Academics' Experiences of meeting Accreditation-related Research Requirements

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor of Education

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April 2021

Dedication

To Gerry, I cannot thank you enough for your support, understanding and for assisting with family responsibilities so I can have the time to focus on the demands of my doctoral journey.

To my children, Anika, Zion and Zuri, thanks for your understanding and patience. May this show you nothing is outside your reach if you really want it.

To my mother and siblings, you have always been there for me. I love you immensely!

To my late father, Norton Taylor, and my former teacher, the late Dr Hilary Phillip, who always encouraged me in my pursuits. I miss you dearly. This one is for the two of you.

Thanks to my friends, Vashti Stanislaus-Williams, Michele Vincent, Rachael Vincent, Anichel Thomas, Samantha Charles, Carina Baptiste, Debby-lee John, Gennesta Charles and Kennisha Harford and my niece, Christolia Taylor who unwaveringly cheered me on. You all are simply the best! I am finally done! I am passing the baton along ☺.

Acknowledgements

To Dr Omur Cinar Elci, my former Department Chair, who encouraged me to embark on this doctoral journey and who always made himself available when I needed to discuss anything. I truly appreciate you.

Thank you to my supervision team. Dr Ming Cheng who guided me through the first set of hurdles and helped me solidify my research focus. Dr Julie Anne Regan who became my primary supervisor and who guided, encouraged and supported me through some of the darkest periods during this doctoral journey. Her gentle nudges and thoroughness kept me going. I am eternally grateful to her. Dr Isabel Huet, my secondary supervisor, whose feedback added clarity and depth to this thesis.

To my work colleagues, for the support and encouragement, and to the secretaries who are waiting patiently to have the sign on my office door changed to read “Dr”. Thank you.

Thanks to Father Roland Mark who counselled me during some very challenging periods. I am forever grateful.

I am eternally thankful to Almighty God, my everlasting source of strength, peace and hope, through whom what appeared impossible was accomplished.

Abstract

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Tessa Alexander- St. Cyr

The study was conducted in a private off-shore University, based in the Caribbean. The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of academics', to highlight the catalysts and impediments encountered in meeting accreditation-related research requirements. The purpose of doing so is to use the findings to instigate reflection, review and action to improve the process of meeting these requirements.

Typically, higher education institutions (HEIs) are categorized as teaching-intensive or research-intensive, public, or private, for-profit or not-for-profit. Regardless, a strong pressure is for HEIs to be both producers of researchers and places of learning. For HEIs to enjoy the recognition and benefits of offering accredited programs, they must comply with standards set by eternal accreditation bodies. This can add to the teaching-research tension that is widely reported in HEIs. For teaching-intensive HEIs, accreditation can intensify this tension, as there are often research requirements which are not part of existing practice. But, although literature on the research-teaching tension is widespread, literature on its relationship to accreditation is sparse. This study explored academics' experiences in meeting accreditation-related research requirements, within their practice as part of an externally accredited program. The research questions were: (1) How do academics understand their role as researchers in externally accredited programs? (2) How do accreditation-related research requirements affect academics' work? (3) How do academics strategically maintain research outputs to meet accreditation-related research requirements?

This study employed a qualitative case study design. Using purposive sampling, the sample consisted of 10 academics (3 academic heads and 7 faculty members), representing the 3 externally accredited programs within a single institution. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews. Data analysis conformed to Creswell's (2009) steps for data analysis.

Four common themes were found. Those were: theme 1- academics' understanding of their research role, theme 2 - dynamics between academic roles, theme 3 - institutional research culture and academics' agency and theme 4 – strategizing for research productivity. More specifically, the findings show research is deemed secondary due to a dominance of other academic roles, low research productivity and the practice of research for promotion. Furthermore, being a researcher is challenging as a result of low institutional research culture, poor internal research structure, time constraints, faculty-related matters and collaboration issues. Additionally, although the accreditation-related research requirements had mixed impact on the academics' work, the most prominent was on their teaching activities. Moreover, despite the use of varied strategies for the maintenance of research outputs, the most frequent were research committees, special initiatives, and projects.

Key words: Accreditation, research requirements, research productivity, academic work, teaching-research tensions

List of Abbreviations

CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation
ERA	Excellence in Research
HEI	Higher Education Institution
FPHEI	For Profit Higher Education Institution
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
MoE	Ministry of Education
REF	Research Excellence Framework
S & T	Science and Technology
SAS	School of Arts and Sciences
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SGS	School of Graduate Studies
SFT	Structural Functional Theory
SOM	School of Medicine
SVM	School of Veterinary Medicine
VCT	Values Conflict Theory

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Research productivity/output is one of the\criteria against which the programs are measured for accreditation. Each program has its own research requirements, as stipulated by the specific accrediting body. This study explores academics' experiences of meeting accreditation-related research requirement, in the context of an international higher education institution (HEI). This chapter introduces this thesis, by offering the background of the research problem, the rationale for the research, the institutional context, the study focus (inclusive of the research aim, objectives and questions) and the significance of the study. The chapter concludes with an overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Research Problem

Historically, there has been debates on research productivity (Hendel & Lewis, 2005). These debates appear to be continuing in the 21st century as the need for innovative solutions and practices across the world increases. McKee (2003) asserts research increases knowledge and comprehension of phenomena, enhances professional practice, is a precursor to innovation and provides for evidence-based decision-making and policies. The research productivity of universities also influences their rankings and their ability to compete in the global environment. Three prominent university ranking systems are the Times Higher Education (THE) World University ranking, the Shanghai Jiaotong University (SJTU) Academic Ranking and the Quacquarelli-Symonds (QS) World Rankings (Altbach, 2012). These rankings all have research-related criteria and weighting which shows that research-related indicators account for between 60% to 90% of the assessment criteria. As such, from the institutional level, academics' research productivity is a major driver of universities' rankings performance. Moreover, based on its social and economic value, research is a crucial component of higher education in relation to the evaluation of HEIs and research attainment is one of the most international academic functions (Ramkumar, 2018). Therefore, it is understandably why internationally, there is pressure on higher education institutions to be producers of research, as well as places of learning. However, this is not a very recent development since, according to Sibal (2011), the idea of universities as research institutions emerged during the 19th century.

