digital recorder and were stored on a secure device which will be deleted on the completion of the writing process.

3.6 PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLING METHOD

The criteria for being included in this research were that the participants needed to be academics and expatriates. Therefore, purposive sampling, which involves sampling participants in a strategic and deliberate way based on their suitability to the research was used in this study (Suri, 2011). To ensure that research aims are addressed, participants were selected that have a relationship with the phenomenon under investigation (Morgan, 2008; Ritchie et al., 2014; Seidman, 2013). To ensure that the phenomenon under investigation is understood with all the complexities, issues and contextual influences and that the diverse viewpoints are sufficiently presented, it is important to select the sample that ensures this to strengthen the credibility of the findings (Bryman, 2016; King & Horrocks, 2010; Morgan, 2008).

3.6.1 Sample selection

Purposive based sampling was used in this research as it supports depth as well as variation. Here the sample units were identified because they have particular features or characteristics that will enable a detailed understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Flick, 2018; Ritchie et al., 2014; Seidman, 2013). In order to answer the research questions in this research, the main criteria for selecting the participants was

that they had to be expatriates (the nationality of the respondent is different from the host country Oman) and academic members of staff in a higher education institution. Care was taken to establish a degree of representation of participants from a range of disciplines and subjects to support the transferability of the findings. Choosing somewhat homogenous groups as participants is a common and recommended strategy as this ensures that participants tend to understand the topic of study (Ritchie et al., 2014) and this increases the strength of the dependability of the findings (Lewis & Nicholls, 2014; Palmberger & Gingrich, 2014). As this study aims to explore the experiences of expatriate academics, I felt that a range of staff in terms of nationalities, designations (department heads, assistant professor, assistant lecturer, lecturer), subject area, age, career stage, experience, years of having been an expatriate and background would be ideal to obtain a greater range of perspectives to analyse which is in line with (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

3.6.2 Gatekeepers

The participants were recruited with the help of gatekeepers. Gatekeepers are people who can help identify relevant and appropriate participants and facilitate access to them (King & Horrocks, 2010; Seidman, 2013). The use of gatekeepers is advantageous as they have access to the relevant participants, insight into the local circumstances and suggest relevant participants that either not known or not well known to the researcher. Gatekeepers help to provide consistency and parity and circumvent bias and conflict of interest in the selection as all participants were mediated by them (King & Horrocks, 2010; Seidman, 2013). The gatekeepers were chosen based on their position and access to relevant participants and included departmental heads.

As a first step, copies of the participant information brief (Appendix 1) and the consent form (Appendix 2) were emailed to gatekeepers. The gatekeepers were instructed of the principles of research ethics to prevent them from inadvertently coercing their colleagues into participating in the research. After the gatekeepers identified suitable candidates, I approached the participants independently by email. The email clearly stated what the objective of the study was and what their participation would entail and a copy of the

participant information sheet was attached. Before the interviews, the participants were made fully aware of their rights and that participation in the study was voluntary to make them more likely to participate in it. The participants were informed that they had the option to opt in to the study and opt out at any stage of the study.

As there is no pre-defined guidance on the sample size for semi-structured interview studies, the overall sample size was led by the recommendations of Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), who suggested that an appropriate sample is around 15, with a range of between 5 and 25 participants in order to obtain a rich account by the participants of the phenomena under investigation (Baker & Edwards, 2012; Dworkin, 2012; King & Horrocks, 2010; Morgan, 2008; Seidman, 2013). A low number ($n < 5$) could lead to the underexposure of the research question while, a large number ($n > 25$) might not provide better insights as it could diminish the quality of the analysis due to the sheer amount of data collected which might prove to be difficult to manage (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Ritchie et al., 2014). A relatively balanced number of participants was accrued to keep the sample size manageable at 18. The participants were finalized before the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown came into effect. The 18 participants were interviewed over 3 months. However, the interviews had to be redesigned to be conducted via zoom as the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown was in place during the time the in-person interviews were to take place.

The sample of 18 people for this study allowed men and women, across disciplines, career stages, which was pivotal to ensure a variation in the sample. The sample included 10 men and 8 women. The majority of the sample was aged between 25-50. The participants were mainly mid-career academics (10 – 14 years), Later-career academics (15 years and above) early career academics (3-6 years). The academics hailed from different countries but most of them were of Asian origin.

#	Pseudonym	Gender	Nationality	Qualification	Years of Experience	Designation	Discipline
1	John	M	Indian	PhD	18	Asst Professor	Hard-applied
2	Zinah	F	Iraqi	PhD	15	Asst Professor	Soft-applied
3	Rahul	M	Indian	Masters	10	Director of Dept	Hard-applied
4	Sam	M	Srilankan	PhD	11	Asst Professor	Hard-pure
5	Mona	F	Indian	PhD	8	Asst Professor	Soft-pure
6	Salma	F	Bangladeshi	Masters	4	Asst Lecturer	Soft-pure
7	Uma	F	Indian	Masters	9	Asst Lecturer	Hard-pure
8	Preeti	F	Srilankan	Masters	11	Lecturer	Soft-applied
9	Marta	F	Canadian	Masters	10	Lecturer	Soft-pure
10	Shanti	F	Indian	PhD	8	Asst Professor	Soft-applied
11	Dave	M	South African	PhD	16	Asst Professor	Hard-applied
12	Rose	F	Filipino	Masters	12	Lecturer	Soft-applied
13	Abdul	M	Pakistani	Masters	10	Lecturer	Hard-applied
14	Hashim	M	Iranian	Masters	12	Lecturer	Soft-applied
15	Fahad	M	Pakistani	Masters	3	Asst Lecturer	Hard-applied
16	Ahmed	M	Iraqi	Masters	4	Asst Lecturer	Soft-applied
17	Max	M	Filipino	Masters	2	Asst Lecturer	Soft-pure
18	George	M	Indian	PhD	11	Director of Dept	Soft-applied

Table 2: Sample characteristics of research participants

For the purpose of anonymity, some details of the participants have been excluded, including their full or part time work status, their marital status and their partner's work

status. Although I will refer to these characteristics, it was seen that these had little impact on the participants' academic identity.

3.7 PILOT INTERVIEWS

Piloting is a small-scale implementation in an interview study that is done usually with a few participants before the larger study. This helps the researcher to come to grips and become comfortable with the practicalities of conducting an interview (Seidman, 2013) and contribute to the dependability of the study and the reliability of the findings (Schreiber, 2008; Seidman, 2013; Silverman, 2013). More importantly, this provides an opportunity for the researcher to test the research instruments and make any adjustments to the questions and structure of the interview guide to mitigate issues of ambiguity, difficulty and clarity. Because pilot interviews ensure that data generation is as rich as possible (Schreiber, 2008; Seidman, 2013), two full interviews were conducted as a pilot before the start of the main study. This provided an opportunity to reflect and make some minor changes to the prompt questions. The two pilot interviews were excluded from the sample, data analysis and findings.

Once the data has been generated it needs to be carefully analysed with the objective of reaching useful conclusions. My chosen method of data analysis is outlined below.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

The virtual interviews were audio recorded and then were transcribed into text (King & Horrocks, 2010; McGinn, 2008). Transcription is regarded as a crucial step for data analysis and hence, care was taken to transcribe all the 18 audio recordings verbatim in full. Next, the transcripts were checked against the audio recordings for accuracy and were prepared heeding the ethical considerations. All names and references to the institution were removed along with any personal information that might identify individuals (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The participants were provided with the transcripts to check the authenticity of the information captured as member checking is a critical step in ensuring the integrity and credibility of qualitative research (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

3.8.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic Analysis (TA) was used to analyse the data in this research, specifically, the approach outlined by Braun and Clarke in 2006 (further developed in 2012, 2013 and 2018), which I consider as most appropriate to the size and the research aims. Thematic analysis is a technique that is structured wherein repeated themes, trends, topics and patterns of meaning relevant to the research questions are searched for in the transcripts or are predefined (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013; King & Horrocks, 2010). TA was chosen for data analysis as it is considered as an appropriate technique to analyse interview data within an interpretative paradigm, where the focus is on exploring and interpreting views, perceptions and meanings, experiences and recognising the contextual structures that may impact these across participants (Ayres, 2008; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Seidman, 2013).

Although there are different approaches to thematic analysis, the approach used in this study is the 6-step framework set out by Braun and Clarke in 2006 that is perhaps regarded as the most widely adopted and influential (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Thematic analysis is more than a summary of the data as it aims to interpret and make sense of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The 6-step process is also particularly useful for inexperienced qualitative researchers and is widely used in social research as it is clear and useable (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Braun and Clarke acknowledged that although thematic Analysis may lack the 'kudos' of some other analytical approaches, they proffered that it offered a theoretically useful, flexible and accessible approach to analyzing data and describe data in rich detail (2006, p. 78). Outlining key definitions is useful when discussing the proposed TA framework. Braun and Clarke contended that the concept of 'theme' 'captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set' (2006, p. 82). Although it may

appear as similar to the coding of data, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), themes are broader than codes, and they are used when analysing the data initially to build up the themes in a recurrent process. Themes and sub-themes are generated, refined and finalized from the initial codes identified. Braun and Clarke underscored that while the thematic analysis approach offered flexibility, the themes chosen should not be 'random or weak and should be connected to the data and the actual research question' (2006, p. 91). They also argued that the themes had to have both 'internal homogeneity' and 'external heterogeneity' (2006, p. 91) meaning that they should be clearly differentiated from each other and be coherent. The themes then need to be named and clearly defined. Following these steps would give strength to the thematic analysis process and other researchers have also commented on the importance of transparency in the process to showcase the rigour required (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Houghton et al., 2013; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017).

3.8.2 The steps of Thematic Analysis

The six steps of thematic analysis were outlined by Braun and Clarke in their seminal paper of 2006 as follows;

1. Familiarisation with the data
2. Generating initial codes.
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing an analytical report using the themes (2006, p. 87).

Although thematic analysis may appear to be a common sense driven and linear process to the analysis of qualitative data, the steps to capture locate and interpret patterns of experiences and meanings is iterative. The absence of theoretical structures and other steps distinguishes TA from other approaches such as grounded theory. Braun and Clarke posit that it is this flexibility of the approach across a range of epistemologies that is a key to its strength (2006, p. 97).

The TA approach has undergone further development in recent times with the objective of giving it more analytic rigour and credibility (Braun & Clarke, 2012, 2013; Houghton et al., 2013; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017). Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, for example, put forth a hybrid approach using TA which combined both inductive and deductive analysis of qualitative data where the codes generated are driven by both data and theory (2006, p. 80).

I chose a data driven and inductive approach to generating the codes in this research, followed by deductively analyzing the themes generated using a theoretical framework. I am of the opinion that this approach is an appropriate variation of the above outlined hybrid approach and it was chosen as I did not want to limit the generation of themes from the data by applying a theoretical framework in the initial step of the process.

Some researchers critique the generation of codes and themes as a process that is a rather positivistic approach within a supposedly interpretivist framework (Brinkmann, 2014; St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Brinkmann argued that although some qualitative researchers felt there was data' out in the world waiting to be 'mined' and analysed, it is in fact 'always produced, constructed, mediated by human activities' (2014, pp. 720, 721). Braun and Clarke also underscore that, researchers must be mindful that the themes are 'generated' by them, and not 'found' in the data (2013), an approach I have adopted in this research.

3.8.3 Application of TA to my research

The first step in thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke 'begins with a process of immersion in the data' (2013, p. 204). This was indeed my first step where I familiarized myself with the data by reading and re-reading the transcribed material. In addition to reading the transcripts, I read the notes and observations that were made after each interview to become familiar with the data. This helped to form overall impressions of the data, conceptual ideas or specific issues (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In order for the researcher to engage with the data more critically, the data must be revisited as the initial impressions might not be fully objective since the initial aspects of the data might be the

most obvious and the ones that the researcher was expecting or have an interest in (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The next step in thematic data analysis is coding, and arrived at by reading the data closely, wherein segments of the text in the transcript that are relevant to the research objectives are identified, summarised and labeled. General meaning is given to each segment wherever relevant which is repeated for each transcript and the codes were refined. Although there are different approaches to coding, a common initial distinction is between 'selective' and 'complete' coding (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 206). I used selective coding where only those aspects of the data that directly relate to the phenomenon being researched is chosen. My research generated a lot of data but some of it appeared to be tangential and irrelevant (such as belonging to the same country or state) and hence these responses were dismissed. However, sections where there was uncertainty was coded so that it could be analysed further at a later stage.

Additional to 'selective' and 'complete' coding there exists a further distinction between 'semantic' or ('concrete') coding and 'conceptual' or ('theoretical') coding (Braun & Clarke, 2013). I used 'semantic' or 'concrete' coding to generate my codes, wherein the actual content of the data based on direct or semantic meaning is summarized which is often followed by 'conceptual' or 'theoretical' coding where implicit meanings in the data are identified applying theoretical frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2013). My theoretical framework was applied in the analysis of the generated themes at a later stage in the TA process. Each transcript was read, re-read and coded separately. In addition, A custom software program was used with excel to check and see if the codes identified are representative of the data. See Appendix 5 for an example of the coding using the custom software program using excel.

My initial coding was based on the 18 interviews conducted with the expatriate academics. I gave the interviewees pseudonyms as I believe that names give them an identity and voice of their own that can be traced through the analysis while preserving their identity instead of simply assigning them numbers (Bell, 2005, p. 48; Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 63).

In addition, for the novice researcher, Braun and Clarke stated that defining the themes was not necessarily due to just the prevalence of codes, it is the importance and relevance of the codes and subsequent themes to the research question and data analysis that matters (2006, p. 83). Hence, not all codes would become part of a theme, although it is dependent on the subjectivity and reflexivity of the researcher making the decisions.

The initial code clusters generated from the coding of data along with the initial range of themes generated from these code clusters are depicted as a concept map in the attachment. The use of a concept map helped to organize and develop the different themes (see figure 4). This activity was completed in accordance with Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012, 2013), which shows that not all the initial themes were kept or developed in the final stages of the analysis. This is in line with the thematic analysis approach wherein the data must be constantly revisited to ensure that it is coherent and relevant to the research questions.

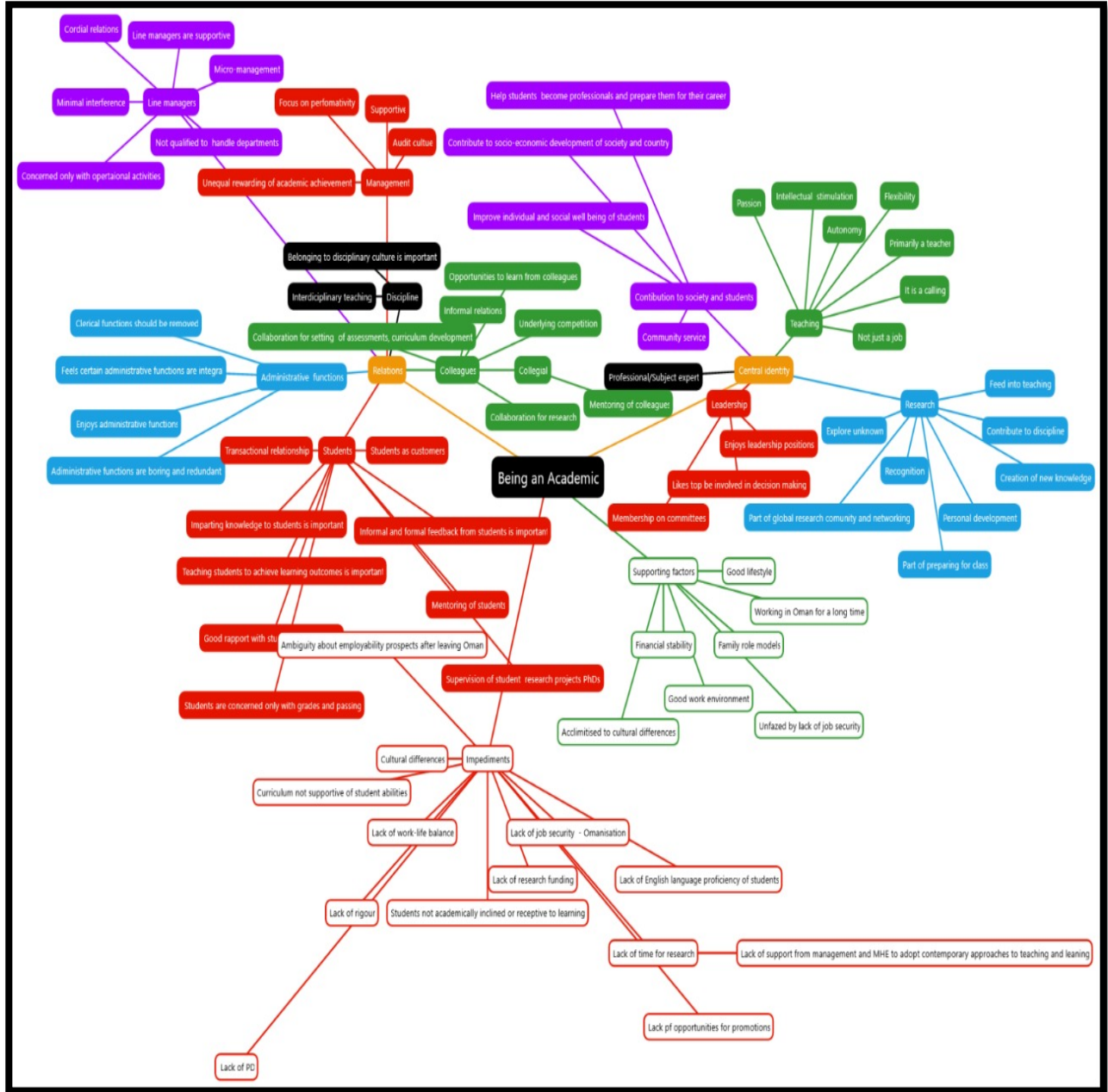


Figure 3: Concept map with the code clusters and initial themes

A range of themes, sub-themes and patterns were generated from the initial analysis of the codes (Clarke & Braun, 2013; King & Horrocks, 2010) and these themes are presented in the next chapter with illustrative quotations them to be as explicit and transparent as possible (Nowell et al., 2017).

After an iterative process of revisiting the initial codes and themes, the data was organised into 4 themes as I felt that these themes captured the important material from the data in relation to the research questions. Relevant extracts from the transcripts are used in thematic analysis not only support the credibility of the interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2013) but also to reveal the complexities and richness of the events and statements studied and to enable the reader 'to make decisions about the applicability of the findings to other settings or similar context' and thereby support the possible transferability of the findings (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Marx, 2008). Therefore, in line with interpretive nature of this research, rich descriptions and varying examples from different participants are used to present the findings (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Creswell & Miller, 2000).

3.9 RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethics is an important element that social researchers need to need to consider when working with people (Denscombe, 2007; Robson, 2011, p. 194). Prior to the data generation, an ethical application was applied to Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Management School Research Ethics Committee (FASS-LUMS REC) and a positive outcome was received in December 2019 (see Appendix 3).

This research was guided by the work of (Bryman, 2016) and Babbie (2020), who propose that for any social research project certain ethical principles need to be taken into consideration. These aspects include an ethic of respect, attention to voluntary participation, informed consent, an awareness of the sensitivity of the topic; anonymity and confidentiality, and protection of privacy, which will be briefly discussed below (King & Horrocks, 2010; Webster et al., 2014).

With the view of upholding these responsibilities, I ensured that the participants understood the purpose of the study, what it entails and their rights as participants. The participants were emailed a copy of the participant information brief (Appendix 1), the consent form (Appendix 2) which provided details of the purpose of the study and all participants were provided an opportunity to ask clarifications regarding the study. I made

sure that I had obtained 'informed consent' from the participants and they were aware that they had to 'opt in' to the research process and had the option to 'opt out' at any stage. However, no participant decided to withdraw from the study.

To ensure anonymity of the participants, a number of steps that were taken to ensure that the participants were not identifiable to outsiders and the institution and hence, pseudonyms were created for the participants as well as the higher education institution in the report of the findings (Hennink et al., 2020) and identifying details were obscured as was discussed previously. References to the specific department of the participant, their discipline or professional practice were grouped using the typology of academic disciplines developed by Biglan (1973) into: hard-pure (e.g. physics, chemistry and biology), soft- pure (e.g. history, anthropology and language studies), hard-applied (e.g. engineering and medicine), and soft-applied (e.g. business studies and education) (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Diamond, 1987; Jessop & Maleckar, 2016; Matthews et al., 2014; Neumann, 2009) and hence, the exact departments have not been revealed. In addition, the participants were informed upfront that only I would listen to the recordings of the interviews and would transcribe them personally (Hennink et al., 2020). A copy of the transcript was provided to each of the participants and asked if any information needed to be removed from the study.

Another ethical issue that is noteworthy is that I as a researcher am also an expatriate academic, and have "a lived familiarity with the group being researched" (Merton, 1972, p. 11). This was not 'insider' research as I was not working at the higher education institution (Robson, 2011) during the time of my research, although I was employed there previously. Insider research has been defined as research that is undertaken within an organisation, community or group of which the researcher is also a member (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Hellowell, 2006; Hockey, 1993; Mercer, 2007; Trowler, 2011). The issue of insider/outsider researcher and 'insiderness' has been discussed by Mercer (2007) in relation to her own research. It is contended that 'the insider/outsider dichotomy is actually a continuum with multiple dimensions' (Mercer, 2007, p. 1). As a result, it is more accurate to refer to the degree of insiderness, as the researcher had 'priori' or intimate or familiar knowledge of the group (Hellowell, 2006; Merton, 1972). As I was not working at the

higher education institution, I was regarded as a peer and hence there was no perceived 'power' issues with the participants which could impact the interviews. Conversely, the insidership helped the researcher to gain insightful data with greater depth through the rapport with the participants and the respondents being comfortable enough to 'open up' during the interviews (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

A further ethical issue was concerning the sensitivity of the topic and whether it would inadvertently harm the participants. The subject of being an expatriate and work was anticipated to be a sensitive issue that could potentially raise concerns. I ascertained that the questions posed were not significantly personal or insensitive (interview questions in Appendix 4). To mitigate any issue arising, pseudonyms were created for the participants to anonymise their responses in the reporting of the findings (Hennink et al., 2020).

A final ethical issue to be considered in educational research to the work of the educational researcher is that of a strong social justice dimension instead of just considering the immediate case in hand and this could lead to ethical tensions pertaining to what should and should not be reported (Bryan & Burstow, 2018, p. 110). These need to be considered by a researcher and I have endeavoured to do so in this study. I was as objective and truthful to the aims of the study as possible while also protecting the professional reputations of the participants and their HEI.

3.10 METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

Although it is not possible to judge the validity and reliability of qualitative research completely like that of quantitative research within the traditional framework of research, it is still important to address the issues of reliability and validity with the use specific criteria appropriate to it (Smith & Dunworth, 2003). Reliability refers to the consistency and trustworthiness of research findings' and 'whether a finding is reproducible at other times and by other researchers' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 245). However, it has been argued that reliability may not be an appropriate criterion against which qualitative research may be measured as the purpose of the qualitative research is to produce one of many possible interpretations of a phenomenon (Yardley, 2008). This approach is in

the same vein of thematic analysis which recognizes the dynamic and interactive role of the researcher and hence, it is important to ensure that the themes generated are credible and are of good quality. Thematic analysis also acknowledges that no two researchers analysing the same data will come with the exact same codes and themes, hence recognising the subjectivity of qualitative research.

The discussion of the emerging and iterating categories with my supervisor who had access to my data, enabled an ongoing sense of communicability to be incorporated into my research process. This is a cross checking process where other researchers with access to same data are able to recognize to a certain extent the categories of description during data analysis. This process helped to ensure that the data outcomes described in the next chapter are a description of the accounts of the participants.

With TA great effort is taken in the process of generating and analysing data to support the arguments being made. As Hammersley (1992) posits, 'an account is valid or true if it represents accurately those features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain or theorize' (p. 69). The quality of research also relates to the transparency and coherence of the research process (Yardley, 2008). In the write up of this study, I have made every effort to document the different stages of the research process very clearly which refers to transparency. Examples of the data analysis process is included to make this as transparent as possible (Appendix 6 & 7).

Bias is a cause of invalidity and it is something that cannot be completely erased but can be dealt with by paying careful attention to detail (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This entails being aware of my characteristics as an interviewer as well as being cognizant of my respondent's characteristics (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). Bias was mitigated by employing gatekeepers in the recruitment of participants for the study and also ensuring that in the reporting of the findings, the narratives of the interviewees' provided their own voice and experiences.

It was also important to be aware that academics working in higher education especially in the GCC region tend to self-censor and are circumspect in their views about local

politics for fear of political censure (Wildavsky, 2010). Consequentially, it needs to be acknowledged that the respondents may have been guarded and attempted to deliver the right answers. As previously discussed, effort was taken to reduce this by giving respondents pseudonyms to ensure anonymity and by not asking too many leading questions and by allowing the respondents to fully express their views without too many probes or prompts. Moreover, the right amount of probes are known to enhance the reliability and validity of the research which is possible in a semi-structured approach to interviewing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

3.11 LIMITATIONS

It is important to recognize the limitations of the methodology and methods employed in this research. The 18 expatriate academics may not be regarded as a representative sample of expatriate academics in Oman. Moreover, there were limitations with the sample as most of the respondents were mid-career academics with fewer towards the top of the career ladder in terms of having professorship. The study was also based in a single Omani higher education institution that foregrounds both teaching and research. Therefore, the themes uncovered may be particular to the sample and the institution.

3.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed why an interpretive paradigm was considered most appropriate for this exploratory and contextual study (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013; Scott & Usher, 2010). The research design was guided by the interpretive paradigm which is in line with the wider literature investigating academic identities (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Henkel, 2000; McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2016). The use of semi-structured interviews were used as the data generation method. Thematic analysis was employed to answer the research objectives. The importance of trustworthiness, how it has been considered and enhanced has been signposted throughout this chapter.

The next chapter will discuss the main themes generated from my research data.

4 CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS: CORE IDENTITIES OF ACADEMICS

This chapter presents the data and the key findings of the research pertaining to the first research question. The aim of this research is to explore the meaning of being an academic as perceived by the expatriate academics and the contributing factors that influence these identities. The data was analysed using thematic analysis and is presented using carefully selected extracts from the data. The findings related to the first research objective: **What are the expatriate academics' perceptions of the meaning of being an academic?** are presented below.

The analysis indicated that the academic identity development was a personalized and complex process, wherein each expatriate academic experienced the identity development differently. Nevertheless, some common aspects seem to have appeared which are outlined in the following themes, dimensions and trajectories. Four core academic identities (core themes) emerged from the data that related to the meaning of being an academic as expressed by the expatriate academics: **traditional teacher, integrated academic, academic freelancer** and an **academic leader** which will be discussed in detail. Each participant constructed one of these core identities which is representative of the central construction of their meaning of being an academic. I argue that the findings of this study reveal the complex nature of academic identities and that there is a variation in the manner in which the academics expressed their identities in ways other than just being a teacher and/or a researcher, but also specifically those of academic freelancers (practitioners) and academic leaders.

Quotations have been selected to encapsulate the perceptions, views and experiences of the participants and are representative of the views of the majority. Individual and minority opinions have also been included.

4.1 IDENTITY AS A TRADITIONAL TEACHER

Six participants who are early-career academics and mid-career academics, Mona, Salma, Uma, Shanti, Fahad and Ahmed reflected the identity of traditional teacher. All six of these academics talked about a sense of “pride”, “commitment”, “flexibility” and “enjoyment” in being a teacher. For these participants, being a teacher was the bedrock of their identity as an academic and their way of describing themselves.

They expressed love for teaching and their identity as a teacher is amplified by their academic and professional focus on their students. For two of the academics, teaching is a calling and they felt that it was more than just a job. Uma enthused:

“Teaching is my thing...it’s what I enjoy the most...I think I’m a really good teacher. My students are my priority and I am driven by the needs of my students...teaching has been my passion for as long as I can remember”.

These academics thought of themselves primarily as teachers who helped students understand the subject and achieve the learning outcomes. They thought of themselves as experts transferring knowledge to their students. Salma’s comment highlights this sentiment:

“For me interaction with my students defines me as a teacher and makes me who I am. I want to help them understand the concepts and so my job is to try and break up the information so that they can understand it”.

The participants perceived that a reciprocal relationship and good rapport with the students positively reinforced their practice and their identity.

Salma described an academic as:

“Someone who is caring, supportive, understanding and responsive to the needs of the students...someone who knows their students well”.

These academics invested time and effort to establish informal rapport with the individual students. Uma shared:

“An important part of my job is listening to the students and hearing about their personal stuff as well as things related to their study...I want them to think of me as their buddy...someone they can approach and talk to. I think it’s important to establish this kind of a relationship with your students....it makes me feel important and gives me purpose”.

These comments underscore that for these academics, the student is at the heart of teaching and also seem to reinforce their ideas of what it entails to be a good teacher, as someone who foregrounds the learning needs of the students and is passionate about teaching.

However, these participants showed a predominantly teaching-centred conception of teaching as they felt the students lacked academic rigour and were not adequately equipped to meet the demands of the curriculum. There was a common concern about the amount of support their students needed and the discourse remained around the importance of teaching and student achievement, where the onus is on the teacher to support the student. Mona described this as follows:

“The curriculum that we teach is above the abilities of the students in this part of the world. You are working within a lot of constraints in terms of their English language skills, math and critical thinking skills...they do come through the Foundation (programme) but I feel it does not adequately prepare them for college...they are not academically excited....so what can we do? We need to tailor the curriculum and learning outcomes to help the students pass...in the end that is what is important”.

Similarly, Uma recognises how teachers shoulder the responsibility of bridging the gap between the curriculum and the academic ability of the students and the methods adopted to counter this:

“Sometimes you need to use a cookbook style of teaching that help students achieve the LOs (learning outcomes), you need to do this or else you are held accountable by the management....you are under a lot of pressure”.

These interviewees also acknowledged that research was an important element of being an academic and they expressed a keen interest in it. They felt research was a requirement for them to progress in their career, however, they did not think of it as being central to their view of being an academic. These academics held the view that there was no time for scholarly or research activity and perceived that they were less research focused as the teaching workload was high. The negative impact of heavy teaching workload and administrative tasks on research was articulated by Shanti:

“Almost 80% of my time is spent on teaching and then admin work. We have meetings, student mentoring, invigilation...where is the time for research? I feel I am not growing as an academic”.

However, she adds that she would like to undertake research and get more involved in scholarly activities. This interest is shared by the other participants as well. In addition, the *“lack of institutional support to undertake research”* in terms of providing relevant trainings and associated support was raised by Ahmed.

The participants' views on the use of technology in their teaching is interesting and noteworthy. They preferred traditional methods of teaching and were uncomfortable using Moodle or the Virtual Learning Environment for teaching.

“I think I am quite old fashioned that way...we have all this technology, the smart board and VLE and every month or so we have trainings on how to use these and incorporate it our teaching and learning but I still like using the white board and the old ways...I feel I am still effective and my pass rate is good and so I don't think there are any problems there”. (Fahad)

4.2 IDENTITY AS AN INTEGRATED ACADEMIC

Three late career academics, John, Zinah and Dave can be described as integrated academics, in that the teaching role and responsibility is congruent with research expertise. These participants discussed how they identified themselves as researchers first and teachers second when thinking of what it means to be an academic. Thus, the integrated academic is in principle a consummate manifestation of the mythologized academic who focuses on research, publishing with a clear reference to their discipline, teaching, transferring knowledge and preparing students.

The interviewees drew on a common understanding of research as a process of creating knowledge, exploring the unknown, transmission of knowledge, informing their teaching, publishing research, contributing to the global research community and professional recognition. In the accounts of these participants, it was evident that they valued the intellectual stimulation that they derived from being involved in research activities and strived to enhance their research competencies. These academics found research in their disciplines to be more challenging and rewarding than teaching.

“I think being a researcher is my identity as an academic. Don’t get me wrong, I enjoy teaching but research is something that gets me excited and happy. It gives me the opportunity to explore, learn new things, read about different ideas and go in-depth into my discipline”. (John)

John also perceived research as a mechanism by which he can maintain academic authority as a teacher in the classroom, he explains:

“To me research and teaching go hand in hand, if you are researching a subject or topic, you know it better than reading a book”.

“One must do research...this is what makes you an academic and I take it very seriously. I get excited about conversations about what’s new in the field with my colleagues or students. I want to get my students excited about presenting at conferences and eventually writing and publishing...that’s the future”. (Dave)

The above quotations highlight how the academics thought of research as a creative process which could be experienced as exciting, intellectually stimulating and satisfying personal interest in their disciplines. They believed that tasks such as reading, writing or interactions with students and colleagues, within both research and teaching were an integral part of being an academic that helped them maintain academic authority.

Two of the participants, Dave and Zinah, perceived that central to the meaning of being an academic was being an expert in the area through research, being well known in the international research community and their standing within the field, as highlighted in the following quotations:

“I would like to think of myself as an expert in my subject area...I want to be well-known for my research...write and publish... people should think of me as an authority in my field”. (Zinah)

“For me it’s about doing good research and publication is a driving force as it’s a requirement for progression here...people citing your work that kind of thing is important... you know publish or perish.... besides if people know you as an expert, the easier it is to find another position”. (Dave)

These accounts indicate that these academics construct their researcher identity with a desire to be recognised and ascend academic ranks within the college and the research community. Career advancement was important for the purposes of both promotion and professional recognition and being research active enabled them to maintain the academic currency to remain mobile in academia.

In terms of conceptions of teaching, these academics inhabited a student-centred, facilitative approach informed by evidence and research. John’s pedagogical approach was influenced by the needs of the students, the student experience and initiating students into research and become autonomous learners:

“I want my students to enjoy learning the subject...they should feel excited and motivated to read and learn...as a teacher I believe I have succeeded if I can get

my students interested and take ownership of their own learning. ...the other thing is that I am working with students on small-scale research. Last year I encouraged a few of my students to present at student conferences and they loved the experience...I hope I have helped them develop a taste for research”.

These participants are seen to be experimenting and embracing the use of technology in teaching and their classrooms. This is reflected in John’s account:

“I like experimenting with new technologies and using them in my classes...I know some of my colleagues are not too open to this but I like the challenge and I think in this day and age it is important to engage our students in this way”.

In the same vein, Dave expresses that the incorporation of technology has helped him to engage the students and also to combat the negatives of increasing student numbers and the increased workloads.

The participants also revealed that ‘collegial relationships with colleagues’ were one of the most valued elements of academic work. Mentoring and collaborating with their colleagues was regarded as an important facet of their academic work. These academics found fulfilment in collaborating with peers within and outside of the college for research rewarding and reinforcing their status as researchers:

“My aim is to publish at least four articles a year...I enjoy being engaged in scholarly activity...it’s so satisfying. I have been holding workshops on writing for publication and helping my colleagues with research....it can be quite daunting and it is always nice to have someone show you the ropes”. (Zinah)

Similarly, Dave noted:

“There are a few of us who work on papers together. We are always doing peer-reviews and I feel happy being in this community of fellow researchers”.

Interestingly, unlike the other academics, these interviewees were not overly critical of the pressures to publish research or to publish for the sake of publishing, rather the quality

of research and process of investigating interesting topics is central to the meaning of being an academic.

4.3 IDENTITY AS AN ACADEMIC FREELANCER

Five participants who were early-career academics and mid-career academics focused more on the identity of an academic freelancer characterised by the valorisation of professional expertise sharing of professional knowledge and experiences with students, perception that the role of higher education is to initiate students into professions and an indifference to academic research and scholarship of teaching. The common thread in the narratives of these participants highlights the way in which practice and academic knowledge shapes their identity. Preeti recontextualizes and transforms knowledge from her vocational practice to the classroom:

"...where I come from is a very practical field, so I have gone from a practitioner to a lecturer. The difference I feel is that I understand how the things work in the field or the ground so to speak and this is what I use to help my students understand".

The participants valued professional expertise as all of them are professional entrants to higher education, rather than having followed a more common research route of undergraduate degree, masters or PhD to an academic role in higher education. *Marta validates the perceived value of being a professional expert:*

"I think of myself as a practitioner. I can tell you how something is done in my profession...I used to be banker and I enjoy using my knowledge of the field and bringing it into the classroom....it gives my teaching credibility".

A strong connection to the occupational background and professional discipline and how it fed into their teaching was espoused by these participants. There were strong references to their professional experiences in the industry or business world and the relevance of this to their academic teaching role:

“My background is working in a business environment, so I am happy to talk about that and I share lots of my own personal experiences as case studies in class”.
(Hashim)

“My background and experience helps me break down complex concepts or something very textbook and help students make sense of it, make them see how we use it in real life, in practice”. (Rose)

Their roles as academics were seen as a vehicle to transmit professional skills and knowledge to their students that they themselves acquired through their professional and practical experiences. So, among these participants, it is the expert knowledge generated through practice that helped define their identity as an academic. Hashim stated that his occupational identity gave him the “*skills, knowledge and credibility*” in his role as an academic and enhanced his relationship with his students by providing them with an “*experience of how things are in the business world...and giving them the confidence to trust me as their teacher...in what I am trying to impart to them*”.

In addition, the responses of these interviewees highlighted their engagement with commercial activities such as trainings, short courses and small-scale consultancy services to other institutions and a range of clients and how they perceived it as integral to keeping their knowledge in their fields up to date. They thought of themselves as revenue generators for the college. Rose explained:

“I was in HR and did a lot of trainings and short courses and after a while I realised that I am really good at training and thought it would be a natural thing to transition into teaching. Now I conduct corporate trainings and short courses for the college and this is something that I want to keep doing along with teaching. Trainings give a different kind of audience and you can always transfer that experience to your students. We developed this programme the other day and delivered it to the [client] and the feedback and evaluation were really positive...not to mention the money we made...my line managers and management were full of praise...that’s when I realized I love what I am doing”.