The benefits of research are widely acknowledged. However, research productivity challenges are also recognized. Often, researchers, especially novice ones, find research difficult. They question the need to do research, what to research, how to go about researching, who to research as well as how to disseminate, apply and advance the knowledge generated by the research (Remenyi et al, 1998) contend. Nonetheless, research engagement in HEIs is progressively becoming an espoused value. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly embedded in their cultures; even within HEIs that are not research institutions. In fact, HEIs are frequently considered as invaluable reservoirs for to knowledge production. This contributes to the renewed focus on the publish-or-perish situation facing faculty members (Smith, 2011). Moreover, the Chair of Science and Technology (S&T) in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has expressed the need to increase and improve regional research productivity.

In relation to this, the Chair of Science and Technology (S&T) in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has expressed the need to increase and improve regional research productivity. A similar call is echoed by organizational administrators. However, institutionally, research engagement, though linked to performance benefits, is not mandatory for faculty. Conversely, accreditation agencies require research productivity from faculty, and with specified groups. While this is the case, HEIs have invested significantly towards accreditation-related issues, data on its effectiveness in facilitating organizational improvements and its impact on organizational functioning and performance is sparse.

Accreditation agencies employ policies, procedures, and specific criteria to measure the performance of the schools and programs they accredit. These are made available and are used by the programs to guide their functioning, documentation and to prepare their self-study reports. As the Accreditation Coordinator at one of the externally accredited programs at my institution, I am tasked with ensuring my program adheres to the accreditation policies, procedures, and criteria. In this role, I also write the accreditation self-study document for my program, with collating faculty's research activities and reporting these activities to various stakeholders, including the accreditation agency. I also engage with faculty in the other externally accredited program since my program offers dual/joint degrees with their programs. As such, there is data

sharing among these programs. Research engagement and outputs are areas of concern which I observed, and which was also drawn to my attention by colleagues across these programs.

Notably, there are clear mismatches between the expectations of the accreditation agencies in relation to research and the university's apparent lax stance regarding it. Faculty contracts are focused strongly on teaching responsibilities and research engagement/ activity and productivity. Additionally, faculty contracts make no mention of conducting research as a duty/ responsibility. Moreover, faculty who are not involved in research, have negligible research activities or are prolific once they satisfactorily undertake their teaching and/ or administrative roles, they receive their performance bonuses. In practice, research comes into the spotlight whenever there is a call for promotions because part of the criteria speaks directly to research activity/ productivity. As such, while some academics engage in research activities others exercise the autonomy afforded to them based on the policies of the university and opt not to do research. Regardless, the accreditation agencies require the programs to demonstrate research engagement/ activities to maintain their accredited status. Programs can only do so if the faculty members engage in research activities. This situation brings to the fore the structure agency issue and whether academics can effectively manoeuvre based on the expectations of the accreditation agencies, the nature of the university and their own individual capacities. These prevailing circumstances piqued my interest and influenced my decision to focus on this phenomenon for my research project. I wanted to explore the lived experiences of academics in meeting the accreditation-related research requirements while functioning within an institution where there is a strong focus on teaching and no research mandate.

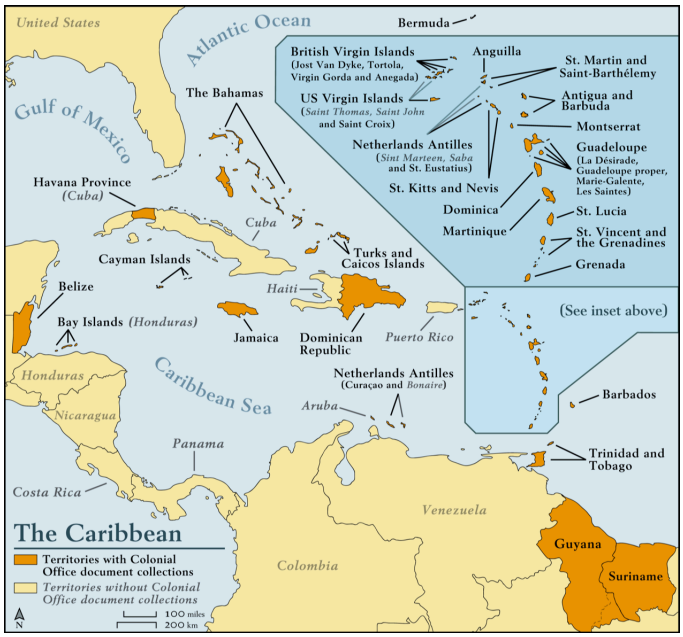
1.2 Research Context

Inarguably, accreditation agencies impose various requirements on HEIs as part of the accreditation process. To enjoy the benefits of offering accredited programs, HEIs make every effort to meet these requirements. In an effort to present an unambiguous picture of the situation, I thought it necessary to present an overview of both the regional and institutional status quo.

1.2.1 Regional context

The Caribbean is a region in the Americas. It comprises an archipelago of islands consisting of sovereign states, overseas departments, and dependencies. The Caribbean is one of the world's most constrained geographical regions because of its large composition of small islands, its location in relation to many northern countries and the level of political, economic, and social activities that occur between these nations (Braveboy-Wagner, 2014).