All of these academics expressed their belief that their professional experience counted for more than qualifications and that this validated their position as academics. They did not consider research and scholarship of teaching as important.

“It’s less about whether I’ve got a master’s or a PhD, which I know is important but I think it’s more about the experiences I’ve had and I feel that is what is useful for my students in class”. (Hashim)

Marta valued positive teaching experiences and interactions with students and aimed to turn her students into *“professionals contributing positively to the field”*. This was somewhat echoed by other academics in this group who seemed to continue to maintain close links to colleagues in practice that helped them have a pulse on the labour market needs and prepare the students accordingly. Rose believed that the practitioner identity that she *“came with into academia”* helped her gain *“confidence and authenticity”* as an academic, however, she wanted to *“start working again to bring in things from outside to enrich the classroom teaching”*.

It is important to mention that a feature common to all these academics was their lack of openness to interdisciplinary teaching which is sometimes required of the academics in the college:

“...the issue here with the ever-increasing student numbers and the reducing staff is that we are expected to step in and teach a subject that I don’t know much about. I think it is ludicrous! I mean just because I am good at teaching one thing doesn’t mean that I can teach something else...the whole thing is very stressful”. (Rose)

4.4 IDENTITY AS AN ACADEMIC LEADER

Three participants who were mid-career academics reflected the identity of an academic leader. These participants over the time of their employment with the college and also their career, had gone through significant changes in their occupational status and roles, moving to positions of senior management and leadership at the institution representing

its interest on the national and international stage. They believed that they they needed to display 'all-round' skills:

"I am the head of the department ... so you can say I am into management, teaching, research, designing curriculum, mentoring colleagues. These things are all important as an academic". (Rahul)

These academics are characterized by their comprehensive knowledge and skills of the wider strategic plans within the college and higher education on the whole. These participants were involved in advising on academic regulations, quality standards for a range of educational programmes both within the college and other educational institutions.

The following quotations illustrate how the participants associate being academic leaders with their extensive experience in the college in strategic roles where they choose to share their knowledge with their colleagues:

"I've been with the college for over 10 years now and I've got a huge range of experience...I've worked in strategic roles...I have the knowledge and consideration to be a sounding board for other people". (George)

And

"I've occupied a lot of positions in the college – I've been the module leader of a number of programmes, chaired committees and now I'm heading the undergraduate department but I have people come up to me and have conversations even though I am not their manager....I feel privileged that they think of me as someone they can come to and discuss issues with". (Rahul)

They are involved in decision making and influencing others through their knowledge and skills and thought of themselves as 'a bridge' assisting people and teams to develop professionally and also to deliver the objectives and mission of the college. They seemed to have a more inclusive and transformational style of leadership identity. Sam explained:

“I don’t like to think of myself just as a line manager or the head...I want to build strong teams and work with like-minded people... I’m here to develop my colleagues. I want to support them in pursuing research and [professional] certifications.... and we will have these kinds of conversations where we will bounce off ideas or options with each other and how we can approach an issue or something. My aim to make my department the best one in the college...make valuable contributions to the college”.

George’s perception of being a torch bearer of the college: *“it is important to be out and about and maintain one’s profile to promote the reputation of the college”* is echoed by other academics who assigned a high value to providing keynote addresses at academic conferences, participating in international recruitment and collaborating with other commercial and educational institutions as a leader.

Sam’s academic identity is linked to his perception of being a *“change-agent”* – conduit to *“steer the college in the right direction”*. These academics played an active role in advising on academic regulations and quality standards for the educational programmes offered by the college and outside the college.

All three participants believed they had the abilities to provide leadership and guidance to students and colleagues within and external to the college:

“I am heading two programmes here... I do not take this position or the responsibility lightly. I have come to appreciate my team and the way we do things within the department. There is always room for improvement...it’s all a collaborative effort...my colleagues and I are always working and figuring out ways to make the learning experience better for our students and make our college better”. (Sam)

Student satisfaction and rendering pastoral care to the students was a prioritised by these participants. George perceived *“having the eye on the ball and finger on the pulse of the students as important”*.

Although participants were not asked directly about how they felt about being in a leadership role as an expatriate, all three of them expressed feeling privileged to be in a position of leadership in the college. In particular, Raj felt ‘*honored and privileged*’ to be one of the few expatriate academics in a leadership position in the college.

Interestingly, these academics did not undertake much research, but expressed a desire to be more research active. They held significant administrative or managerial roles, which they seemed to enjoy and define their identity as an academic:

“I’ve been working at the college for more than 10 years now and I can say I enjoy the administrative side of things. when I walk into my office, I look forward to it...I spend most of my day in managerial activities that ensures that the diploma programme is running smoothly...this is why I have reduced my teaching and research load”. (George)

One participant in the study, Max, did not reflect any of the above identities and seems to be at odds with the core identities reflected by the other participants. The sentiments expressed by Max are that of disaffection and disappointment:

“To me this is just a job...I tell me myself that this is just to survive...to be honest I am here for the money...it’s sad I know to have this kind of a mindset but I just don’t feel motivated or anchored by anything here”.

This participant is exceptional as while all the other participants in this study express a concern for the students, he seems to have an ‘authoritarian and rigid’ attitude towards students. He seemed to take a critical lens to the conditions of employment and hence generated a narrative of disappointment, disillusionment and thwarted ambitions. However, he seemed to ‘accept’ these conditions and made little effort to effect a change in the circumstances or conditions, despite the discourse of disaffection.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In summary, within this chapter I have responded to the first research question by outlining the perceptions of the expatriate academics of being an academic. The participants appeared to construct one of the four core identities: as a traditional teacher, integrated academic, academic freelancer and academic leader. This is summarized in the following figure:

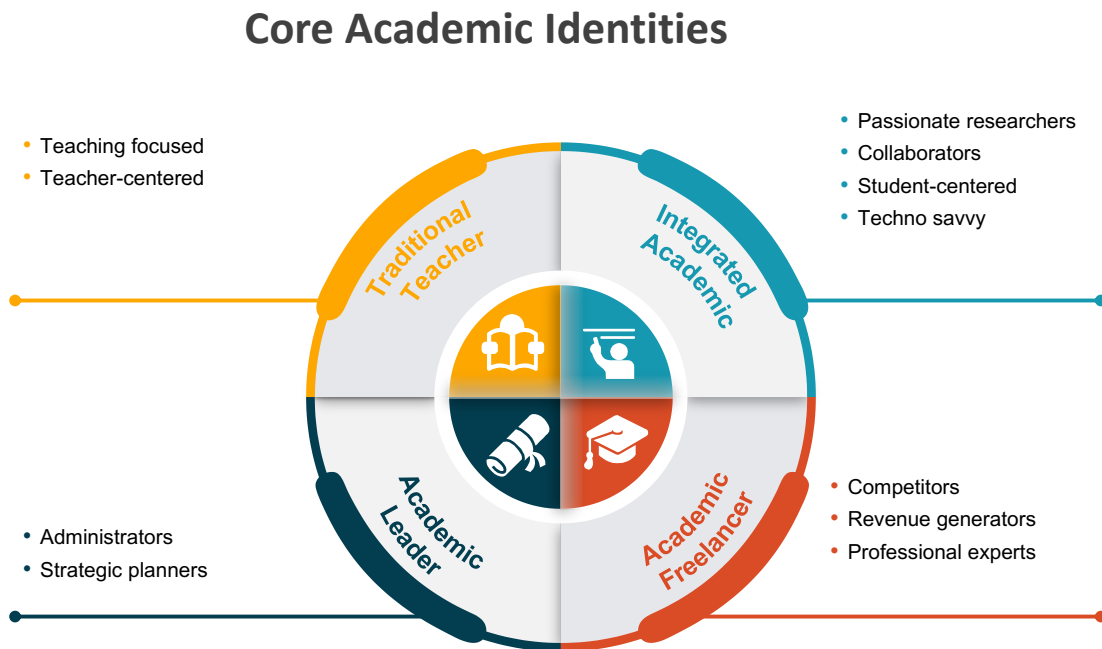


Figure 4: Core Academic Identities

In the next chapter, the identity-trajectory framework will be used to analyse the changes in the meaning of being an academic (core identities) over time as perceived by the expatriate academics.

5 CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS: EXPLORING THE ACADEMIC IDENTITY CHANGES OVER TIME THROUGH IDENTITY TRAJECTORY

In this chapter, the identity trajectory (McAlpine, 2012a; 2012b; McAlpine and Åkerlind, 2010; McAlpine and Amundsen, 2016; McAlpine et al., 2014) will be used as a conceptual tool to structure this chapter and to answer the second research objective: **What are expatriate academics' perceptions of how their understanding of being an academic has changed over time?**

The sections below will bring to view how the four core academic identities that originate from the data have developed and evolved over time as perceived by the expatriate academics. The 'three distinct strands of experiences' capture how the participants evaluated, negotiated challenges, responded and developed their past-present and desired future directions as academics (McAlpine, 2012a; 2012b; McAlpine and Åkerlind, 2010).

I argue that the identity trajectories of the expatriate academics in this research, are seen as confirming and strengthening their core affiliations and is evolving as an extension of their core identities, influenced by their experiences.

5.1 TRADITIONAL TEACHER – COMMITMENT TO TEACHING WITH A FUTURE INCLINATION TOWARDS RESEARCH

The six participants who reflected the core identity of a traditional teacher, showed that their experiences had helped them develop their salient identity affiliation of being a teacher. It can be seen through the intellectual dimension of these participants identifying themselves with the teaching practice:

"I think of myself as a teacher primarily". (Uma)

“Interacting with students and helping them understand concepts brings me great joy...this is my calling”. (Salma)

For this group of academics, the intellectual affiliation with teaching remained most salient, where they felt committed to their students and passed on disciplinary know-how to their students. They perceived teaching as stimulating and rewarding, however changes in the discourse of these academics in relation to their intellectual strand demonstrates changes in the way they were thinking of educational research.

“... although I am very much focused on teaching and it brings me great joy, I would like to engage more with research”. (Fahad)

This change in their intellectual strand could be because they realised that research would be a useful ‘transfer voucher’ that would enable them to secure a suitable future post as an academic in another institution or country.

No changes in the network strand were found and within it, interactions of these academics were predominantly with their students which they found to be supportive, challenging and enabling renewal at work. Interactions with their colleagues or with national and international academics was limited. While exploring future directions, these academics expressed an interest in strengthening their networking with colleagues and other academics with an aim to develop their research identities.

The constraints within the institutional strand are presented in the form of the institution sending contradictory messages and devaluing teaching merit. These academics perceived the range of tasks and responsibilities that come with the teaching role such as heavy teaching loads, administrative tasks, teaching subjects out of one’s discipline, student mentoring, hectic work rhythms, long working hours and the perceived commitment of the institution to be more research active teaching focused career trajectory, as impacting their present and future identities as academics. These

academics perceived the institutional responsibilities as constraining their networking (social life included, I assume) and intellectual work as argued by Shanti:

“...where is the time for research? Teaching gets more and more and where is the time to think of anything! I know that if I don’t do research, I will be stuck like this”.

In terms of the identity trajectory, the alienation that these academics experience as being away from the academic community and the lack of job security that these academics experienced, have led to the realization and conformation of the importance of teaching for their future directions, however, their interest in pursuing academic research as a desired future is also evidenced.

5.2 INTEGRATED ACADEMIC – RECONFIRMING AND STRENGTHENING COMMITMENT TO RESEARCH

The three participants who reflected the core identity of an integrated academic, showed that their experiences had helped them develop their salient identity affiliation of being a researcher. Their academic identity trajectory direction was one of affirmation of their research identities.

Within the intellectual strand, the experiences of these participants had confirmed but not shifted their identity affiliations. They considered research and academic freedom as central to being an academic. Intellectually their salient affiliation lay with their disciplinary research which they found challenging and fulfilling:

“Research is my priority; it challenges and invigorates me more than teaching”.
(John)

Within the intellectual strand, they were involved in collegial sharing, mentoring and collaborating with their colleagues on research and academic work. For instance, John and Dave mentored junior colleagues and initiated them into research. While, there seems to be sense of solidarity and belonging within this group, these participants perceived a lot of competition in establishing one’s name in research and attaining an

elite position. These participants are seen to be experimenting and embracing the use of technology in teaching to make their lessons more engaging for their students and also to combat institutional constraints such as working with large class sizes.

A change in the network strand seems to have occurred in these academics wherein these participants navigated between inter-disciplinary and disciplinary research and genres. While exploring future directions, these participants perceived that continuing to collaborate on interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and international projects would enable them to successfully build their careers and ensure mobility within academia.

Within the institutional strand, these interviewees perceived the institution as being mostly supportive but found that there was an absence of clearly defined policies on research that could be put forward for promotion and also the lack of resources for research. However, they felt that being research active enabled them to climb the ranks within the institution. Despite the perceived lack of institutional support for research, these academics are intrinsically motivated to research in their topic of interest or to inter-disciplinary research to position themselves in the international knowledge production field.

In terms of the identity trajectory, the resilience that these participants have developed, have led to the realization and conformation of research-led trajectories for their future directions with an eye to develop a trajectory that offered them intellectual interests, challenges and allowed them mobility within academia.

5.3 ACADEMIC FREELANCER – RECOMMITTING TO PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Five participants who reflected the core identity of an academic freelancer considered their professional practice to be most salient. Within the intellectual strand their main commitment is to their professional backgrounds, expertise and the development of future generations of practitioners. They are seen as actively seeking to integrate teaching and professional practice. In the present and future trajectories, these academics are seen as self-branding in networks, creating attractive packages of

expertise and establishing oneself in professional networks nationally and internationally:

“Apart from teaching, I am involved in trainings, conducting workshops, consulting work and other societal activities...I am making a lot of money for the college”.
(Marta)

Within the network strand, these participants perceived their ties with colleagues from their previous professional jobs as important. They viewed these networks as safety nets to rely on in the future. They valued interactions with their students and prided themselves on initiating students into the professional and practice world. These academics perceived undercurrents of competition among their colleagues and hence interactions with peers were kept to a minimum. There seems to be a shift in the network of their strand towards their entrepreneurial networks.

I am a networker. . . I'm still in touch with all my colleagues from the field...this has helped me to feel a part of that community... it's like I enjoy the best of both worlds... the fact is that it is beneficial for both my students and me”. (Rose)

There seems to be an alignment between the participants' intellectual interests and the institutional opportunities. Within the institutional strand, these academics perceived the institution as a facilitator for self-branding and networking, Within the institutions these academics were regarded as revenue generators, however, these participants argued that the allocation of institutional resources and demands of their teaching and administrative roles and responsibilities had stalled their career progression.

In terms of the identity trajectory of these participants, the sense of disengagement that they experience in terms of the lack of control over their teaching and administrative roles have led to the reinforcement of the importance of their entrepreneurial and professional practice as their current and future trajectory.

5.4 ACADEMIC LEADER – COMMITMENT TO LEADERSHIP

The three participants who reflected the core identity of academic leaders, showed that their experiences had helped them develop their salient identity affiliation of leadership.

Within the intellectual strand, the experiences of these participants confirmed and reinforced their intellectual interests and their personal affiliation to teaching and leadership.

“The way I look at my work now is one of administrative focus on running the programme well... quality assurance is something that I am getting more into...thinking of how to improve our teaching and validating our programmes”.

(George)

These participants felt that changes had occurred in their network strand. They had begun to represent the college as spokespersons in regards to educational regulations, policies and as strategic leaders. This strengthened their connections within the institution and other institutions nationally and internationally, while weakening their disciplinary networks. This reflects an alignment between the network and the institutional strands. As department heads and programme leaders these participants had roles of authority where there was a convergence of the intellectual, networking and institutional strands. The institution was perceived as supportive and these participants felt privileged to be entrusted with leadership roles within the institution.

In terms of their academic identity trajectory, the resilience that these interviewees have developed, have led to the reinforcement of leadership trajectory and research along with teaching support for their future. Their experiences had supported this trajectory by enabling these participants to act as representatives of the institution and guide their colleagues.

5.5 CONCLUSION

Within this chapter the identity trajectory and its three strands (the intellectual, network and institutional dimensions) were used to discuss expatriate academics' perception of how their understanding of being academic developed and evolved over time. The identity trajectories of the expatriate academics in this research, are seen as confirming and strengthening their core affiliations and is evolving as an extension of their core identities, influenced by their past experiences (motivations to expatriate), their present experiences (of expatriation) and looking to their future aspirations.

The present and future identity trajectories from the accounts of the academics are encapsulated in the table below:

1.Traditional Teacher		
Strands	Present Identity	Future Identity
Intellectual strand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to teaching • Enjoys teaching associated with discipline • Passing on disciplinary know-how to students • Outside of research 	Perceive threat to career continuity, so to progress in academic career, one must advance in research
Network strand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily interaction with students' challenges thinking and renews oneself • Limited collegial interaction • Limited to local setting with no potential to cross institutional or national borders 	
Institutional strand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy workloads • Diverse administrative tasks and committee memberships 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy teaching loads leading to falling behind in research • Sends out contradictory messages- praises the value of teaching in mission statements but ignores teaching merit 	
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2. Integrated Academic

Intellectual strand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to traditional academic values especially academic freedom • Identify themselves as researchers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Striving to achieve scientific reputation within one's academic tribe • Collaborate on interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research • Successful career involves mobility from one institution to the other both nationally and internationally
Network strand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collegial sharing and mutual exchange of work experiences • Mentoring of other academics • Efforts to be part of the global research community 	
Institutional strand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack time for research and need to do it on own time • Lack of recognition of research 	

3. Academic Freelancer

Intellectual strand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurial in line with academic capitalism • Actively seeking integration of teaching and professional practice • Professional expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue focusing on integrating teaching and professional practice • Focus more on entrepreneurial activities
Network strand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-branding in networks • Interdisciplinary, professional and social networks locally, nationally and internationally 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well established and sustained within academia and outside of it 	
Institutional strand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue generators for institution but allocation of institutional resources and demands of their roles and responsibilities had stalled their career progression • Administrative duties pushed to the bottom of to-do list 	
4. Academic Leader		
Intellectual strand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value teaching and leadership identity • Involvement in strategic planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue in academic leadership roles • Focus on research • Continue to collaborate with other HEIs
Network strand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with other institutions in the region working as assessors • Changes in network strand represent their role as spokesperson of the college 	
Institutional strand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institution is seen as supportive • Involved in strategy development • Importance attributed to student experience • Development of teams 	

Table 3: Present and future identity trajectories of expatriate academics

Within the following chapter, I will explore the findings in relation to third research question and discuss the factors that influence the academic identities of the expatriate academics.

6 CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS: CONTRIBUTING FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE IDENTITIES OF EXPATRIATE ACADEMICS

In this chapter, I further explore the data and develop the findings related to the third research objective: **the contributing factors that influence the identities of expatriate academics**. The interviewees identified multiple factors such as the factors that motivated them to expatriate and how their experiences impacted their identity as an academic.