Figure 1: Map showing the Geographic Location of the Caribbean Region



Source: The National Archives - UK

Historically, European powers such as Spain, England, France, and the Netherlands sought to establish profitable colonies in the region. This resulted in the Caribbean being a disputed area during the European wars for centuries. The Caribbean was at one time the center of these countries' first overseas empire or colonies. These European powers, having utilized a slave trade to support the tropical plantation system that had spread throughout the region, established a long-term presence there (Martin, 2011). Balance of power and dynastic succession that were evident throughout European diplomacy and wars, where England, Spain and France were the strongest rivals, also impacted the region. Many Caribbean nations changed hands/ ownership between these nations. England was the most prolific in the end as many nations remained under its rule. Interestingly, despite gaining independence, the Queen of England remained the Head of State of these countries. In recent times, moves have been made to depart from this. Some

Caribbean nations, with the most recent been Barbados has done so while others, such as Grenada, are considering to follow suit. Interestingly, the loss of power by former colonizers enabled the United States (US) to become a major influence in the Caribbean (Martin, 2011). Notably, the US has military, economic and political influences in the Caribbean region. In fact, the United States' hegemony in the Caribbean has become increasingly visible. Included in this are many aspects of the American culture and system of education at the tertiary and higher education landscape. Furthermore, the Caribbean has recorded a strong interest of Asian companies, particularly among the Chinese, in the region which reflects their foreign economic policies (Wenner & Clarke, 2016). In fact, the university where this study took place is American owned but also has Asian investors. One can argue that if the university was state-owned the focus on research might have been stronger given Caricom's assertion of the need to increase research productivity in the research, as highlighted above.

Geopolitically, the Caribbean is identified as a sub-region of North America (United Nations Statistics Division, n.d). This designation perhaps explains why Caribbean HEIs tend to pursue accreditation mainly from Northern American Agencies and why, despite a strong resemblance of the UK education system at the primary and secondary levels, many HEIs adopt a North American style of functioning. Moreover, North America is the top destination for Caribbean immigrants (Zong & Batalova, 2019). There are approximately two (2) million immigrants in the Caribbean (IOM UN Migration, n.d). These numbers have remained stable over the years (UN International Organization for Migration, 2019). Notably, some migrate there to pursue continued education and or employment. Additionally, many North American students who do not get accepted in their home country attend medical school in the Caribbean because these schools offer the second chances to matriculate. So, employability of graduates is an important motivation for some Caribbean HEIs to pursue accreditation from North American agencies since they will return to their country of residence after graduation.

Furthermore, Braveboy-Wagner (2014) claims the small size of the Caribbean archipelago limits their resources and makes the territories susceptible to external influences. Given the geopolitical connections with North America, the education systems within the territories are not exempt

from these influences. In relation to education and specifically to accreditation, the US alone, there are more than 8,200 institutions and 20,000 programs accredited by one of more of the recognized accrediting agencies (Council for Higher Education Accreditation-CHEA, 2013). Reflecting these trends, they have a strong focus on accreditation. It is important to note, even though some Caribbean islands have accreditation boards, they tend to endorse the decisions of external accreditation agencies in lieu of undertaking the full process themselves. This is possibly due to limited resources and expertise. In other cases, an abbreviated review is done by local ministries of education (MoEs). Additionally, some HEIs highlight that their programs are recognized by MoEs as opposed to accredited by them. While some may argue this as mere semantics, it provides an important layer for understanding the phenomenon under investigation. Moreover, external accreditation agencies' criteria are the same regardless of the geographic location (and inherent factors) of HEIs. Therefore, individual institutions must ensure its functioning adequately accommodates accreditation criteria.

1.2.2 Institutional Context

This research was conducted in a private, for-profit, international HEI. Majority shares are held by North American investors. The university is considered an offshore HEI. While its campus and the offices that manage its day-to-day functioning are situated in the Caribbean, its main administrative and support services offices are in the USA. In practice, this means most of the key decision-making activities take place in the US and are then channeled down to the administrators on campus. As a results, on-campus personnel tend to have limited direct involvement in the decision-making process in many areas; aspects of university functioning that affects their status and activities on campus. The overall functioning of the university positions it as an offshore international HEI.

Knight (2015) compartmentalizes international universities into different models. Table 1 below summarizes these models.

Table 1: Models of International Universities

Model	Features
Classic/ 1st generation	Diverse, international and local partnerships, employees and collaborations
Satellite 2nd generation	Satellite offices/ branch campuses, research centers and contact offices
Internationally co-founded/ 3rd generation	Developed by partner institutions in different countries

This research was conducted in a private (American-owned), for-profit, international HEI. Universities are categorized as being international based on 3 main factors (Knight, 2014). The first is a high international student population which speaks to diversity in the geographic origins of students. The second is a large proportion of international faculty which, like the demographics of the student population, speaks to the countries and sub-regions of origin of these academics. The third is international collaborations, in terms of all student learning experiences, including shared facilities, practical exposures and research (Knight, 2014).

More specifically, Based on Knight (2015) categorization of international universities, the university conforms to the classic/first-generation model. It has different international partnerships, international students and employees and is engaged in various international and intercultural initiatives on location and abroad. Although considered an international HEI, the institution employs a North American education system. This is evidenced, among other things, by its organizational chart, culture, and ways of functioning. As an international university, this institution has a diverse student and faculty population, as it relates to gender, geographic origins, race, and ethnicity. The student and faculty demographics are most likely affected by the focus of the different schools. The HEI has four schools: School of Medicine (SOM), School of Veterinary Medicine (SVM), School of Graduate Studies (SGS) and School of Arts and Sciences (SAS). The university offers different part time and full time academic and professional programs at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels as well as certificates and courses in specific vocational areas. Only the SOM and SVM have external accreditation so only programs from these schools are included in this study.

At the university faculty differ in rank (Demonstrator, Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor) and level (junior, upper junior, senior). Moreover, each rank has different stages. Junior faculty have typically a master's degree or were recruited immediately after completing their doctoral studies and are considered early professionals. They are recruited as Instructors. In rare cases, there are junior faculty with a bachelor's degree and who hold the rank of Demonstrators. Upper junior faculty are those who may have been at the junior level for quite a while, who may have progressed through the different Instructor stages and have recently earned a doctoral degree. This category is also reflective of faculty who were recruited with some amount of professional experience and a doctoral degree. These persons are either not seeking promotion or would not have met the criteria for it. Interestingly, research outputs are used as a criterion for promotion. There are cases though where persons with a doctoral degree and significant professional experience accept position at the junior and upper junior levels. Senior faculty have various sub-sets. Firstly, they can be academics persons who were recruited with a doctoral degree and extensive professional experience. Secondly, they may have progressed through the various Instructor stages, earned a doctoral degree while employed at the HEI, and have consistently been promoted and is now a professor. Additionally, there are those who promoted from the upper junior level.

Faculty in this institution have either full time or part-time contracts. Full time contracts range from a minimum of one year to a maximum of three years. These contracts are often given a 'permanent-temporary' label to indicate to financial institutions that these contracts have automatic renewals unless otherwise expressed by faculty or the university. As such, the university does not use a tenure system where permanent or indefinite positions are awarded. Faculty roles includes teaching, research, and service. Service constitutes university, governmental, non-governmental and other community or academic activities in which academics are engaged. Service activities include, but are not limited to, committee leadership/membership, consultancies, training/workshops, and reviews. The focus placed on those roles by the university administrators also follow that order of importance. Interestingly, the employment contract requires faculty to fulfill a ten-month teaching contractual period every year. The university uses a Full Time Employment (FTE) system. While there are instances

where some academics choose to commit their entire FTE to teaching, faculty are expected to dedicate a minimum of sixty percent (60%) to it. Despite the order of importance of the three roles, faculty have some degree of flexibility in dividing the remaining forty percent (40%) between research and service if they choose to engage in these or are asked by their supervisor. In this regard, it is important to highlight this institution identifies itself primarily as a teaching institution where research is encouraged but not formally mandated. It is important to reiterate here the employment contracts has no clause which speaks to research. Faculty engage in research based on their professional and or personal interests. This, therefore, creates an interesting situation where the university does not mandate research productivity, but the accreditation agencies require it. This situation and my personal experiences in it motivated me to undertake this study.

Braithwaite et al (2011) acknowledge the need to improve the research base for accreditation purposes. Meek, Teichler and Kearney (2009) establish the need to do so for research purposes. Hence, this study is relevant for my professional practice and context as well as regionally and globally. Although, according to Meek et al (2009) the need to promote research in HEIs more generally is well documented, this study is more focused on academics' experiences of meeting accreditation-related research requirements. This is the strongest driver in my practice context, for externally accredited programs, within an international HEI based in the Caribbean region.

During the development of the interview schedule, I had familiarized myself with the research requirements for the other two programs represented since I was already familiar with one. Additionally, before each interview, I reviewed the accreditation agency's research requirements for the programs. Below are the direct excerpts from the accreditation criteria in relation to the research requirements for each of the academic programs. I opted to remove the name of each program because I thought this would bolster the anonymity of the participants. The letters were randomly assigned to the programs. To address the authenticity of the information, screenshots of the actual criteria are presented. These excerpts show dissimilarities in the research-related requirements of the accreditation agencies. While this is expected because the accreditation agencies are not the same, they pre-empt differences in academics' experiences in meeting the

requirements as well as variances in approaches to ensuring compliance at both the program and institutional levels.

Figure 2: Accreditation-related Research Requirements for Program A

Percent of faculty (specify primary instructional or total faculty) participating in research activities
Number of faculty-initiated IRB applications
Number of students advised
Number of community-based research projects
Number of articles published in peer-reviewed journals
Total research funding
Number of citation references
Presentations at professional meetings
Support for development and mentoring of new faculty
Number of grant submissions

Figure 3: Accreditation-related Research Requirements for Program B

The college must maintain substantial research activities of high quality that integrate with and strengthen the professional program. The college must demonstrate continuing scholarly productivity and must provide opportunities for any interested students in the professional veterinary program to be exposed to or participate in on-going high-quality research. All students must receive training in the principles and application of research methods and in the appraisal and integration of research into veterinary medicine and animal health.

Figure 4: Accreditation-related Research Requirements for Program C

Evaluate the research activities of the faculty (areas of emphasis, level of commitment, quality, quantity) in the context of the mission and goals of the medical school.

Assess the adequacy of the resources (equipment, space, graduate students) for research. Evaluate the amount of intramural support for research and the level of assistance available to faculty members in securing extramural support.

Assess the impact of research activities on the education of medical students, including opportunities for medical students to participate in research.