In the first section of this chapter, I will present the main findings from the study with regards to the factors that motivated the academics to expatriate and how it possibly relates to their core academic identities. An interplay between both primary motivation factors and other factors have been identified. I argue that in past studies, the motivations of expatriate academics to relocate and the extent to which they influence their academic identity have not been studied and additionally, the differences in the intentions and motivations of the academics to go abroad and work in other countries may impact their academic identities differently.

In the second section of this chapter, I present the main findings from the data in relation to the expatriation experiences of the participants because of its relevance to the third research objective.

6.1 MOTIVATION – DECISION TO EXPATRIATE

An incumbent's motivation to expatriate and work in Oman is vital to understand how it influences and shapes the core identities of these academics. The primary motivations of the academics are representative of their orientations and inclinations that affected their decision to expatriate. The primary motivations of the expatriate academics to relocate to Oman in conjunction with other motivating factors have been discussed through the academics' quotes and ideas.

6.1.1 Life change

Six participants, Mona, Salma, Uma, Shanti, Fahad and Ahmed who reflected the core identity of traditional teacher stated that the desire for international experience and the change in life that it afforded prompted them to come to Oman. These participants were driven by a desire to seek a better life and escape their home country for personal, political and economic reasons. They sought improvements in their professional and personal lives. This was emphasised in Mona's account which shows that she was motivated to take up the position in Oman to escape her personal circumstances back home:

"I got this job offer when I was coming out of a bad relationship and it was a God sent for me...gave me the chance to start a new life-a new chapter".

The poor labour markets in their home countries were also a decisive factor in their decision to leave their countries and move to Oman. The worsening political and economic conditions in their home countries was also cited as one of the main motivators to expatriate. The below comments are representative of other participants' who held this view:

"After graduating, I just couldn't find a job...I had a student loan to pay off and things didn't seem to improve. Then, one day I saw an advert in the paper about an opening here at xxx and I applied not thinking I have nothing to lose...and the rest as they say is history". (Salma)

"Things haven't been too good in Iraq...there is so much of instability and it really pains me to say this but I just didn't feel that it was safe for my family and me to continue to stay there and Oman seemed like a very good option for a better life for me and my family". (Ahmed)

"Things are pretty bad back home economically and politically. The situation doesn't seem to be improving, so I'm planning to stay put here and don't plan to go back home any time soon". (Fahad)

Hence, it can be seen that Oman was seen as a country with a favourable political and economic climate, allowing for expression without troubles unlike their home countries. This appeared to be the main motivator for these academics to expatriate.

6.1.2 Career opportunities

Eight participants, John, Zinah, Dave, Preeti, Marta, Rose, Abdul and Hashim who can be described as integrated academics and academic freelancers, sought academic expatriation as a career-building move to improve their marketability in academia. These participants were seen to be actively engaged in constructing career competencies and thought that expatriation would help their future career prospects.

“In India sadly the opportunities for research funding is much less and there is fierce competition, but here in Oman, the priority of the MHE (Ministry of Higher Education) is research and this is something that motivated me to come here apart from the flexibility to continue researching what I’m interested in”. (John)

And

“I moved here 15 years ago and at that time the facilities were pretty good and things have only gotten better. My main focus was to carry on my academic work and research and the environment in the college is good for that. I was able to complete my PhD and do research in areas of my interest”. (Zinah)

The above quotations show that these participants had moved to Oman in the ‘pursuit of meaningful work’ and ‘career growth’ which were the two most important drivers for these academics. In addition, they wanted to establish themselves as researchers in their disciplines as they felt a proximity to their research areas.

In addition, these participants also cited the need for a new life experience, however, this factor can be viewed in concurrence with their desire to develop their careers:

“I was looking forward to a change, a new experience. I had been working in South Africa all my life and when this opportunity came, I thought it was perfect – a new

career path, a new country and a new experience...this place has provided me lots of opportunities for me to fulfil some of the goals that I set for myself despite the challenges". (Dave)

6.1.3 Adventure

Three participants George, Rahul and Sam who reflected the identity of academic leader, stated that the desire to travel and experience adventure is what motivated them to take up employment and live in Oman. These participants were driven to expatriate to Oman to gain international experience and an interest in the region. Their desire to experience different cultures prompted them to come to Oman where they saw the opportunity of meeting and working with people from different nationalities. For instance, George explained:

"Oman offers me the opportunity to interact and learn from people of different cultures and nationalities, and to boot I get to travel and explore this beautiful country!"

All these interviewees reported to having been interested in international experience that offers opportunity to travel and experience new things. Both George and Sam have prior overseas experience and they had spent the majority of their lives out of their home countries and professed that their families loved travelling which was a major motivating factor:

"My wife and I both love traveling, so we thought Oman is a good base to travel to. Besides, there is so much to explore here...the wadis and the mountains...lots of opportunities to interact with the locals, wonderful food...what more can you ask for!" (Sam)

In addition to these factors, additional factors such as remuneration, lifestyle and family relationships as motivating factors for expatriation are presented below.

6.1.4 Other factors that motivated expatriation

While I have discussed the prominent factors for expatriation by the participants in the previous section, there are also factors that motivated the participants to expatriate that are seemingly less prominent, but nonetheless important. This section will discuss the other common factors that were identified by the academics as motivating factors that encouraged them to come to work in a higher education institution in Oman.

6.1.4.1 Remuneration

Ten participants in the study, mentioned that the remuneration was a “pull” factor that acted as a driver for their expatriation although it was not the primary reason. However, out of the ten, Max was the only one whose motivation to expatriate was purely financial. The major benefit perceived by the academics was that Oman is a tax-free country, so whatever the academics are paid, they take home. Rose stated that tax-free salary was what enticed her to work for the college:

“My main concern was the kind of money I was going to get paid. I had responsibilities and certain debts back home and the great thing is that I get paid on time here and now I can say that I am almost debt free”.

Almost all the participants felt they were being paid competitive salaries compared to their counterparts in their home countries. Furthermore, these interviewees’ perceptions about additional benefits could have also acted as a driver for them to expatriate:

“The good thing about working in this part of the world is the really good salary and all the additional benefits like healthcare insurance, education allowance for the kids, travel allowance, you even get things like furniture allowance once you reach a certain grade” (Dave).

“I feel it has been good so far. My family and I have had a nice life here (in Oman), I am earning good money and I am able to support my family”. (Rahul)

These quotations give a sense that the participants perceived that the salary paid to them was adequate, attractive, equitable and enabled them to have financial stability. However, the comment below indicates that the attractiveness of the financial perks had diminished in recent years:

“In the recent years there has been serious belt tightening at the college...well not just us but all around. Things are not like what they used be...gone are the good old days where we would have good increments, bonuses. It’s all linked to the oil prices and the world economy generally...but can’t complain”. (Marta)

This quotation indicates that the economic downturn and austerity measures adopted by the college and the country as a whole in the recent years have dented the perspective of the participants regarding academic positions being financially attractive to some extent.

Interestingly, despite the lack of professional growth by titles (professor, associate professor, lecturer), the interviewees decided to stay in the jobs motivated by financial stability and better lifestyle.

6.1.4.2 Lifestyle

All the participants highlighted that the quality of life and lifestyle was one of the reasons that motivated them to take up the academic role in Oman. They were appreciative of the safe and secure environment that Oman offered them and their family.

Preeti who had been offered a job in another country, opted for Oman as she felt *“the environment and facilities in Oman are very good”*. She also added that Oman was a beautiful country and the quality of life was better than her home country. Dave echoes the same sentiments about the quality of life in Oman and added that the proximity of Oman to his home country also acted as a factor to take up the teaching position in Oman:

“Oman is in itself a very beautiful country and the quality of life is much better and it’s a very quiet place compared to the UAE or the other GCC countries. A big plus is that it’s close to home for me”.

6.1.4.3 Family

Eleven participants moved to Oman looking for a better life for themselves and their families. Their spouse/partner or children were the main drivers for their decision of to take up the teaching position in Oman.

“I applied for the job partly because my wife and I wanted a change and she was the one who did most of the research about the country and the college”. (Sam)

Salma and Ahmed had preferred to raise their children in a Muslim country and it was one of reasons that prompted them to take up employment in Oman. Salma recounts:

“I thought my kids would be able to fit in well here, learn the right values”.

Similarly, for instance Dave stated that he was *“really happy to find really good educational institutions”* for his kids which alludes to the importance he attached to the facilities available for his family in his choice of employment.

The main motivations along with other motivating factors of the academics to expatriate and how it possibly relates to their core academic identities are summarized in the following table:

Main motivations to expatriate	Other motivations to expatriate	Core academic identity
Life change	Financial reasons; Family reasons	Traditional Teacher
Career opportunities	Adventure; Family reasons	Integrated Academic

Career opportunities	Financial reasons; Family reasons	Academic Freelancer
Adventure	Improve career opportunities; Financial reasons	Academic Leader

Table 4: Main motivations of expatriate academics in relation to their core identities

6.2 EXPERIENCES AS FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC IDENTITY

Next, the main findings from the data in relation to the expatriation experiences of the participants are presented.

6.2.1 Alienation

Six participants experienced a sense of alienation. Alienation here means feeling distanced from the academic community as they felt isolated from and unable to be engaged in research activities. They perceived a mismatch between teaching and research merit and felt this threatened their career continuity not just in the institution but in their academic career. These participants felt insecure and alluded to a less than optimal organizational climate at the college and its negative impact on research practices in particular. This sentiment is illustrated below:

“I feel I am somehow lagging behind in the research department. Teaching is my main priority and it takes up most of my time and research is like an afterthought”.
(Mona)

Ahmed added that *“better resources would definitely help in undertaking research...”*.

These quotations indicate that although these participants are inclined to undertake research and scholarly activities, they felt that the policies of the college and the emphasis on teaching were not conducive. Uma’s fear about the future is noted below:

“I am not sure what to do or where to go if I lose this job. I don’t think I will get another teaching job easily as I haven’t published anything”.

Other participants echoed the same sentiment as they felt they were lacking in research and publication which was considered as valuable currency in academia.

The country’s mandate of nationalization of teaching in higher education also added to the sense of insecurity among these participants:

“I do worry about the future sometimes...it is the elephant in the room...nobody wants to talk about Omanisation openly but it is a fact and something that you need to come to terms with. I am not sure what the future holds for me and what I will do once I leave here...I have to come up with plan B. Going back home isn’t going to be easy and finding another job like this is going to be difficult especially since I am basically only a teacher. In today’s world you need to be research savvy...as they say publish or perish...we are pretty lucky here in xxx as there is not much pressure on us to do research but I know outside things are very different”. (Shanti)

However, these participants all professed that this feeling of insecurity did not seem to affect their commitment to the organization or the enjoyment that they derived from their teaching.

6.2.2 Resilience

Six participants expressed a sense of resilience into the new environment and workplace while describing their expatriation experience. These academics were able to adapt to and manage the constraints or challenges entailed in the jobs and re-established and continued their professional careers.

All the participants in this group were comparatively well adjusted in terms of the expectations with regards to their work and their colleagues. Three participants Zinah, John and Dave acknowledged constraints such as limited time and resources to undertake research, however, Zinah recalled how she has been constantly working to

overcome these constraints and engage in research to keep herself “*academically relevant*”. For Dave, research was perceived as consistently “*important*” throughout his career and that it was something that he prided himself on and took seriously.

These interviewees discussed the challenges that they faced at both the personal and professional level, however, John felt that “*self-reliance*” and “*belief in one’s ability as an academic*” had helped him overcome the challenges that he had faced in the initial years of his career in Oman. Dave explained:

“You need to constantly keep pushing yourself, re-inventing yourself in order to survive here...when things get a bit much, I just turn to things that motivate me like work on a paper or enroll myself in a conference”.

These quotations highlight the importance that these participants placed on research and although the general perception was that the “*college was not supportive*” by providing resources for research or “*not valuing research*” as much as they would like, they engaged in research to maintain reputation in their academic circles and stay mobile both nationally and internationally.

Interestingly, the other three academics, George, Rahul and Sam perceived themselves as an integral part of the organisation and focused more on converging their teaching and leadership skills than on research in order to make a difference to the student experience and the college. George found interactions with his students “*rewarding*” and thought of himself as a “*spokesperson*” of the college. His perception about the organisation being supportive seems to spur him on to develop his students and develop the college as “*one of the best in the country*”.

This highlights how these participants have adopted a positive outlook on the responsibilities placed on them by the college and are inclined towards contributing strategically to the institution in their leadership roles.

In addition, all the six participants appeared to be unfazed by the Omanisation (nationalization) drive across higher education. These academics believed that they had the professional currency to be employable if they were relieved of their current position.

“Omanisation is something that I have been hearing about for the past 15 odd years and I am not worried about it...there is no point in dwelling on this...I am happy I got to work and live here for so long. I want to work at a university where research is a focus...I have a good network... so I am confident I can get another position easily”. (John)

And

“I know many people who just keep talking about Omanisation but if you keep focusing on that how are you going to get any work done or let alone live your life. We all know we are guests here and that we all have to leave one day, so there is no point in fretting about it... we make the best use of what we have and focus on improving our teaching, our students and be good academics”. (Dave)

The above comments about not focusing on Omanisation and building on one’s skills as an academic to help oneself stay mobile in academia is resonated by the other academics in this group.

The participants in this group also expressed how the whole experience of working in Oman transformed their outlook to their jobs and life in general in a positive light despite concerns with the intellectual environment at the college. They felt that this experience had helped them to learn more about themselves and the world around them. They argued that they had become more patient, self-reliant and culturally tolerant.

6.2.3 Disengagement

Five participants described their experiences of expatriation with a sense of disengagement. Disengagement here refers to a coping mechanism adopted by these participants to deal with stress and conflicts both professional and environmental to avoid disappointments. Preeti, Rose, Marta, Abdul and Hashim perceived a certain level of

underlying competition among their colleagues and hence, adopted an attitude of indifference and keeping interactions to the minimum. This is summarized by Rose who stated:

“There is this feeling of apathy from the other teachers...initially when I used to approach certain teachers, they used to say they would help me but then I realized that it was just words and that I needed to fend for myself and figure it out myself...now I just keep to myself and I know how to manage things at work”.

These interviewees seemed to focus their energies on negotiating various factors such as the lack of power or control over their teaching and administrative roles and eventually embraced an attitude of focusing on their entrepreneurial and professional practice to mitigate this. Marta referred to herself as “elastic” to describe the changes that she perceived in herself as an academic after taking up employment at the college. She added that this attitude helped her to survive and maneuver some of the conflicting situations that she found herself in at work. For instance, Marta explained:

“One day the HoD asked me to take this class that I just wasn’t prepared for...I mean I have no clue about research projects and I was asked to prepare and deliver it. I was very stressed but then I told myself that preparing for it would help me get material for a nice workshop on it....and now I deliver this workshop on basics of research projects at different institutions here”.

And

“I realised soon after coming here that I need to continue my ties with my friends outside of the college, in the real practice world otherwise I am just going to stagnate here. I conduct at least two trainings or workshops in a month and that keeps that door to the corporate world open for me...I personally think of it as my plan B if ever I need to leave the college”. (Hashim)

So, these participants believed that by focusing on their priorities such as professional and commercial activities, they trained themselves to be immune to insecurities about

losing their jobs. They seemed to actively participate in professional circles which helped their students gain practical industry experience and also keep their job options in the corporate sector alive. They perceived that their industry reputation and professional experience made up for their lack of research expertise and that they would go back to corporate jobs or trainings if they were to lose their jobs due to Omanisation.

In this section the experiences of the participants have been presented and these experiences expatriation have been related to the core academic identities of the participants. This is summarised in the table below:

Experiences of expatriation	Core academic identity
Alienation	Traditional Teacher
Resilience	Integrated Academic
Disengagement	Academic Freelancer
Resilience	Academic Leader

Table 5: Experiences of expatriation in relation to the core identities of expatriate academics

6.3 CONCLUSION

Within this chapter the contributing factors that influenced the academic identities of the expatriate academics were discussed. The motivations of expatriate academics to relocate to another country for work and the extent to which this may impact their academic identity have not been studied in the past.

The findings indicate that the academics were agentic contributing to teaching, learning and research despite having certain negative experiences of expatriation. Hence, it is argued that this study addresses the gap in the literature by adding to the review of academics who have expatriated and considering the context of how their motivations to expatriate and their experiences may have shaped their core academic identities.

From the data, a combination of the motivations (both primary and others) to expatriate and the ensuing experiences of the academics were evidenced to influence the core identities of the academics. This is summarized in the table below:

Primary motivations to expatriate	Other motivations to expatriate	Experiences of expatriation	Core academic identity
Life change	Financial reasons; Family reasons	Alienation	Traditional Teacher
Career opportunities	Adventure; Family reasons	Resilience	Integrated Academic
Career opportunities	Financial reasons	Disengagement	Academic Freelancer
Adventure	Improve career opportunities; Financial reasons	Resilience	Academic Leader

Table 6: Impact of motivation to expatriate and experiences as influencing core identities of expatriate academics

Core academic identity	Dimensions	Trajectory direction	Factors influencing core academic identity	
			Motivations to expatriate	Experiences of expatriation
Teaching	Intellectual Network	Commitment to teaching and future direction towards research	Life change	Alienation
Research	Intellectual	Reconfirming and	Career opportunities	Resilience

	Network	strengthening commitment to research		
Professional practice	Network Institutional	Recommitting to professional practice	Career opportunities	Disengagement
Leadership	Intellectual Network Institutional	Commitment to leadership	Adventure	Resilience

Table 7: Core academic identity, the trajectories and the factors influencing academic identity observed in this study

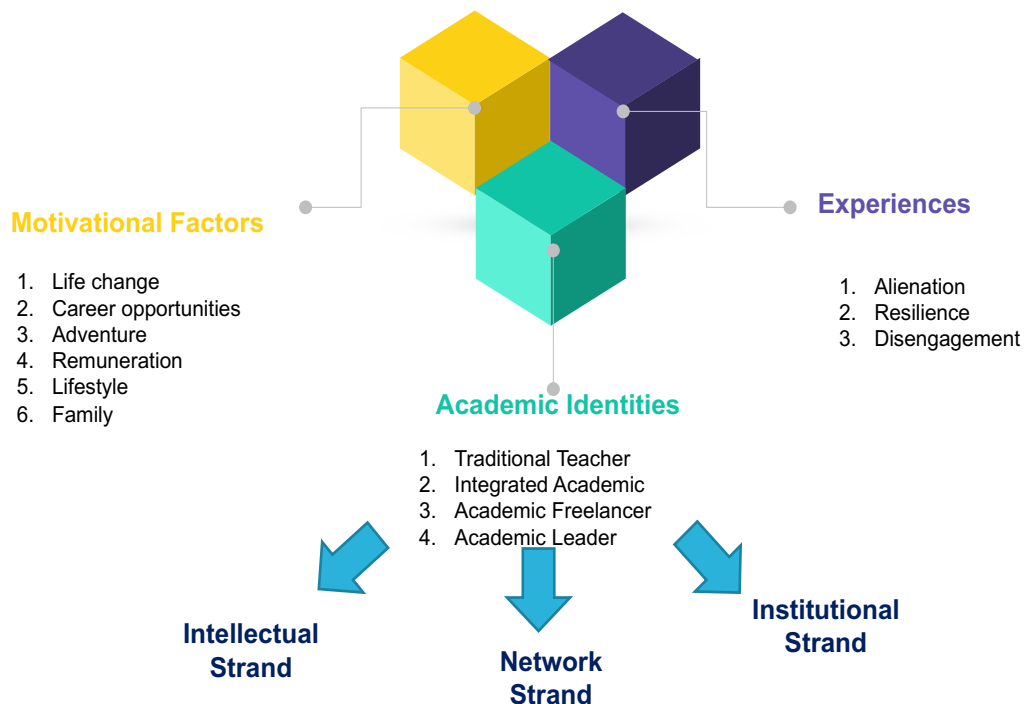


Figure 5: Academic identities and the influencing factors- motivations to expatriate and experiences

In the next chapter, the study discusses the findings in a thematic manner relating it with the relevant literature.