1.3 Study Aims and Objectives

This study aims to explore academics' experiences of meeting accreditation-related research requirements for externally accredited programs within a single American-owned institution based in the Caribbean, using a qualitatiove case study approach. The research has three objectives. The first objective sought to ascertain faculty members' perceptions of their roles as researchers within accredited programs. The second objective was to establish the effects of having to meet accreditation-related research requirements on academics' work, in terms of quantity and quality. The third objective sought to highlight the strategies that academics use to meet and maintain the accreditation agencies' expectations as it relates to research productivity outputs.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Given the nature of the research topic, this study can be significant on different levels. Firstly, this study can be instrumental in assisting the departments at the research site with evaluating the appropriateness of their research goals and objectives. This is particularly important for departments that currently offer externally accredited programs. Also, this is critical to the university since it is currently seeking external accreditation for some its programs. Further, this study could serve to guide plans and policies to ensure compliance with and manage accreditation-related research requirements. Additionally, since the university's administration is currently in the process of formalizing research policies/ procedures with the hope of making research a core responsibility of faculty, this study could heighten administrators' cognizance of faculty's experiences with these research requirements. This holds implications for the quantity and quality of the research capacity building infrastructure offered by the university to foster research productivity. Therefore, this study could serve as a catalyst for reviewing the current infrastructure, policies, and procedures, at the micro level. Furthermore, this study could serve as a point of reference for other regional and international HEIs. In other words, this study can inform the design of institutional policies for promoting a research culture which will contribute to the external accreditation requirements.

1.5 Thesis Overview

This first chapter provided the research problem. It outlined the research context, , the research aim/objectives, and the significance of the study. The second chapter situates this study within the wider literature on issues related to accreditation, research, the interplay between them as well as discusses the main theoretical perspectives which informed the study. The third chapter presents an in-depth discussion of the methodology and methods used to accomplish the research aim, objectives, and questions. It concludes with a detailed synopsis of the data analysis process used. The fourth chapter focuses on the findings. The fifth chapter discusses the findings. The sixth chapter focuses on conclusions and recommendations.

1.6 Summary

This chapter discussed the research problem. It also presented the research context on the regional and institutional levels. Furthermore, the aims/ objectives of the study were highlighted. Then, the significance of the study was discussed. The chapter concluded with the presentation of the thesis overview.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a detailed review of the literature surrounding the research topic: Academics' experiences of meeting accreditation-related research requirements. This review of the literature is presented under four overarching headings: the teaching-research nexus, organizational culture, academic work, accreditation, research, and theoretical framework. These were considered appropriate focal areas since the research problem revolves around a situation where externally accredited programs within the HEIs are required to demonstrate research productivity in or to be compliant with accreditation standards, but research is not mandated by the university. Moreover, these are deemed relevant for exploration of academics' lived experiences of meeting the accreditation-related research requirements while functioning within an institution where there is a strong focus on teaching.

2.1 The Teaching and Research Nexus

HEI's are identified as research-intensive (prestige-seeking), teaching-intensive (reputation-seeking) or a combination of both. However, HEIs historically more focus was placed on the first two broad types of institutions: research-intensive (also referred to as research-driven/ led) and teaching-intensive (also referred to as teaching-driven/ led). The aims of research-intensive universities are to generate ground-breaking discoveries, to find new understanding and transmit them (International Alliance of Research Universities- IARU, n.d.). As such, they are held in high esteem especially since societies are becoming increasing knowledge-based. These universities are characterized by strong research culture which is evidenced by their impacts, outputs and research environments which are often externally supported, based on their research performance, by entities including governments (Tomas & Jessop, 2019). Moreover, research-intensive universities prioritize more time and resources for academics to conduct research than teaching-intensive ones (Fung, Besters-Dilger & van der Vaart, 2017). However, they are seen as 'loss leaders' because the revenue gained from research is insufficient to cover its costs (Lombardi & Craig, 2018). As such, they rely heavily on funding from different sources. On the other hand, teaching-intensive HEIs tend to carve out a niche market and focus strongly on building their reputation there. They are institutions where teaching is the primary/ core focus,

and where research is less prominent in the organizational culture and activities (Tomas & Jessop, 2019). Moreover, in teaching-intensive universities, academics have more teaching time, and the HEI has a more diverse student population (McLean, Abbas & Ashwin, 2013). One would expect that more time would also be spent on supporting these students than on conducting research. Interestingly, an added identifier to types of universities is the categorization of universities as being entrepreneurial. The concept of entrepreneurial university involves the evolution of the traditional missions of university, teaching and research, to include economic development facilitated by the transfer of research findings (Etzkowitz, 2019). Economic development activities can be observed through initiatives such as joint research ventures and academic spin-off companies (Feola & Cucino, 2021).

Regardless the differences in the characterizations of HEIs as teaching-led/intensive or research-led/intensive, HEIs are places for knowledge sharing and creation. The synergy between teaching and research in HEIs has been a focal point for decades. Interestingly, in some quarters of the higher education landscape, national and global rankings of HEIs are driven by their research excellence (Mägi & Beerkens, 2015). While this may be the case, the category/ type of HEI could influence the strength of research pursuits and potentially their ranking. One may question the need to use research to rank teaching-led/ driven HEIs and conversely to use teaching to rank research-led/ driven institutions. Interestingly, despite the synergy between teaching and research, globalization and marketization detangle these two roles (Arimoto, 2015). Moreover, HEIs and government's policies contribute to the weakening and possible destruction of the teaching-research practices of academics (McKenzie, Griggs, Snell & Meyers, 2018). Despite this, the need to produceand synthesize knowledge must be acknowledged.