7 CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to explore how the expatriate academics perceive the meaning of being an academic, how their understanding of being an academic has changed over time and how the identities of these academics are influenced by factors such as the motivations for expatriation and their experiences. In this chapter, I first discuss the main outcomes from the findings chapter and relate it to the existing literature. First, I discuss the core identities of the expatriate academics focusing on the variations in the core identities adopted by the participants and the identity trajectory framework will be used to understand the perceptions of the expatriate academics on how their understanding of being an academic has changed as it acknowledges the interplay and the tensions in relation to factors influencing the identity development and the prominent aspects of the academic context. Finally, I discuss the different motivations of the academics to expatriate followed by their experiences of expatriation. I focus on the ways in which the factors motivating the academics to expatriate and their ensuing experiences along with the variations in them could influence the development of the core identities of the academics.

7.2 THE MEANING OF BEING AN EXPATRIATE ACADEMIC

In this section the main outcomes with regards to the perceptions of the expatriate academics about the meaning of being an academic in conjunction with the identity trajectory development will be discussed in relation to the existing literature.

In this study, the expatriate academics constructed four core meanings of being an academic which is the way in which these academics approached and inhabited their

roles, regarded their responsibilities and expectations and acquired value from them. The academics in this study reflected the core identities of a traditional teacher, integrated academic, academic freelancer and an academic leader. The core identities could be looked at as academic practice that 'brings into play the underlying, sometimes implicit, purpose(s) that motivate us to be academics and through which it is possible to integrate an array of multifaceted duties, responsibilities, skills and knowledge into a coherent sense of academic identity' (McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010, p. 3).

There was one participant in this study who did not reflect any of the four core identities and expressed sentiments of disappointment, disaffection, disillusionment and thwarted ambitions which was at odds with the core identities reflected by the other participants. This participant seems to be experiencing identity strain and struggle. The possible explanation could be that it is an identity development issue that may be worked out later over the course of his career as the participant is an early career academic and still struggling to come to terms with the pressures of work as an expatriate working in the HEI. Additionally, the weak agency apparent in the narrative of the participant indicated tensions arising out of the precariousness and insecurity experienced by him and is indicative of his reluctance in attempting to modify the content of work to suit oneself. However, the narrative of this academic is poignant as it shows how the changing HE landscape and the neoliberal management culture has impacted the identity construction of this participant. If this participant is unable to adopt and develop a coping strategy, then this academic might be in danger of taking steps such as leaving the country, HEI or academia altogether. This is of significance to policy makers and the management of HEIs who should take remedial actions such as creating bottom-up development programs that help the academics to address and develop their identities as well as create more opportunities for the academics to work with each other as early career academics are usually in the "make or break" stage of their careers and are going through a period of identity construction that is particularly vulnerable and intense and are not in a position to craft the rules that shape their work conditions (Laudel & Gläser, 2008; Smith, 2010).

The identity trajectory framework will be used to discuss the development of the core identities of the expatriate academics as perceived by them over time and the projections

of their future identity trajectories using the three intertwined strands: intellectual, networking, and institutional. I argue that the identity trajectory framework is apt to understand the development of the identity the expatriate academics as it acknowledges the interplay between the individual (the intellectual strand and the agency of the individual) and the social (the networking strand) and the structural (the institutional strand) in developing the core identities of the academics. The strands help acknowledge the tensions in relation to the motivations, experiences of the academics and the prominent aspects of the academic context.

The theoretical framework of the identity trajectory is useful to capture the identities broadly, and in the past has been used in studies on PhD students and early career academics (McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2016; McAlpine et al., 2014). In this study, the notion has been applied to explore the academic identities of early-career, mid-career and late career academics. The three strands (intellectual, network and institutional) in particular, provided useful domains to show how the core identities of the academics was built on and evolved over time. Every academic can be seen as creating a special balance of being active or passive, coping with or giving up, compliant or opposing what is presented to them (Arasa & Calvert, 2013; Henkel, 2005). The goals that these academics are committed to, guide them and orient their decisions and responses to the environmental demands (Leisyte, 2007), and their positions and viewpoints make them the academic that they are (Carra et al., 2017).

The academics in this study expressed their identities in other ways than just being a teacher or a researcher. Previous studies have shown that academics mostly identified with teaching and or research roles which is at the heart of academic practice in HE (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Billot, 2010; Blaxter et al., 1998; Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Churchman & King, 2009; Clarke et al., 2013; Delanty, 2007; Dugas et al., 2020; Fitzmaurice, 2013; Henkel, 2000; Murphy, 2011; Nixon, 2001; Skelton, 2012b; Taylor, 1999). The findings from this study show a variation in the identities adopted by the expatriate academics, specifically, as an academic freelancer or practitioner and an academic leader.

7.2.1 Core identity of Traditional Teacher

The academics in this study who reflected the identity of a traditional teacher, expressed a notion of themselves as a 'teacher' in the context of higher education (Light et al., 2009; Pratt, 1992) and they attributed the interactions with students and the positive teaching experiences as providing them validation and confidence in their roles and helped establish the identity of being a teacher (see also Laiho et al., 2020; McCune, 2019; Van Lankveld et al., 2017). This observation is similar to that of Brew and Boud (2009) who felt that teaching, supporting and developing students was more emotionally rewarding and satisfying. However, the experiences of academics who identify more strongly with teaching in HE are not well supported nor comfortable (Loads & Collins, 2016).

Interestingly, although these participants were mostly early career academics, they were more inclined to teaching and less towards research compared to the late-career academics who reflected the salient affiliation to research which is contradictory to the literature. This is at variance with studies that reported that early career academics were reluctant to be associated with a teaching identity Probert (2013); Skelton (2012a, 2012b, 2012c) and the study by Fitzmaurice (2013), and the general academic community, as reported by Oxford (2008), amongst others. This could be because for most of these academics, teaching was not just a job and they found being engaged in teaching and learning as both challenging, rewarding and have deep intrinsic value which can be considered consistent with studies such as Leibowitz et al. (2012); McCune (2019); Stupnisky et al. (2016) where teaching was reported to produce more adaptive emotions such as pride, enjoyment and fulfilment.

Most of these early career academics experienced their workload as demanding and at times burdensome and stressful (Austin, 2010; Laiho et al., 2020; Rice et al., 2000). In the literature (for example, Austin, 2010), similar concerns were raised by participants who perceived an imbalance in terms of resource allocation for teaching and the opportunity to stay connected to research. Furthermore, these academics expressed the

need to be adequately assisted to conduct research through training workshops conducted by their experienced research-oriented counterparts with the aid of transparent, process-oriented publications and evaluation procedures in place in the institution (Gao et al., 2011; Xu et al., 2018). It has been highlighted that academics working in collegial departments with support from colleagues were likely to succeed in research careers (Smith, 2010). Studies have shown that lecturers have felt that universities are sending mixed messages; although they claim that teaching and research are equally important. Academics experience that teaching is less valued than research, especially when it comes to promotions and tenure, publications and research performance were stressed (Clarke et al., 2012). This rings true with the academics in this study as the traditional teachers especially can be seen as expressing a certain degree of insecurity and self-doubt in line with Knights and Clarke (2014, p. 337). The academics felt that although their teaching was acknowledged, the merits of research were emphasised over teaching (also see Laiho et al., 2020; Ylijoki & Henriksson, 2017).

7.2.2 Identity Trajectory of Traditional Teachers - Commitment to teaching with a future inclination towards research

The traditional teachers showed that their ***intellectual affiliation*** lay with teaching and transferring knowledge to their students. Their previous commitment to teaching and learning has been reinforced as a result of their motivations to expatriate which was for a life change as they were dissatisfied with the employment conditions in their home countries including lack of teaching jobs in their disciplines, large teaching loads, conflict ridden environments. Some academics were frustrated with the general conditions in their own country which included poor economy, poor medical facilities, discrimination on the basis of religion and culture and unsuitable conditions for raising children. This compounded with the experiences of alienation that they experienced, may have led to the confirmation of their intellectual affiliation with teaching (Young, 2006) within their disciplines as this provided them with a sense of belonging (Austin, 2010; Henkel, 2000; Wisker et al., 2010).

However, changes in the *intellectual affiliation* of the traditional teachers can be observed while exploring future directions with the desire to undertake and be involved in research which shows that these academics have had to make pragmatic decisions to overcome the tensions between the intellectual and the *institutional dimensions* (McAlpine et al., 2010). This needs to be understood within the constraints of the institutional strand, where the institution is perceived as devaluing teaching merit. Teaching here albeit important, emerges as a neglected site of academic work and identity formation (Golde & Dore, 2001; Greer et al., 2016; Jepsen et al., 2012). This future direction towards research, could also be interpreted as stemming from the insecurity that the academics perceive in terms of lack of job security and alienation from scholarly activity as a means of gaining academic currency pursue jobs outside of their current institution and Oman. This perception is in accord with findings in studies in the international context where it is believed that success in research is the key to career advancement (Acker & Webber, 2017; Bosanquet et al., 2017; Castelló et al., 2017; Hollywood et al., 2020; Sutherland, 2017), and is representative of the much current discourse about conceptions of academic success across higher education (e.g. Cadez et al., 2017) and questions about whether teaching was rewarded equally to research (Cashmore et al., 2013; Locke, 2014).

The *network strand* of these academics showed no changes as their interactions were predominantly with their students which they found rewarding and challenging as teachers. However, the future directions of these academics indicated an interest expressed by the academics to strengthen their networking with colleagues for research which aligned with their intellectual affiliation to research looking to the future.

7.2.3 Core identity of Integrated Academic

The academics who adopted the core identity of the integrated academics were more research focussed and adopted student-centred approaches to teaching which reflects the findings of previous studies (Fox, 1983; Light et al., 2009; Trigwell & Prosser, 1996). Intellectually, their salient affiliation was placed with disciplinary research (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Henkel, 2010; McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010). In line with the existing

literature (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Henkel, 1997, 2000, 2005; Kreber, 2010), these academics exhibited a link between the academic identity and discipline. However, discipline was not a central feature that contributed to their meaning of being an academic, rather it was one of the factors that influenced their meaning of being an academic (for example, Brew, 2001, 2008; Manathunga & Brew, 2012; Spurling, 2012; Trowler et al., 2012).

Becher and Trowler (2001) found that the emphasis towards teaching increased in the later stages of the academic career which is not in line with the findings in this study as the late-career academics identified more with a researcher identity than that of a teacher. A possible explanation for this could be that these are particular to the case study institution which is becoming more research focused whereas it was more teaching focused previously. Another explanation could be that late career academics in this study were more inclined to research from the beginning of their careers and chose the profession because of their interest in research.

Interestingly, the academics in this study were either more focused on teaching or research and did not identify with both teaching and research equally as has been reported in previous studies (Feather, 2010; Henkel, 2000, 2004; Whitchurch, 2008). However, the academics who identified with the research identity, perceived the identities of research and teaching as interconnected and used research to feed and accentuate their teaching, however, they did not perceive the two as essential to provide a coherent sense of academic identity which is a variation from previous studies (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Clarke et al., 2013; Hall, 2002; Henkel, 2000; McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010).

Prior research has shown the existence of pressure for additional time and space for research (Gornall & Salisbury, 2012; Leisyte, 2016; Vostal, 2016) which has been echoed by the academics in this study. As a result, academics were found to create time and space for achieving their research interests or they chose to stay on the margins and not climb the career ladder (Ylijoki, 2013). However, I found that these academics tended to strive and make their own time for research for career advancement as they perceived it to impact their career trajectory and intended to grow in the institution.

The academics however, raised concerns about the lack of a well-established, clear and transparent research evaluation criteria at the institution. They questioned the congruity between the institution's research agenda and the contribution to higher education and the society at large. The lack of a properly developed research culture in the institution was highlighted by the academics. They perceived it was important to have a shared discourse between the institutional management and the academic staff on what can be regarded as 'research' and 'quality research' (Borg, 2013). Institutional recognition for research was deemed important with clear relationship between research and professional growth. This in accord with studies that have shown that the internal motivation to conduct research is likely to be increased when research is appraised as a strategy that helps generate evidence for teaching practice and professional growth (Cabaroglu, 2014; Gao et al., 2011; Wyatt & Dikilitaş, 2016). However, the academics despite perceiving this lack of clarity in the research policy and culture in the institution, believed that their research practices were not influenced by it.

From the accounts of the integrated academics, they were found to involve students actively in research which has been argued to be more beneficial in relation to student engagement and outcomes compared to passive, teacher-centred teaching (Brew, 2012; Jenkins & Healey, 2005) which was espoused by the academics who reflected a teacher identity. This practice of involving students as partners in research has been shown to increase student aptitude for research, engagement and learning in studies by (Brew & Mantai, 2017; Healey et al., 2015).

7.2.4 Identity trajectory of Integrated Academics - Reconfirming and strengthening commitment to research

The salient affiliation of these academics lay with their disciplinary research, and that it provided them with personal satisfaction and sustained their career trajectories over time, which accords with literature on academic identities (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Henkel, 2010; McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010). Additionally, within their ***network strand***, they confirmed that disciplinary communities played a role in sustaining their research identities (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Henkel, 2000; McAlpine et al., 2010). These

academics were motivated to expatriate for career and professional growth similar to the “overseas experience seekers” (Inkson et al., 1997) who are internationalists who adapt and thrive in foreign environments. As for their experiences, they had developed a resilience to the situations presented in the academic context as they were aware of the positives and the negatives of an international teaching job. These academics can be seen as constantly reaffirming their enthusiasm for research which manifested positively in a sense of professional satisfaction and achieve research engagement and gain ‘recognition’ (Edwards & Burns, 2016) and their professional goals (Lazarus, 1991).

Within the *institutional strand*, there were no changes for these academics. The academics felt that research was valued over teaching by the institution and hence important for future career progression although the lack of a conducive research culture and transparent research policy was highlighted by these academics.

However, changes can be observed in the intellectual and network strands of these academics when looking at their future directions. The *intellectual affiliation* of these academics in relation to research, however, can be seen as crossing over to “borders of different disciplines” (Deem, 2016), leading to new identity trajectories, whereby academics are open to moving away from the boundaries of disciplinary research and open to inter-disciplinary and transdisciplinary research. This could be understood as academics’ considering research activity as academic and social currency for professional growth and mobility within academia. The findings from the current study therefore contribute to the existing literature on academic identity and disciplinary background.

7.2.5 Core identity of Academic Freelancer

The academics who identified strongly with the practitioner identity had arrived into higher education from diverse backgrounds, including industry practitioners and those with formal academic credentials. They thought of themselves as ‘professional gatekeepers’ something that is noted in professional or vocational higher education (Hegender, 2010; Vacha-Haase et al., 2004). Their professional expertise validated their sense of

authenticity and confidence (Stronach et al., 2002). Congruent with the findings of Dickinson et al. (2020), the accounts of these academics show that the practical engagement with industry both past and present lend legitimacy and status to these academics especially in relation to their students. The academics also considered their ability to impart strong professional values along with practical problem based learning as their strengths coming from a practice background (Wilson, 2015).

The narrative of this group of academics is one which challenges the focus of academia on research and educational credentials and instead focuses and draws on the knowledge application in practical contexts. These academics can be seen to emphasise vocational expertise and teaching practice over research and hence developing an academic research identity as unlikely (Orr & Simmons, 2010; Sinclair & Webb, 2020; Springbett, 2018). However, these individuals seem to suffer from anxieties and pressures of competing demands to be both academically oriented and practically oriented in their practice domains.

Some of the academics alluded to competition in the institution and higher education generally, which echoes the perspectives of Archer (2008b) on the existence of competitive, individualistic practices in academia. The educational paradigms have shifted from cooperative to competitive according to Schmidt and Langberg (2007) even though this might be in reference to competition between institutions or even countries rather than individuals, the presence of the competitive environment was very much evident in the accounts of these academics.

The 'blended professional' concept coined by Whitchurch (2009b), could be of relevance in understanding the identities of these academics as these academics are able to capitalize on a sense of 'belonging' and 'not belonging' entirely to academic or professional domains, often working in conditions that she calls ambiguous conditions (p. 408). These academics are seen to be experiencing similar instability with regards to belonging or not belonging and negotiating credibility and space within academic and industry/professional contexts and hence has contributed to the construction of their professional practitioner identity.

These academics also could be seen as working in 'third space' which is a concept applied by Whitchurch (2012b) in higher education, wherein they are involved in academic and non-academic activities and roles. The findings of my study highlight the identity trajectory of these academics as moving into the 'third space' as they navigate and negotiate individual and institutional constraints. This study sheds more light on the ways in which academics are being agentic by working out how to shape their own jobs and identities in ways that satisfy their own needs and goals and at the same time that of the institution. These academics can be seen as negotiating and adapting to less certain environments which has not been paid attention to in previous studies on academic identities and particularly in the context of expatriate academics in higher education.

7.2.6 Identity Trajectory of Academic Freelancers - Recommitting to professional practice

Within the intellectual strand, the commitment of the academic freelancers lay with their professional/vocational backgrounds. The motivation for expatriating to Oman for these academics was for better career opportunities which was similar to the integrated academics as discussed in the previous section. However, their experiences painted a picture of disengagement characterised by servicing of their own needs and ambitions. As a result, in the intellectual strand, these academics have not experienced any shift in their professional practice and entrepreneurial affiliations where they are engaged in a wide range of activities such as networking or consultancy which according to Landry et al. (2006) identify as important for not just the academic in terms of reaping academic and commercial rewards but also for the institution. Their commitment also lay in integrating their practice expertise with their teaching to develop future practitioners. If anything, their motivations and experiences seem to have reinforced their affiliations in the intellectual, network and institutional strands to develop a proactive and entrepreneurial spirit as these academics may be seen as responding to the needs of institutions in higher education to be more involved in business engagement activities and hence, become more entrepreneurial (Guerrero et al., 2015). These academics seem to be motivated to engage in entrepreneurial activities for peer recognition and esteem which echoes literature (Cunningham et al., 2016; D'este & Perkmann, 2011). However,

income is a motivating factor only when it is for their home institution rather than for themselves which again is in accord with the findings of Alexander et al. (2018).