Knowledge increase and the need for synthesis

A notable growth in academic knowledge has been observed worldwide. Growth involves increases in existing disciplinary knowledge as well as the creation of new disciplines created (Clark, 1996). Notably, new disciplines, as well as the importation or upgrading of existing areas in higher education, breed additional demands for research (Clark, 1996). These new demands create further fragmentation of the academic profession through increased competition and the development of intra-institutional departments. (Clark, 1996) In relation to this, research often

requires a high level of specialization and the development of knowledge within narrow disciplinary confinements (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). Neither students' needs nor those of corporate entities seamlessly fit into these disciplinary compartments. As such, structuring the curriculum to external needs and demands instead of internal needs creates challenges to academic territory and freedom (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). However, increased knowledge creation external to HEIs results in knowledge systems that are globally distributed (Gibbons,1998). Furthermore, for HEIs to productively engage within these systems, they need to modify their approaches to research and teaching (Gibbons, 1998). Historically, approaches were characterized Mode 1 and the modified approaches as *Mode 2. Table 2 below captures the essences of both approaches.*

Table 2: Approaches to Teaching and Research

Mode 1 Characteristics	**Mode 2 Characteristics**
Emphasis on the individual	Emphasis on teams
Academic control and authority over research direction	Research direction shaped interaction between researchers and users
Discipline-based	Problem and issue based / transdisciplinary
Local institutional knowledge base	Organizational diversity, networks, connectivity / draws together knowledge from diverse sources
Quality judged through peer review	Broadly-based quality control incorporating peer-review and judgements of users (eg. economic and social impact)

Teaching-Research Tensions

Friction related to combining teaching and research roles affect institutions as well as academics' portfolios of activities (Mägi and Beerkens, 2015). In response to this, in some countries, research is prioritized at the expense of teaching or a balanced teaching-research model (Arimoto, 2015). In others, academics who are recipients of multi-year research grants are increasingly being relieved of teaching responsibilities so they can focus on their research (Bak

& Kim, 2015). This may not mean they are entirely released from all of their teaching activity; just some. Moreover, the context of this study, given the research site is a teaching-led/ driven university, such considerations may be non-existent. In some countries, there number of academics who are adjunct faculty has increased (Bettinger & Long, 2010). While the scope of this study neither involves adjunct faculty nor trends in that population, increases in adjunct faculty could result in more teaching responsibilities being done by individuals who are not full-time employees of HEIs and as such, they may not be encouraged nor required to do research. Consequently, the university's ability to meet the accreditation research-related requirements could be negatively affected. However, it is almost impractical to acquire and keep an academic position without having research activities and outputs (Mägi and Beerkens, 2015). Therefore, it is normal for academics to have teaching and research portfolios. Although, this maybe the case, the connections between teaching and research are multifaceted and continues to be a debated topic in higher education.

Research-informed Teaching

Many studies on research-informed teaching concentrated on shaping practices by pinpointing dissimilarities between individual academics' perspectives on teaching and learning (Brew & Mantai, 2017; Wilson, Howitt, Wilson & Roberts, 2012). Others focused on institutional enablers of research-informed teaching (Jenkins & Healey, 2005). This alluded to the need to expand knowledge on what militates and facilitates research-informed teaching (Brew & Mantai, 2017). Notwithstanding, there is a plethora of studies on how research is entrenched in the curriculum and how these affect students' outcomes (Mathieson, 2019). Notably, the practice of having students actively involved in research has better learning outcomes than faculty-led, content-focused instruction (Mathieson, 2019). Moreover, having students as partners in research projects has been encouraged (Healey, Bovill & Jenkins, 2015; Brew & Mantai, 2017). This speaks directly to a component of the accreditation-related research requirements which focuses on students' involvement in research. It also suggests the need to have academics engaged in research in order to positively impact the teaching-learning environment and outcomes. Should this be the case, meeting the accreditation-related research requirements could be better facilitated.

However, the teaching-research relationship is not automatic and needs to be deliberately developed (Mathieson, 2019). Notably, academics' definition of research and their beliefs about teaching and learning affect how they teach research (Brew & Mantai, 2017; Wilson et al, 2012). Moreover, poor institutional strategies for promoting research-informed teaching, time and funding challenges as well as limited recognition and rewards were identified as institutional constraints (Mathieson, 2019). In relation to this, the direction and strength of the teaching-research synergy is dependent on the academic discipline, student demographics, the type of academic and the orientation of the academic program (Gros, Viader, Cornet, Martínez, Palés & Sancho, 2020). As such, a multifaceted, multistakeholder approach to research-informed teaching and inarguably to ensuring the accreditation-related research requirements are met. This type of approach can only be effective if it is facilitated by the culture of the organization.

2.2 Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is the internal characteristics which defines the personality of every organization (Morcos, 2018). It is tangible, can be deliberately devised and leveraged, affects morale, employee engagement and performance (Morcos, 2018). Therefore, organizational culture is a process of collective programming (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). It shapes the identity of the organization, creates boundaries, balances self-interests against those of the organization and regulates employees' behavior (Robbins, 2010). Hence, organizational culture filters the functioning of organizations and their employees. Understandably, there are different conceptual culture models. One of the most prominent is Hofstede et al (2010) Onion Model of Culture which illustrates the different levels of depth in which different elements of organizational culture are entrenched in individuals' minds and functioning. Although the model was developed to classify national culture, it is also relevant to organizational culture. The model holds that the less embedded a cultural element is, the higher the possibility/ likelihood that it will be changed or discarded (Ritcher, 2016). The model differentiates between four layers of cultural elements, using a peeling analogy. The layers become more embedded as they are peeled from the outer layer inwards (Ricther, (2016).

The layers are (1) symbols, represents elements that are easy to develop and get rid of and only recognized by individuals who share a particular culture (inclusive of institutional jargon, gestures, images, and objects). The second layer, heroes, represents individuals who are either living, dead, real, or fictional, who have characteristics that are highly appreciated in the organizational environment (Hofstede et al, 2010). Heroes serve as models for acceptable behavior. The third layer, rituals, are the collective activities of organizational constituents which are aimed at achieving a specific socially essential end and, as such, they are undertaken for their own merit (Hofstede et al, 2010). Rituals include greetings and ways of showing respect as well as other social and religious ceremonies. Interestingly, outsiders can observe the first three layers by paying attention to the practices of the culture. The fourth layer of the Onion Model is the core of an organization's culture. They are defined as broad preferences as it relates to states of affairs in the organization (Hofstede et al, 2010). Values take the form of statements of feelings that are presented as paired positive and negative expectations (Hofstede et al, 2010). They indicate what the organization considers to be important. In the context of this study, organizational culture would be a strong influencer of the academics' work.

2.3 Academic work

HEIs have various ways of accounting for academic work. Brew, Boud, Crawford and Lucas (2018) identify the institution's selection criteria, academics' job description, work plans, promotion criteria, institutional policies, procedures, and structure. Coaldrake and Stedman (2009) say academic roles are usually categorized under three distinct but sometimes overlapping umbrella headings: teaching, research, and service. These headings are also the ones employed in the research context. Malcom and Zukas (2009) assert it is neither uncommon for HEIs to identify the proportion of time to be spent on these activities nor for them to specify the number of work hours for academics. Brew et al (2018) contend that such specifications are simply frameworks for action and do not dictate how academics balance these activities nor their academic trajectories. They also argue academics have a degree of flexibility when undertaking their roles. These assertions are consistent with what happens at my institution. Teaching time/ percentage of the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) is stipulated and faculty can determine how they spend the rest of their time on the other roles. However, it is not unusual for faculty to have their

teaching time reduced to engage more in other roles. This is a discussion though that happens at the program level with department chairs/ leadership. While this kind of flexibility could auger well for faculty job satisfaction, it could also create lopsidedness in some roles, and this could result in new challenges.

The Impact of Change on Academic work

Each HEI has its own values about academic work. Traditionally, these values reflected academic autonomy, high regard for original research and aloofness towards administrative/ managerial tasks (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). These academic values and the work practices inherent to them often conflict with the demands of external stakeholders (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). They identify specific aspects of change. Firstly, instead of adapting to meet the challenges that result from the evolution of higher education, academic work has been extended (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). Secondly, many HEIs and individual academics prefer accretion rather than consistently undertaking the challenges of making strategic choices and rethinking the definition of an effective and productive academic (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). Thirdly, while academics are intrinsically motivated by their work, they feel increasingly pressured and disconnected from their HEIs (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). Fourth, academics feel burdened by the additional expectation placed on them and would rather be able to freely determine the parameters of the work lives (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009).

In relation to this, some academics felt, despite notable surges in student population and slight increases, their workload had not grown while others felt it did (McInnis, 1996). This could be attributed to the use of part-time staff to balance the workload of full-time ones (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). In relation to this, academics' workload has become more sustained throughout the calendar (McInnis, 1996). This may be exacerbated using summer semesters as well as continuous pressure on academics to accommodate the various expectations placed on them (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). Additionally, there is an increase in academics' non-core work such as administrative responsibilities (McInnis, 1996). Moreover, He faculty member's greatest dissatisfaction with their workload was linked to external demands for accountability and quality assurance (McInnis, 1996).

Strong focus on performance, professionalism, and accountability

In relation to this, in Britain, the Research Excellence Framework (REF) is used to impose a set of standards for successful academic research attainment (Olssen, 2016). The nature of such external processes, the complexity of compliance standards, at the organizational, departmental, individual levels, affects anxiety, stress, and research productivity (Olssen, 2016). Interestingly, the REF also encourages dubious research strategies and plans, overemphasizes conformity to an external system and redefines professionalism based on that system (Olssen, 2016). It is understandable that academics may be overwrought by the external demands presented by McInnis (1996). However, based on the dynamics of higher education discussed above, it is evident these requirements will continue to invade and potentially become integrated into the functioning of HEIs. Considering this, academics ought to quickly get used to the external demands (Ramsden,1998). Notably, those external to the academic profession may be ignorant of the organization and governance of academic work (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). Additionally, of academics' work, meticulous training, and external peer review of the quality of outputs are only applied to their research activities (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). They acknowledge though, to some extent, there are external reviews of HEIs' processes and structures while some activities are left to the discretion of individual academics (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). The latter practice seems to contravene quality assurance standards and establishes the need for HEIs to be held accountable for higher education outcomes.

Shifts to collective and institutional emphasis

External accountability is most often focused on institutional characteristics rather than on those of individual academics (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). Curriculum changes and increased adoption of initiatives into the mainstream of HEIs' activities potentially shifts control of curriculum management from individual academics to institutional academic and non-academic teams (McInnis, 1998). But, when all is said and done, academics are the ones on whose shoulders the responsibilities of meeting the accreditation agencies' research requirements rest. Nevertheless, in line with the shifts in emphasis, HEIs are increasingly decentralizing their organizational and management activities to faculties and schools (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). While such initiatives expand managerial authority, they also demand added accountability

(Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). As a result, HEIs are intentionally separating policy making from service delivery and emphasizing general policy guidelines, accountability, and performance (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). These changes are characterized under two dimensions of control which yields four quadrants (McNay, 1995). This characterization is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Dimensions of Control Showing Related Quadrants

Quadrants	**Dimensions of Control**	
	Policy	Organizational
Collegium	Loose policy	Loose organizational control
Bureaucracy	Weak policy direction	Tight organizational control
Corporation	Relatively intrusive policy direction	Tight central control
Enterprise	Firm policy directions are established	Loose organizational control

HEIs utilize elements of each of the four styles in their functioning. However, the importance of each changes as HEIs respond to both internal and external pressures (McNay, 1995). This has bearing on the design of governance strategies employed by HEIs. The formation of these strategies requires HEIs to make relative judgements about its functioning, taking into consideration threats, opportunities, feasibility of decisions and ability to adapt under specific conditions (Roberts, 2020). The strictness of control exercised by HEIs can be loose or tight. The difference between the two is the level of autonomy facilitated by institutional policies. In relation to the various demands , HEIs worldwide move from employing loose policy control, where there are high levels of autonomy to well-established institutional policies, which is more restrictive and involve high levels of supervision (Davies, 1997). Based on McNay's (1995) categorization, this is reflective of HEIs move from primarily being at the position of the collegium and bureaucracy to being corporations and enterprises. However, this shift to entrepreneurial styles of functioning significantly impacts HEIs' culture and policy (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). Understandably, there will be inequity in the distribution of resources, the recognition given, and the rewards bestowed because some members more effectively exploit the opportunities within an academic community than others (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). Interestingly, for academics to effectively capitalize on these opportunities, HEIs needs Gibbons

(1998) Mode 2 functioning. This mode requires the HEIs to flexibly organize individuals and resources across the institution.