These academics have strong networking with their practice world and the industry (Dickinson et al., 2020) as they perceived this to be important for their future trajectory in academia and outside of it.

The future trajectory of these academics indicates a conformation to their entrepreneurial and teaching identities which could be understood as a means of coping to the disengagement that these academics experience in their roles. This seems to be strengthened by the opportunities created in the institutional strand as higher education institutions are becoming more business oriented and entrepreneurial in response to the needs of the industry (Bercovitz & Feldman, 2006; Fitzgerald & Cunningham, 2016; Miller et al., 2016). This confirmation to the entrepreneurial and teaching identities shows the agency of the academics which otherwise would have led to their career trajectories outside the academic profession (McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2016).

7.2.7 Core identity of Academic Leader

The academics who adopted the identity of academic leaders occupy managerial roles within the institution ranging from course leaders to department heads. These academics have aligned themselves to the corporate enterprise and exhibit an affiliation for their managerial identities (Cassidy, 1998; Lafferty & Fleming, 2000; Winter, 2009). However, the style of management of these leaders were not divisive and attempted to protect the staff from the negatives of managerialism and focused on building strong team work and collegiality. As these academics have transitioned into leadership roles, this could be seen as a form of servant leadership which is anchored in service motivation (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012), where the leaders provide direction, develop and empower people, interpersonal acceptance and stewardship (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

The findings from my study suggests that there is a variation in leadership identity of the academics from what has been established in previous studies Winter (2009), where

schisms in academic identities pertaining to leadership roles were identified. Most of the academic leadership positions in higher education have been Omanised (nationalisation), however, these academics have been offered positions of leadership and although they exhibit organizational commitment and allegiance to the institution, they show an integrated leadership identity which is understanding of the staff and also help the organisation achieve its goals. These academic leaders were seen to undertake boundary spanning roles, across disciplines, institutions and impacting policy and practice as well raising the profile of the HEI.

Furthermore, although the current study did not focus on gender inequality, the findings show that none of the female academics occupied leadership positions in the HEI whereas their male counterparts occupied senior leadership positions. This shows the significant under representation of women academics in leadership positions and corroborates the male domination of universities in terms of academic culture and management as has been discussed by Chavez (2011); Cook (2010); Krajcovic (2011) and Leathwood and Read (2008). This reflects findings from literature that the university is a gendered space, indicating a decline in gender parity that privileges men over women at higher career levels (Clegg, 2008; Marchant & Wallace, 2013; Thornton, 2013).

As is evidenced, the academics with an affiliation to the leadership identity hold substantial administrative and leadership roles and, in the process, have accrued substantial academic and social capital. This accumulated capital has enabled these academics to advance their positions within the case study institution and occupy positions of leadership outside of it.

7.2.8 Identity Trajectory of Academic Leaders - Commitment to leadership

The academic leaders valued their engagement in leadership where they seemed to have a clear objective to bring people together and influence them to achieve institutional goals. This is consistent with literature which underscores the importance of collaboration and integrity for effective leadership (Avolio et al., 2004; Boyatzis et al., 2012; Cuddy et al., 2013).

The motivations of these academics to expatriate were to experience adventure and explore different cultures which indicates an openness to new experiences in their intellectual strand. They have shown resilience and adaptability which in turn has reaffirmed and reinforced their intellectual affiliation to leadership. For these academics being the 'go to person' who provided and connected their colleagues and students with opportunities for teaching and learning was an indicator of leading (Raven, 1990).

Changes have occurred in their network strand as locally their connections within the institution had become strengthened however their connections with their disciplinary networks have weakened which is accord with the literature (Åkerlind, 2010; Hall, 2002; Henkel, 2000; Van Der Sluis, 2019).

The institutional strand where the institution is seen as providing the academics with leadership roles, seemed to be aligned to these academics' intellectual strand where their motivation for career growth and network strands with their affiliation for guiding colleagues and representing the institution have been amalgamated and this in turn has reaffirmed their leadership identity for the future.

7.3 AGENCY AND HORIZONS FOR ACTION OF THE EXPATRIATE ACADEMICS

The academics in this study can be seen as exercising varying degrees of agency, which is the ability of the academics to set goals and move towards it with their own volition despite personal or institutional constraints. Consequently, it can be seen that the enactment of agency by the academics in this study are grounded in both individual backgrounds and the social conditions.

The academic's horizons for action are closely linked to their agency as well as their intellectual, network and institutional strands and is defined by the viable career options available to these academics considering their personal circumstances and the freedom in acting towards these opportunities (McAlpine et al., 2014).

The findings provide evidence that identity and agency are interrelated in the context of the university (McAlpine et al., 2014; Toom et al., 2015; Ursin et al., 2020; Vähäsantanen,

2015). The integrated academics, academic leaders and academic freelancers demonstrated the most agency and extensive horizons for action compared to the traditional teachers. The integrated academics enacted their agency by reaffirming their commitment to research, while the academic leaders can be seen as confirming their leadership identity and the academic freelancers can be seen as reaffirming their entrepreneurial identity through changes in their intellectual, network and institutional strands. Here agency can be seen as the academics using their conscious volition and academic relationships to influence a change in their work practices to align with their desired or core identity. This finding is in line with the idea of agency as proposed by Hopwood (2010) as using relationships to influence practice to meet certain goals and needs.

The traditional teachers were less agentive compared to the other academics. These academics enacted their agency and horizons of action by prioritising teaching over research even though they showed an interest in research and acknowledged that research activity was an important criterion for promotion and growth in the institution. Their horizons of action were largely linked to their intellectual and network strands as they showed intent to be more involved in research and also collaborating with colleagues. However, the weaker agency apparent in the traditional teachers indicates a reluctance or hesitation on their part to make changes to the content of their work within the hierarchical relations and the institutional structure, even though they expressed a desire to undertake more research.

Previous studies in academic identity focus on the contextuality of identity development (Busher, 2005; Gardner & Willey, 2018; McAlpine & Emmioğlu, 2015) and have highlighted that academic identity is developed and constantly being shaped by the political, social and cultural influences around the academics (Fortune et al., 2016; Jawitz, 2009; Mockler, 2011; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015). The present study uses a similar theoretical lens, but I argue that this study provided an original contribution to knowledge by exploring the influence of motivations and experiences of expatriation on the academic identity construction of the academics using the identity trajectory framework to capture

a range of identity trajectories that emerge through the negotiation of the academic work and the agency of the academic.

7.4 MOTIVATION TO EXPATRIATE AS AN INFLUENCING FACTOR ON ACADEMIC IDENTITY

In this section the motivations of the academics to expatriate are discussed in relation to the existing literature. In terms of motivation to relocate, the differences in the motivations and intentions of academics to go abroad for work may affect their academic identities differently. Research on motivations of expatriate academics and the extent to which this impacts their academic identity has not been studied in past studies as they have focused on motivation of academics to expatriate and work outcomes (Al Ariss, 2010; Luring et al., 2014; Pate & Scullion, 2010; Reiche et al., 2011; Selmer & Luring, 2009, 2010, 2011b, 2012, 2013); job adjustment (Isakovic & Whitman, 2013; Selmer & Luring, 2013); and employee performance (Thomas & Lazarova, 2006). The findings from the present study sheds light on the how the different motivations of the academics to move to Oman has an influence on their core academic identities.

The study examined the motives of life change, career opportunities, adventure, remuneration, lifestyle and family as main the reasons academics have expatriated to Oman. This study addresses the gap in the literature by extending the review of academics who have moved out of their home countries for work and considering the context of how their motivations for expatriation may have shaped their core academic identities.

Campbell (1968) described academic expatriation as a hero's journey, which entails the academic undertaking a challenging expedition, overcoming challenges, grows personally from the experience and returns home after the adventure a changed person (Richardson, 2000; Richardson & McKenna, 2002, 2003a, 2003b). The motivations for an academic to expatriate were divided into four metaphors by Richardson and McKenna (2002) - the 'explorer', who took up a foreign assignment as an opportunity to explore the world; 'architect' who was motivated by better career growth and opportunities;

'refugee', who was motivated by seeking a better life outside of the home country and the 'mercenary', who was motivated by the financial benefits of expatriation. Similar results were found by Froese (2012) where themes such as a desire for international experience (explorer); appealing job conditions (mercenary); escape from poor labour conditions in their countries were identified, while Selmer and Luring (2012, 2013) studies also generally confirmed these categories.

Majority of the academics in the study, accounted that career opportunities (architect motivations) were the primary motivator for expatriation. These results are contrasting to the findings of studies by Stahl et al. (2009), Richardson and McKenna (2002) and Froese (2012) which found that seeking adventure/travel or personal challenge (explorer) were the main reasons for expatriation. The results of study however, echo the findings of Fee and Karsaklian (2013); Thorn (2009) and Maharaj (2014) who had found that their respondents had moved in pursuit of new career challenges and growth. These academics who identified career opportunities and career development as the major factor that influenced their expatriation (Andresen et al., 2013; Froese, 2012; Mostert, 2013; Van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012) reflected the core identity of integrated academics and academic freelancers. The possible explanation for this could be the perceived lack of opportunities in their home countries for career progression or growth. "Good resources and facilities" for career development in Oman were cited as a reason by the integrated academics, whereas for the academic freelancers, they perceived that they had reached a dead end in their professional careers in their home countries.

The findings pertaining to the academics who sought expatriation as an escape from their current situations (Selmer & Luring, 2010; Van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012) in their home countries is in accord with findings from previous studies by Kim (2015); Al Ariss and Syed (2011); Carr et al. (2005); Thorn (2009) and Richardson and McKenna (2002) which show that poor economic and political conditions or personal circumstances act as motivators to expatriate as these academics felt 'locked out' of academia in their home countries due to the lack of openings there or their specialisations (Pustelnikovaite, 2021). These academics who were motivated to expatriate in pursuit of a better life constructed the core identity of a traditional teacher with an affiliation for teaching. These academics

perceive Oman to be politically and economically stable and a safe country to pursue their career in teaching and imparting knowledge to their students.

In contrast to findings of previous studies (Alpaslan Danisman, 2017; Inkson et al., 1997; Myers, 2013; Richardson & McKenna, 2002; Van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012) that cited exploration as a major motivating factor for academics to expatriate, the findings in this study showed that exploration and desire to gain international experience was accounted as a motivator by very few academics. The academics who reflected the identity of academic leader moved to Oman to experience adventure and gain international experience. These academics enjoyed representing the institution on the national and international higher education stage and they perceived expatriation as a conduit to gain this experience.

Romanowski and Nasser (2015) stated that most of the academics moved to Gulf countries as they paid among highest salaries in academia and that the academics' primary motivation to expatriate was mercenary despite the stifling academic environment that limited academic freedom. The findings from my current study show that financial benefits were not a significant reason stated by the academics to relocate. I would argue that it is too simplistic to state that academics who expatriate to Gulf countries are motivated only by money and financial benefits. The academics in my study, seemed to value opportunities for career growth and adventure more than compensation and related benefits.

Hence, the academics in this study, in terms of their motivations to relocate may be categorised as architects, refugees and explorers based on their orientations and inclinations. The study reveals that some of the academics were driven by the desirability of the job and prospects of career growth, while others were propelled to relocate due to poor economic and political conditions in their home countries and others the need for adventure and to experience new cultures.

Extant research shows that lifestyles enjoyed by expatriates is an important motivation factor and a critical aspect of their expatriation experience (Cieri et al., 1991; Clegg &

Gray, 2002). The academics in this study also described enjoying benefits such as fully paid accommodations, paid leaves including flights, free healthcare, travel opportunities and cross-cultural experiences. These benefits that enhance an expatriate's lifestyle were seen as providing a strong motivation to remain in their current positions regardless of the organisational climate and culture of the country (Schoepp, 2011; Wilkins, 2013). Additionally, family were seen to play an important role in the decision-making process to expatriate. This is in line with studies by Langford (2012); Zilber (2009) about expatriate academics broadly and studies by Fail et al. (2004); Lazarova et al. (2015); Peterson and Plamondon (2009) about expatriates in general. The academics also considered good education facilities for their children and giving them an opportunity to experience international experience (Richardson, 2006) as a motivation factor.

These findings relating the different factors motivating academics to expatriate and the construction of their core identities have not been established in existing literature on expatriate academics and their identities.

7.5 EXPERIENCES AS INFLUENCING FACTOR ON ACADEMIC IDENTITY

The previous section discussed the expatriate academics' motivation to expatriate. These motivations combined with their experiences of expatriation could have an impact on the construction of the academic identities of these academics. Richardson and McKenna (2002) had categorised the expatriate academics and their experiences as 'explorers' who experienced expatriation as an adventure; those who experienced it as a transformational experience both personally and professionally as 'student'; those who felt alienated and isolated from the culture of the host country as 'outsider' and those who experienced precariousness and insecurity in their work situation as 'tightrope walker'. This framework has been used by other authors to explore the connections between how the attitudes and experiences of expatriate academics related to their work and their work outcomes. In this study, however, the findings will be discussed using this framework relating the expatriation experience of the academics and their academic identities. The

academics in this study expressed that they experienced alienation, disengagement and resilience upon expatriation.

The academics who expressed a sense of alienation could be related to the experience of 'outsider' in the literature although there is a slight difference to the notion of being an outsider in the current study. The academics here felt insecure and felt isolated from the academic community as opposed to feeling alienated from the country's culture. The country's nationalisation policy negatively impacted these academics' sense of security in the job. This is in accord with the outsider metaphor in the literature where the expatriate academics felt distant or excluded (for example, Garson, 2005a; Hassan & Hashim, 2011; Richardson & McKenna, 2006). In this study, it can be seen that the academics who reflected the identity of traditional teachers experienced a sense of alienation.

Studies by Austin et al. (2014) and Romanowski and Nasser (2015) in the GCC context have shown that the lack of job security due to nationalisation policy and the perception that expatriate academics are expendable have impacted the academics by injecting fear and anxiety in their daily behaviour and affecting their organizational commitment, productivity and were constantly on the lookout for other employment opportunities. However, the academics in this study seemed to be committed to the institution and intend to remain in their positions despite the feelings of insecurity and alienation that they experienced. These academics found enjoyment in teaching the students and were primarily driven by the desire to facilitate learning of their students, although they did express concerns about the lack of support for research environment.

Similarly, the academics who experienced a sense of disengagement could be likened to tightrope walkers (Richardson & McKenna, 2002). The academics who constructed the identity of academic freelancers, discussed about the precariousness that they experienced in their careers. The academics used disengagement as a coping mechanism to address the stress and conflicts in their professional lives. These academics learned from their experiences and were always vigilant about the

developments both within and outside of the institution and focused on their professional practice along with teaching.

Although the experiences of alienation and disengagement could be considered negative experiences, the academics in this study seem to be adopting these attitudes to negotiate the challenges that they perceived could negatively impact their core identities. These academics are high performers as teachers and professionals contributing to the teaching and learning of students as well in the achievement of institutional goals and contributing to the country. These findings challenge studies like Austin et al. (2014); Romanowski and Nasser (2015); Schoepp and Forstenlechner (2012) that presents a pessimistic view of the opportunities for the development of academic identities in GCC countries.

Studies on expatriation experience have also alluded to 'explorer' and 'student' (Richardson & McKenna, 2002) experiences (For example, Jepsen et al., 2014; Schoepp, 2011). The academics who reflected the identity of integrated academics and academic leaders all expressed resilience which could be compared to the experiences of being an 'explorer' and 'student' as these academics felt the experience of working in Oman transformed their outlook to their jobs and life in general and aided in developing an appreciation for themselves and the world around them. These academics chose to stay in the institution and seemed to be well adjusted with regards to managing the challenges that they perceived in their jobs. They felt that the opportunity to learn, develop international research collaboration networks and the cross-cultural interactions outweighed concerns such as lack of intellectual environment and resources for research. This shows that academics who experience expatriation with a sense of resilience stay true to their core identity and have reduced turnover intentions and higher commitment to the institution.

Studies have reported of work-related challenges such as the lack of institutional support that have negatively impacted the expatriate academics and left them demoralised (Froese, 2012; Mostert, 2013) or lived in fear of the unknown (Richardson & McKenna, 2002; Richardson & Zikic, 2007) because of the discrimination at their work places. Interestingly, the academics in this study did not touch upon discrimination at the

workplace, nor a feeling demoralized or hopeless. Even though, some of the academics experienced stress, insecurities and identity conflicts due to the nationalisation policy in higher education or the lack of institutional support to pursue their intellectual affiliations like research for professional and personal growth, these academics show that as Clegg (2008, p. 343) concluded: ‘rather than being under threat, it appears that identities in academia are expanding and proliferating.’

Primary motivations to expatriate (Oman)	Motivations to expatriate linked to literature	Other motivations (Oman)	Experiences of expatriation (Oman)	Experiences of expatriation linked to literature	Core academic identity
Life change	Refugee	Financial reasons; Family reasons	Alienation/Lack of job security	Outsider	Traditional Teacher
Career opportunities	Architect	Adventure; Family reasons	Resilience	Explorer and student	Integrated Academic
Career opportunities	Architect	Financial reasons	Disengagement	Tightrope walker	Academic Freelancer
Adventure	Explorer	Improve career opportunities; Financial reasons	Resilience	Explorer and student	Academic Leader

Table 8: The link between the motivational factors to expatriate, the experiences of expatriation and academic identity of expatriate academics in this study

Adapted from (Richardson & Mallon, 2005; Richardson & McKenna, 2002; Selmer & Lauring, 2010).

An original contribution of this study is that, for the first time, the notion of academic identities has been explored in relation to the motivations to expatriate and the experiences of the expatriate academics. The findings have added knowledge and understanding of academic identities and to literature on expatriate academics. It can be seen that the motivations to expatriate and also the experiences along with the agency of the academics has led to the consolidation and development of their core identities. Looking forward, this has led to some changes for the academics especially in their intellectual and network strands. Previous studies on expatriate academics have looked at identities as perceived in relation and comparison to other people around them and have focused on changes in their professional identities (Richardson, 2000; Richardson & McKenna, 2000; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015) as opposed to their academic identities in relation to their motivations to expatriate and their experiences. As far as the expatriate academics in this study are concerned, it is discernable that they have demonstrated a much more optimistic and agentic approach in building on and evolving their academic identities compared to the participants of the study conducted by Romanowski and Nasser (2015) of expatriate professors in Qatar who had developed negative changes to their academic identities as they perceived inequalities at the workplace and thought of themselves as “second class citizens” in comparison to the local academics (Richardson, 2000; Romanowski & Nasser, 2015).

A tension that exists in the literature on identity, is between the views that state that, individuals have multiple identities or they have a ‘core’ identity (Trede et al., 2012), the different features of which are enacted in different contexts and roles (Oyserman et al., 2012). The findings in this study are consistent with Paterson et al. (2002) who argue that the core identity is a starting point in developing as a professional. I would like to add that the core academic identity is a base which then is subject to a process of construction and (re)interpretation over time (Barnett & Di Napoli, 2007; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2016).

Although the impact of neoliberal management culture in Omani higher education was not the focus of this study and not explicitly researched, certain effects of it could be seen as peculating and impacting the academics with increased competition between colleagues, institutions, quality assessments and audits and introduction of market

mechanisms. Most of the studies conducted in the west have criticised the neoliberal developments as the academics perceived these developments as suppressing teaching creativity, leading to a reduction in autonomy of teachers, trivialising the complexity of teaching, undermining of values like academic freedom and increased workloads (Archer, 2008a; Beach, 2013; Bolden et al., 2014; Churchman & King, 2009; Clarke et al., 2012; Clegg, 2008; Fanghanel & Trowler, 2008; Guzmán-Valenzuela & Barnett, 2013; Hockings et al., 2009; Jones, 2011; Kreber, 2010; Mathison, 2015; Nixon, 1996; Skelton, 2012a; Smith, 2010; Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013). In this study, the academics demonstrate some resilience and they have managed to keep a positive identity coupled with a passion and enjoyment for one or more aspects of their work. These academics can be seen employing different strategies such as 'playing the game' or creating practices to support themselves. This is consistent with the findings that have portrayed how academics have dealt with of the impact of neoliberal management culture in higher education positively (Archer, 2008a; Churchman & King, 2009; Clarke et al., 2012; Clegg, 2008; Mathison, 2015; Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013).

To summarise, in this study, the stance on identity is that there is reciprocal relationship between the individual/agentive and the structural/social in forming the academic identity. In the case of the expatriate academics in this study, I argue that the core identities that have been developed by these academics is being built on and evolving as an extension of their core identities, influenced by their past experiences (motivations to expatriate), their present experiences (of expatriation) and planning for their future. This study supports the argument of Trowler (1997, p. 314) that 'individuals bring sets of values, attitudes and expectations with them when they enter higher education and, while these can shift during their time in the institution, they continue to have an important influence on responses to change'. From the accounts of these academics, we see these academics exercising resistance and building robust responses to the higher education reform Pick et al. (2017) showing an increased focus on individual academics over structures.

7.6 CONCLUSION

In summary, within this research I have explored how expatriate academics constructed the core meaning of being an academic. In particular, I have discussed that there is a variation in the identities adopted by the academics other than those of being a teacher and a researcher, but also specifically those of academic practitioners and leaders.

The central ideas emerging from this study are that of 'consolidation', 'integration' and 'extension'. In this study, it can be seen that the expatriate academics, construct, build and develop on their core identities. The findings here contribute to a different perspective on academic identities as I have argued that the core identities that have been developed by the expatriate academics are being consolidated, built on and are evolving and developing as an extension of their core identities, influenced by their past experiences (motivations to expatriate), their present experiences (of expatriation) and prominent aspects of their academic context. It has also been argued that as far as the expatriate academics in this study are concerned, they have demonstrated a much more positive and agentic approach in building on and evolving their academic identities within the higher education environment in Oman.

Furthermore, this research adopted the identity trajectory framework to capture the core identities of the academics through the interplay of the individual (the intellectual strand and the agency of the individual) and the social (the networking strand) and the structural (the institutional strand) in developing the core identities of the expatriate academics.

Factors such as those motivating the academics to expatriate and their experiences have been discussed and the influence of these factors as impacting the construction of the core identities of the expatriate academics was explored. I have argued that the academic identities of expatriate academics have not been researched in relation to their motivations to expatriate and their experiences.

Within the next chapter, I summarise the main arguments and discuss the broader implications of this research along with the limitations of the study.

8 CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Within this chapter, I will address the research questions and summarise the main arguments, findings. I will also summarise the main aspects of the study including originality and contribution to knowledge, taking into account the implications of the study and limitations, before recommending areas of future research that might need to be considered.

As has been discussed in chapter 1, the overall aim of this research was to explore the meaning of being an academic from the perspective of expatriate academics. The motivation to undertake this study stemmed from an interest in the topic of expatriate academics and the construction of their academic identities. The literature readings provided an impetus to concentrate on expatriate academics and the development of their core academic identities in relation to their motivations to expatriate and their experiences, as it brought to light, that this relationship was under researched (chapter 2). In chapter 3, I elaborated the rationale for the methodology and methods that guided this interpretive study that utilized semi structured interviews. Data was generated using this to explore the research questions (in chapter 1) with 18 academics from a single higher education institution in Oman belonging to a range of nationalities, disciplinary backgrounds, academic positions and career stages.

8.2 ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

8.2.1 What are expatriate academics' perceptions of the meaning of being an academic?

The expatriate academics in this study reflected four core identities of the meaning of being an academic: traditional teacher, integrated academic, academic freelancer and academic leader. Each academic constructed one of these core academic identities. In

this study, the findings draw attention to the complex nature of academic identities and that the academics expressed their identities in other ways than just being a teacher and or a researcher. Studies have shown that academics mostly identified with teaching and or research roles in HE (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Billot, 2010; Blaxter et al., 1998; Brown & Humphreys, 2006; Churchman & King, 2009; Clarke et al., 2013; Delanty, 2007; Dugas et al., 2020; Fitzmaurice, 2013; Henkel, 2000; Murphy, 2011; Nixon, 2001; Skelton, 2012b; Taylor, 1999). The findings from this study show a variation in the identities adopted by the expatriate academics, specifically, as an academic freelancer or practitioner and an academic leader.

As a traditional teacher the academics thought of themselves primarily as teachers who transferred knowledge to their students and helped them understand the subject and achieve the learning outcomes. These academics primarily found interactions with students as providing them validation and confidence in their roles and helped establish the identity of being a teacher (see also Laiho et al., 2020; McCune, 2019; Van Lankveld et al., 2017).

Integrated academics on the other hand, found research to be more challenging and rewarding than teaching. They adopted a student-centred approach to teaching and enjoyed collaborating with colleagues within the institution and outside it for research. These academics tended to strive and make their own time for research as they perceived it as important for their career trajectory and to grow in the institution. The intellectual affiliation of these academics in relation to research, however, was seen as moving away from disciplinary research and crossing over to inter-disciplinary and transdisciplinary research. This could be understood as academics' considering research activity as academic currency for professional growth and mobility within academia.

The academic freelancers valued professional expertise as all of them are professional entrants to higher education and were characterised by the valorisation of professional expertise and the sharing of professional knowledge and experiences with students. These academics are involved in academic and non-academic activities and roles which could be considered as 'third space' (Whitchurch, 2012b) and seem to undertake such

activities both within and outside of higher education as potential safety nets for their career and lend credibility with their students (Dickinson et al., 2020) .

Lastly, as academic leaders, the academics occupied leadership positions in the higher education institution aligned themselves to the corporate enterprise and exhibited an affiliation for their managerial identities which included representing the interests of the HEI on the national and international stage and provide guidance to their students and colleagues. These academics exhibited a 'distributed leadership' (Laing & Laing, 2011) identity where they showed allegiance to the institution but at the same time were understanding of the needs of their staff and students.

One participant in the study did not conform to any of the above-mentioned academic identities. The participant presented a pessimistic narrative which was at odds with the narratives of the other participants. This narrative is significant as it reflects the changing HE landscape and the impact of neoliberal management culture on identity construction. Policy makers and management of HEIs should create development and support programs for these academics to prevent them from exiting academia.

The academics in this study experienced their workload as demanding and and stressful and they perceived an imbalance in terms of resource allocation for teaching and the opportunity to stay connected to research. Most of the academics who have a salient affiliation to teaching, felt that the institution was sending mixed; although it claimed that both teaching and research is equally important. The academics experienced that teaching is less valued than research, especially when it came to promotions and tenure. However, the integrated academics who associated more with research, felt that there were no clear and coherent research policy and research evaluation criteria at the institution.

8.2.2 *What are expatriate academics' perceptions of how their understanding of being an academic has changed over time?*

Using the identity trajectory framework as a conceptual tool, the perception of the expatriate academics as to how their understanding of being an academic has evolved over time and the projections of their future identity trajectories were captured. The academics who reflected the core identity of traditional teachers were seen to be committed to teaching but changes in the three dimensions of the identity trajectory especially the intellectual and the network strands indicated that these academics showed a future interest in undertaking research while considering their future trajectory although they experienced constraints in the institutional dimension. The integrated academics on the other hand, can be seen as reconfirming their commitment to research and changes in their intellectual and network dimensions could be seen as influencing this consolidation and strengthening of their research identity. The academic freelancers perceived changes in their network and institutional dimensions and hence show the intention to recommit to professional practice in the future. Lastly, the academic leaders can be seen as strengthening and consolidating their leadership identity as they perceived all three identity trajectory dimensions to be aligned to their desired future direction.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that identity and agency are interrelated in the context of the university (McAlpine et al., 2014; Toom et al., 2015; Ursin et al., 2020; Vähäsantanen, 2015). I argue that the identity trajectories of the expatriate academics in this research, are seen as confirming and strengthening their core affiliations and is evolving and developing as an extension of their core identities, influenced by their past experiences (motivations to expatriate), their present experiences (of expatriation) and looking to their future aspirations.

8.2.3 What are the contributing factors that influence the identities of expatriate academics?

The third research objective of the study was to explore the contributing factors that influence the core academic identities of the expatriate academics. Factors such as the motivation to expatriate and the associated experiences were identified as having an impact on their identity as an academic. The findings identified the motives of life change, career opportunities, adventure, remuneration, lifestyle and family as the main reasons why the academics expatriated to Oman. Most of the academics in this study could be classified as 'architects' according to the metaphors coined by Richardson and McKenna (2002) to describe the reasons for academics to relocate, implying that they may have come to Oman to build a career in order to improve their employability profile and to make themselves more marketable. In this thesis, the academics showed that they were not primarily motivated by financial benefits in their decision to relocate to Oman and they seemed to be more oriented towards opportunities for career growth and adventure than compensation and benefits.

Research on motivations of expatriate academics and the extent to which this impacts their academic identity has not been studied in past studies as they have focused on motives for expatriation and its relation to other aspects such as work adjustment, challenges faced, work outcomes and organizational commitment. It is argued in this study that the differences in the motivations and intentions of academics to go abroad may affect their academic identities differently.

Considering the experiences of relocating, the academics in this study expressed that they experienced alienation, disengagement and resilience upon expatriation. Experiences of alienation and disengagement could be compared to the 'outsiders' and 'tightrope walkers' of Richardson and McKenna (2002) which can be categorised as negative experiences. However, the academics in this study seem to be adopting these attitudes to negotiate the challenges that they perceived could negatively impact their core identities. So, these academics could be seen as adopting these attitudes in order to preserve their core identity. The academics showed commitment to the institution and

showed intend to stay in their positions despite feelings of insecurity and alienation as they enjoyed teaching and facilitating learning.

The academics who developed resilience as a result of their experiences, could be compared to the experiences of being an 'explorer' and 'student' (Richardson & McKenna, 2002) as these academics looked at their experiences in a positive light and felt that the experience of working in Oman had transformed their outlook to their jobs and life overall and had aided in developing an appreciation for themselves and the world around them.

Taking into consideration both the factors of motivations to expatriate for work and the experiences of expatriation, the relationship between these constructs and the core academic identities of the academics was established. The traditional teachers were found to be motivated by the need for a life change and experienced alienation on expatriation. The academic leaders expatriated looking for career growth and opportunities and had developed resilience as a result of their experiences. While the academic freelancers had also relocated motivated by prospects for career growth in Oman like the academic leaders, their experience was one of disengagement. Lastly, the academic leaders had relocated to Oman motivated by adventure and their experiences had helped them develop resilience to negotiate challenges.

Although these experiences had elements of both positive and negative, the academics in this study were found to be agentic performers contributing to teaching and learning and research despite some of the negative experiences such precariousness, disengagement and alienation that they have experienced hence challenging some of the studies like Austin et al. (2014); Romanowski and Nasser (2015); Schoepp and Forstenlechner (2012) that showed that expatriate academics are not provided equal opportunities to develop their identities, especially in GCC countries. Hence, this study addresses the gap in the literature by extending the review of academics who have expatriated and considering the context of how their motivations to expatriate and their experiences have shaped their core academic identities.

8.3 ORIGINALITY AND CONTRIBUTION

This distinctive study helps to close some of the literature gaps identified on the influences of motivations to expatriate and the experiences of expatriation on the academic identities of expatriate academics. The thesis advances thinking about how multiple contributing factors such as the motivations to expatriate and the experiences of academics have influenced the development of the identities of academics.

In this thesis, the core identities of expatriate academics and how they perceive their core identities to have changed over time in relation to their motivations and experiences of expatriation is explored using the identity trajectory (McAlpine et al., 2010) as a conceptual tool and the results from the analysis contributes to new knowledge by foregrounding how the academics understand their core identities.

The purpose of my research is twofold. First, it extends the review of academics who have expatriated by considering the context of how their motivations to expatriate, their experiences and their ongoing attitude towards these experiences act as factors that shape their core academic identities. My research gives voice to expatriate academics working in HE in Oman by providing them the opportunity to describe their experiences, understandings of identities and extending the research landscape currently existent in this area in HE.

Second, this thesis also demonstrates that a wider range of academic identities such as academic freelancer (practitioner/vocational) and academic leaders (leadership) are present in addition to traditional identities such as teaching and research identities, taking into account the diversity of the academic profession, context and settings.

The study reveals a fresh perspective that all the expatriate academics were able to construct positive and agentic narratives of academic identity development within the higher education environment in Oman despite being pulled in different directions between the cultural ideals of academic work and calling, shifts in the nature of academic work, and the socio-economic realities of building a career in the Omani higher education unlike the pessimistic view in the literature on expatriate academics.

A guiding theme throughout this thesis has been that the identity formation of the academics has been evolving and that the individuals have been developing a meaningful narrative as they have interpreted their past experiences in light of the present and likely future experiences: building on and extending their core academic identity.

I have attempted to develop a textured understanding of how the expatriate academics consolidate, develop and build on their core academic identities in the Omani higher education context. The picture is neither rosy nor wholly pessimistic, I could perhaps say that I have painted a realistic portrait of this complex and evolving aspect of the academic profession.

8.4 LIMITATIONS

'Posteriori' critical reflection is beneficial for all research and it is important to consider how it could have been improved and how to carry out research in the future. 'Informed hindsight' is an important element of the research process (Trafford & Leshem, 2008, p. 143). At the practical level, the findings of this study are from one case study institution and so are limited in their generalisability to the wider HE field and is the study is not representative of all Omani higher education institutions. However, I believe that the responses of the expatriate academics who participated in the study are insightful and of great interest and this suggests that a broader data set of more expatriate academics across disciplines working in a wider range of higher education institutions would afford further investigation and possibly lead to generalizable findings.

Another constraint identified in this study is that I interviewed the participants once rather than undertaking a longitudinal study similar to ones undertaken by McAlpine and her colleagues (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2011; McAlpine et al., 2010; McAlpine et al., 2013a, 2013b; McAlpine & Lucas, 2011; McAlpine & Turner, 2012) to see time related changes in the views of the participants with regards to themselves and their work. These researchers constructed individual narratives of the research participants from the longitudinal data while developing the identity trajectory framework. However, it has been argued by other identity researchers (for example, McLean & Pasupathi, 2012) that

identity is developed and sustained by narrating important every day events in the lives of the participants. In my study, the interview data presented of the academics across different career levels and disciplines is intended to provide in a shorter time frame, insights approaching those of a longitudinal study by using the three dimensions of the identity trajectory related to the academic context.

In addition, although I am aware about migrant academic identities, the literature it was not pursued and explored in detail as I felt that the scope of literature reviewed was already substantial. However, the findings from the study show that academic mobility has identity implications that can be both positive and negative for the expatriate academic.

Finally, this thesis has focused mainly on the agency of the expatriate academics in building their academic identities and less on the cultural and structural influences that could play a role in identity construction. Academics working in the GCC region tend to self-censor and are circumspect in their views about local politics for fear of political and institutional censure (Wildavsky, 2010). As the topic of the thesis was a sensitive one, the participants might have been reticent in voicing critical opinions pertaining to the institution and the culture both within the institution and the country. However, during the interviews the academics were made to feel comfortable and were provided confidentiality and anonymity to allow the participants to provide original answers, without feeling the need to regulate responses.

8.5 IMPLICATIONS

The global changes occurring in higher education have also impacted Oman which is evidenced by the strong intention of the country to enhance the global competitiveness of its higher education institutions. As Oman has a deficit in qualified local academic staff, there is a significant reliance on expatriate academics to effectively grow higher education in the country and to meet global standards. Despite the significant changes in HE in Oman little is known about the under-researched population of expatriate academics and how they construct their academic identity and the factors that influence the construction

and development of their core identities. The research findings have significant implications as a better understanding of the how expatriate academics perceive the meaning of being an academic working in Oman, will help the HEIs reimagine the HE environment where the expatriate academics are offered time and space to develop their intellectual orientations so that they feel valued, continue to develop and thrive in their academic profession.

As expatriate academics in Oman play a crucial role in the socio-economic development of the country and the development of the future workforce of the country, it is imperative for the government to make deliberate efforts towards revising and crafting policies and programs that are more beneficial to the expatriate academics. At the national level, it would be useful to invest in research to understand how the current employment policies may be impacting the employment and academic identities of the expatriate academics. The government and HEIs should consider giving the expatriate academics long term contracts to alleviate any feelings of insecurity or feelings of precariousness as voiced by some of the academics in this study.

Policy makers and managements of HEIs in countries like Oman should consider international work experience as a criterion for promotion and hiring decisions as they are facing a challenge of nurturing, sustaining and retaining expatriate academics. The need for clear policies for promotion and tenure was raised by the academics hence, the managements of HEIs could introduce promotion in rank and tenure which are greatly tied to academic performance and productivity of academics.

Additionally, the HR departments or managements of HEIs could create bottom-up professional development programmes for the expatriate academics with their inputs, addressing their objectives and requirements rather than one time or superficial professional development programmes to upscale themselves and help them develop and evolve their desired identity trajectories.

Given that most of the academics in this study found discussions and interactions with their colleagues as useful for their professional development, HEIs should provide

opportunities for collaborative research opportunities, reflections and dialogue with others. Institutions and departments should establish peer networks both on a national level and also internationally which would help develop collegiality and alleviate stress and negative feelings.

One of the recurring themes in the findings is pertaining to the institutional strand. The academics questioned the equity of teaching and research within the HEI. They perceived an imbalance in terms of resource allocation for teaching and the opportunity to be involved in research. The HEI was seen as sending mixed signals to the academics. As asserted by Brew (2012), HEIs need to work towards providing positive work environments where there is a synergy between teaching and research rather than further increasing the division between the two. Some of the academics are keen on undertaking research but stated the lack of institutional support as impeding their research trajectory. The HIE could support research agendas and help in research funding that will give the academics currency in academia and develop a meaningful career in academia. This strategy could help to retain the incumbents as well as attract qualified international faculty.

As there is a reciprocal relationship between the institutional practices and the careers of the expatriate academics, the managements of HEIs might want to reconsider resource allocations and create development opportunities for the academics that will engage them intellectually. Institutions need to work collaboratively with academics and staff to develop robust processes for teaching, research, reward and recognition that will provide coherence to the different aspects of university life to the academics, as well as foreground the broader social value of higher education. Also, institutions might need to put in place a transparent and coherent research evaluation criterion which values quality over quantity of research output which could alleviate unnecessary tensions in academic identities.

The findings from this study would also be useful for recruiters equipping them with additional hiring criteria to understand the motivations of academics to expatriate and their experiences and how these influence their academic identities which is essential for

achieving the institutional and national higher education objectives. The findings will provide recruiters and HR personnel with comprehensive insights as to appreciate the motivations of expatriate academics to leave their countries and be better equipped to handle issues with employment that could arise (Maharaj, 2014, 2017; Trembath, 2016).

Overall, the findings of this thesis will be useful for academics globally that have expatriated or are considering expatriation to gain insight into what to expect when deciding to expatriate and their experiences that ensue.

8.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has provided a springboard for future research on the interesting and important topic of being an expatriate academic. This study drew attention to four main core constructions of being an academic, however, with a larger and more diverse sample by extending it across multiple higher education institutions in Oman, it would be interesting to explore whether these identities exist or if the larger sample may reveal additional constructions of identities. This would provide a multi-institutional perspective on the academic identity of the expatriate academics working in Omani higher education.

The study could also be extended by comparing the expatriate academics working in different countries to understand how they construct core meanings of being an academic and shed light on international or expatriate academics in the global higher education sector.

Another way the study could be extended would be to compare and contrast the lived experiences and perceptions of expatriate academics and local academics to better understand the differences and similarities in the construction of their academic identities and its implications on their work output and organisational commitment.

In this study, I have concentrated on the perceptions, lived experiences and academic identity constructions of academics who work on a full-time permanent contract (two years contract). It might be unlikely for part-time expatriate academics to share the same experiences and perceptions as those in this study.

To conclude, the findings of my study draw attention to the four core identities of the meaning of being an academic constructed by the expatriate academics as a traditional teacher, integrated academic, academic freelancer and academic leader. The contribution of this thesis adds to the existing body of research on expatriate academics and their identity development as influenced by the motivations for expatriation of the academics and their ensuing experiences. The distinctive findings of this study, indicates that the academics are building on and extending their core identities, influenced by their past experiences (motivations to expatriate), their present experiences (of expatriation) and looking to their future aspirations. Ultimately, the study that I have undertaken can be regarded as an initial step into a much wider endeavour towards understanding the academic identities of expatriate academics which is an important and complex phenomenon in higher education.

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10 APPENDIX 1 - PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



Participant information sheet

Title **BEING AN ACADEMIC: PERCEPTIONS OF EXPATRIATE ACADEMICS**

For further information about how Lancaster University processes personal data for research purposes and your data rights please visit our webpage: www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/data-protection

I am a PhD student and this research is for my thesis on the PhD Educational Research programme with the Department of Educational Research at Lancaster University.

Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the study about?

My research aims to understand the experiences of expatriate academics and the meanings they attach to being an academic. **Specifically, this study aims to** understand the experiences and perceptions of expatriate academics on how they construct their identities as academics when they move to Oman as an expatriate.

Why have I been invited?

I have approached you because I am interested in representing faculty who have expatriated to Oman and your views and opinions on how you perceive and construct your identities as academics are very important. I would be very grateful if you would agree to take part in this study, but you are in no way compelled to do so. It is entirely up to you if you want to take part.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?

If you decided to take part, you will be expected to attend a semi structured interview. You will be asked to attend an interview lasting between 45 to 60 minutes. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted to understand the following:

1. What are the expatriate academics' perceptions of the meaning of being an academic?
2. What are expatriate academics' perceptions of how their understanding of being an academic has changed over time?
3. What are the contributing factors that influence the identities of expatriate academics?

What are the possible benefits from taking part?

The expected outcomes from this research will lead to further development in this area. If you take part in this study, you will provide valuable contribution to be a part of discussions on how expatriate academics perceive and construct their academic identity and thus make a valuable contribution to this research.

Do I have to take part?

No, your participation is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part or recorded, then please let me know.

What if I change my mind?

You can withdraw at any time during the study and there is absolutely no obligation on you to continue nor penalty for withdrawing. Your related data (recordings, notes) can be destroyed and all reference removed at any time. However, it is difficult and often impossible to take out data from one specific participant when this has already been anonymised or pooled together with other people's data, and their reactions to it. **Therefore, you can only withdraw up to 8 weeks after taking part in the study.**

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is unlikely that there will be any major disadvantages to taking part. The only disadvantage that I can think of is the commitment of time. This will be across 2 sessions, each of around 60 mins. These will span the former half of 2020.

Will my data be identifiable?

After the semi-structured interview only I, as the solo researcher conducting this study, will have access to the data you share with me. I will keep all personal information about you (e.g. your name and other information about you that can identify you) confidential, that is I will not share it with others. I will anonymise any audio recordings and hard copies of any data. This means that I remove any personal information. Your data will be transcribed and kept in a password protected folder on my laptop. After the interviews only my supervisor and me will have access to the ideas you share us.

How will we use the information you have shared with us and what will happen to the results of the research study?

I will use the data you have shared, after it has been transcribed and anonymised, to generate discussions and findings. These will be submitted as part of a thesis and doctoral examination called a viva-voce. This could include anonymised extracts and quotes of our discussions

supplemented by my analyses. The work may also be abridged for publication in: academic journals; institutional journals of technology enhanced learning and academic conferences. As previously stated, all participants will be anonymised prior to encryption by using pseudonyms.

How my data will be stored

Your data will be stored in encrypted files (that is no-one other than me, the researcher will be able to access them) and on password-protected computers. I will store hard copies of any data securely in locked cabinets in my office. I will keep data that can identify you separately from non-personal information (e.g. your views on a specific topic). In accordance with University guidelines, I will keep the data securely for a minimum of ten years.

What if I have a question or concern?

If you have any queries or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please contact myself or my supervisor at Lancaster University:

Sapna Dileesh, General Foundation Programme, Oman Dental College, P.O Box 835,, Mina Al Fahal, Muscat, Wattayah 116, Sultanate of Oman

s.dileesh@lancaster.ac.uk

or

Professor Paul Ashwin, Department of Educational Research, County South, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YD. 01524 594443

paul.ashwin@lancaster.ac.uk

If you have any concerns or complaints that you wish to discuss with a person who is not directly involved in the research, you can also contact:

Professor Paul Trowler, Director of Studies, Higher Education: Research, Evaluation and Enhancement, Department of Educational Research, County South, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YD. 01524 594443

p.trowler@lancaster.ac.uk

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Lancaster Management School's Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for considering your participation in this project



11 APPENDIX 2- CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

Project Title: **Identity of Expatriate Academics in an Evolving Higher Education Landscape in Oman**

Name of Researchers: **Sapna Dileesh**

Email: **s.dileesh@lancaster.ac.uk**

Please tick each box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during my participation in this study and within 8 weeks after I took part in the study, without giving any reason. If I withdraw within 8 weeks of taking part in the study my data will be removed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, academic articles, publications or presentations by the researcher/s, but my personal information will not be included and all reasonable steps will be taken to protect the anonymity of the participants involved in this project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I understand that my name/my organisation's name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentation without my consent.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I understand that any interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed and that data will be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I understand that data will be kept according to University guidelines for a minimum of 10 years after the end of the study.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I agree to take part in the above study.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent _____ Date _____ Day/month/year

One copy of this form will be given to the participant and the original kept in the files of the researcher at Lancaster University

12 APPENDIX 3 - ETHICS APPROVAL

Educational
Research

Lancaster
University



18th December 2019

Dear Sapna

Thank you for submitting your ethics application and additional information for **Identity of Expatriate Academics in an Evolving Higher Education Landscape in Oman**. The information you provided has been reviewed and I can confirm that approval has been granted for this project.

As Principal Investigator your responsibilities include:

- ensuring that (where applicable) all the necessary legal and regulatory requirements in order to conduct the research are met, and the necessary licenses and approvals have been obtained;
- reporting any ethics-related issues that occur during the course of the research or arising from the research (e.g. unforeseen ethical issues, complaints about the conduct of the research, adverse reactions such as extreme distress) to the Research Ethics Officer (Dr Murat Oztok).
- submitting details of proposed substantive amendments to the protocol to **Prof Paul Ashwin** for approval.

Please do not hesitate to contact your supervisor if you require further information about this. Yours sincerely

Kathryn Doherty

Programme Co-ordinator

PhD in Higher Education: Research, Evaluation and Enhancement Head of Department

Professor Paul Ashwin, BA, MSc, PhD Professors

Carolyn Jackson, BSc, PhD

Don Passey, BSc, MA, PhD

Murray Saunders, BA, MA, PhD **Malcolm Tight**, BSc, PhD

Paul Trowler, BA, MA, Cert Ed., PhD

<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/edres/>

Educational Research Lancaster University Bailrigg Campus Lancaster. LA1 4YD
TEL: (+44) (0)1524 593572

13 APPENDIX 4 - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are your qualifications and how or why did you choose teaching as a career?
2. Could you describe your journey into academia in Oman?
3. Could you describe your typical work day in the College?
4. Could you tell me about a particular course that you taught on, what was your role, how you interacted with managers, colleagues and students?
5. What are the opportunities available for PD in your HEI?
6. What are your perspectives about research?
7. Have you faced any challenges as an expat academic? If yes, What are they?
8. What do you think are the main contributions that you have made as an academic working in the HEI?

14 APPENDIX 5 - EXAMPLE OF CODING USING EXCEL

Search Form X

Core

Criteria A: It is a calling Not just a job Passion Autonomy Intellectual stimulation Flexibility Is primarily a teacher only Teaching and Research are both

Criteria B: Research is secondary Wants to do research creation of new knowledge Explore the unknown contribute to discipline Feed into teaching personal development recognition Part of global research community Research is regarded as a part of

Criteria C: Professional/subject expert- Expert in **Criteria D:** Enjoys leadership positions Likes to be involved in decision making Membership on committees **Criteria E:** Contribute to socio-economic Improve individual and social well being Help students become Contribution to society and

Candidate: Gender: Qualifi: Yrs of Exp: Designation:

Summary

Ministries : 5 No of Male(s) : 2 No of Females(s) : 3	Asst Professor: 1 Director of Dept: Asst Lecturer: 4 Lecturer:	Discipline Belonging to disciplinary culture is important : 5 Interdisciplinary teaching : 0 Administrative functions	Supporting Family role models : 1 Working in Oman for long time : 1 Good lifestyle : 3 Financial stability : 5
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Relation

Relation :

C6 - F - Masters - 4 - Asst Lecturer - Discipline (Belonging to disciplinary culture is important ,) - Administrative functions (Feels certain administrative functions are integral , Clerical functions should be removed , Enjoys administrative functions ,) - Students (Teacher centred teaching , Imparting to knowledge to students is very important , Teaching students to achieve learning outcomes is important. Informal and formal feedback from students is important , Good rapport with students is important , Mentoring of students ,) - Colleagues (collegial , Informal relations , Underlying competition exists , Collaboration with colleagues for setting of assessments, curriculum development , Opportunities to learn from colleagues ,) - Line managers (Cordial relationship , Micro-management ,) - Management (Management is supportive , Unequal rewarding of academic achievement , Focus on performativity ,) -

C10 - F - PhD - 8 - Asst Professor - Discipline (Belonging to disciplinary culture is important ,) - Administrative functions (Feels certain administrative functions are integral , Clerical functions should be removed , Enjoys administrative functions

Factors

Factors :

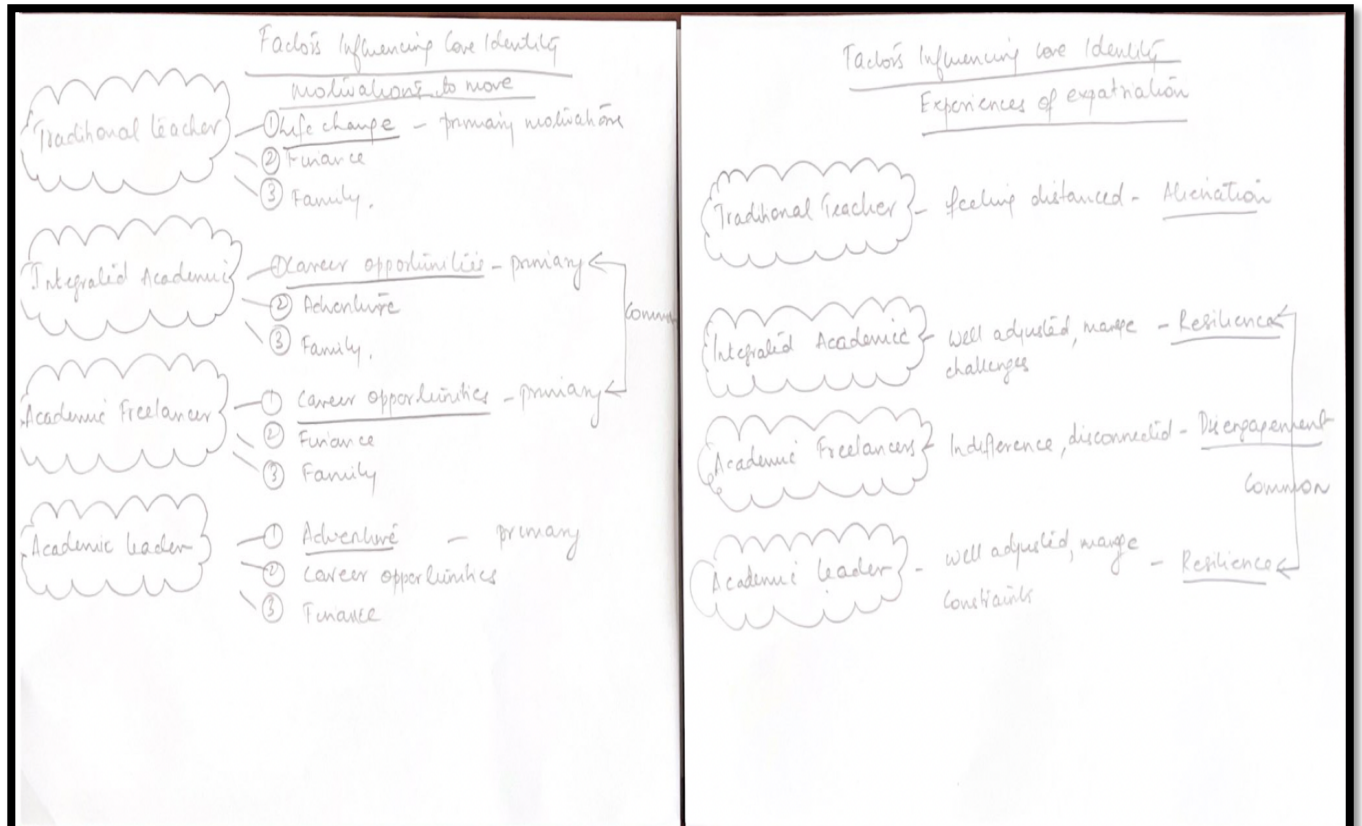
C6 - F - Masters - 4 - Asst Lecturer - Supporting (Financial stability , Good work environment) - Impediments (Lack of worklife balance, cultural differences , Lack of job security due to Omanisation , Ambiguity about employability prospects after leaving Oman , Students are not academically inclined , Students are not self-driven and receptive to learning , Lack of English proficiency of students , Curriculum not supportive of student abilities , Lack of PD opportunities , Lack of time for research ,) -

C10 - F - PhD - 8 - Asst Professor - Supporting (Family role models , Working in Oman for long time , Good lifestyle , Financial stability , Unfazed by lack of job security , Acclimitted to cultural differences , Good work environment) -

15 APPENDIX 6 - EXAMPLE OF CODE CLUSTERS

TOTAL CANDIDATES		TEACHER	ACADEMIC	PROFESSIONAL PRACTITIONERS	ACADEMIC LEADERS
Discipline					
1. Belonging to disciplinary culture is important : 6	18	100%	100%	100%	100%
2. Interdisciplinary teaching : 2	7	33%	75%	0%	67%
Administrative functions					
1. Feels certain administrative functions are integral : 5	15	83%	100%	60%	100%
2. Clerical functions should be removed : 5	14	83%	100%	40%	100%
3. Enjoys administrative functions : 3	5	50%	25%	0%	33%
4. Administrative functions are boring and redundant : 1	3	17%	0%	40%	0%
Students					
1. Imparting to knowledge to students is very important : 6	18	100%	100%	100%	100%
2. Students are concerned only with passing course : 6	15	100%	100%	100%	0%
3. Mentoring of students : 6	18	100%	100%	100%	100%
4. Informal and formal feedback from students is important : 6	17	100%	100%	80%	100%
5. transactional relationship : 5	11	83%	75%	20%	67%
6. students as customers : 5	11	50%	75%	60%	67%
7. Student centered teaching : 3	8	50%	75%	0%	67%
8. Teacher centered teaching : 3	9	50%	0%	100%	33%
9. Good rapport with students is important : 3	12	50%	75%	60%	100%
10. Teaching students to achieve learning outcomes is important : 3	9	50%	0%	100%	33%
11. supervise students research projects, PhDs : 2	7	33%	75%	0%	67%
Colleagues					
1. collegial : 6	17	100%	100%	80%	100%
2. Collaboration with colleagues for setting of assessments, curriculum development : 6	18	100%	100%	100%	100%
3. Collaboration with colleagues for research : 5	11	83%	100%	0%	67%
4. Underlying competition exists : 4	11	67%	50%	80%	33%
5. Opportunities to learn from colleagues : 3	9	50%	25%	40%	100%
6. Informal relations : 3	8	50%	50%	40%	33%
7. Provides training for colleagues : 1	6	17%	50%	0%	100%
Line managers					
1. Cordial relationship : 6	18	100%	100%	100%	100%
2. Concerned only with operational activities : 6	15	100%	75%	100%	33%
3. Managers are not qualified enough to handle department : 3	9	50%	75%	40%	33%
4. Micro-management : 3	4	50%	0%	20%	0%
5. Minimal interference : 3	13	50%	100%	60%	100%

16 APPENDIX 7 - THEMES AND SUB-THEMES RELATED TO FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC IDENTITY



17 APPENDIX 8 - DISTINCT CHARACTERISTICS OF ACADEMIC IDENTITIES

Key Characteristics	Traditional Teacher	Integrated Academic	Professional Freelancer	Academic Leader
Passion for research		x		
Team work is important	x			
Collaboration with colleagues for research		x		
Primary focus on teaching	x			
Competition among colleagues			x	
Teacher- centred teaching	x			
Student-centred teaching		x		
Use of technology and VLE in teaching		x		
Revenue generators			x	
Professional expertise			x	
Enjoys Administrative roles				x
Involved in Strategic planning				x
Not affected by lack of job security		x		