Moreover, in certain aspects of HEIs, some academics may experience greater freedom and control over their work than others if the HEI finds it valuable (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). Furthermore, the entrepreneurial university does not limit its measure of the value of academics' work to disciplinary research status (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). In relation to this Gibbons (1999) states academics who exist in Mode 2 environments must embrace different research practices. Doing so, however is not without implications. Their practices may not be consistent with the reward systems within the HEIs where they work (Gibbons, 1999). He asserts though for HEIs to be active Mode 2 (entrepreneurial) institutions they need to effectively use their intellectual capital and that this may involve exploring employment agreements with broader scope (Gibbons, 1999). In line with this, academics are increasingly using a team approach to teaching and research (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). While this may be the case, HEIs continue to be fixated on individual academics (Lynton, 1998).

Specialization and demands of academic work

As noted above, academics roles are encompassed by three primary areas: teaching, research, and service. Moreover, academics are expected to engage in all three (Lodewijks, 2011). However, these labels neither effectively capture the variety and complexity of academics' work nor HEIs' staffing policies nor the realities of academic work (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). Teaching and research are often observed as the nucleus of academic work while other tasks receive reduced importance (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). Based on this assertion, in the context of this study, academics would be expected to spend most of their time on teaching and research. Furthermore, academic work related to teaching and research has become more defined and demanding (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). Regarding research, there is increased accountability for the quantity and quality of academics' research outcomes (Lodewijks, 2011). Research demands include improving student supervision, publishing, patenting, establishing links with industries as well as preparing, submitting, and reviewing grant applications (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). Clearly, these expectations require dedicated time.

Moreover, given the multiplicity of expectations placed on academics and the increasing challenges of academic work, it is expected academics' levels of comfort will vary. Furthermore, academics' strengths and their interests and productivity will change with time (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009; McInnis, 1998). These variations among academics also insinuate the possibility of more status differentiation due to teaching and research (McInnis, 1998). They also hint at the need for a concerted effort to improve productivity and efficiency in teaching and learning (McInnis, 1998). These circumstances imply the need for academic roles to be internally restructured based on performance (McInnis, 1998). As HEIs endeavor to be more effective knowledge system players, new categories of academic work may need to be created (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). In relation to this, they highlight knowledge production occurs locally, regionally, and internationally as well as inside and outside of HEIs (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). Notably, in knowledge systems, HEIs are expected to collaborate with stakeholders in using knowledge to address specific problems (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009). It is also expected that within HEIs' framework for academic work, teaching should be influenced by individual academic's research interests (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2009).

Blurry academic roles

It is unimaginable to have functioning HEIs without academics. Interestingly, with the evolution of higher education came the need to create sub-categories, namely full-time and part time, of academics. As discussed earlier, these academics had teaching, research and service roles which include coordination, leadership, and management responsibilities. Coaldrake and Stedman (2009) introduce the concept of para-academic roles and state they encompass faculty development, learning support and instructional design. This created overlap of roles. This 'blurred-role approach' allows for flexibility and diffusion of roles, as the need arise (Brown, Crawford & Darongkamas, 2000). In relation to this, roles are linked to identity and presents professional identities (Whitchurch, 2008). These are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Categories of Professional Identity

Categories of identity	Characteristics
Bounded professionals	Work within structural boundaries (eg function, job description)
Cross boundary professionals	Actively use boundaries for strategic advantage and institutional capacity building
Unbounded professionals	Disregard boundaries to focus on broadly-based projects and institutional development
Blended Professionals	Dedicated appointments spanning professional and academic domains

Taken from Whitchurch (2008)

Due to the blurring of roles, a 'third space' has emerged (Whichurch, 2008). The "third space" is occupied by unbounded and blended professionals (Whitchurch, 2008). Additionally, 'perimeter' roles such as community and regional partnerships, pastoral support have appeared and, over time, these roles have penetrated the 'third space' (Whitchurch, 2008). In fact, bounded approaches will continue to facilitate the maintenance of processes and systems, to guarantee academic and regulatory standards and to ensure institutional continuity (Whitchurch, 2008). Nevertheless, HEIs need to balance these approaches to allow more flexibility. This, however, will require more of academics' time. In relation to this, Pickersgill (1998) found academics' time was increasingly used on administrative duties. With this being the case, it is inevitable they would have less time to commit to research activities. Moreover, Coaldrake and Stedman (2009) argue current and future blurring of roles will continue being important since HEIs are adopting more flexible modes of teaching and learning. This will also be impacted by the fact that education has become a global commodity.

Globalization, & Marketization of Education

Educational institutions are categorized based on the educational services they provide. These often include pre-primary, secondary and tertiary or higher education institutions such as colleges and universities. Educational institutions also vary based on the educational purposes for which they have been established. Moreover, they can either be privately or publicly/ state owned and can be for-profit or not-for profit institutions. Regardless of their description, globalization and commercialization of education has resulted in significant changes in the

functioning of HEIs. Globalization of education entails increased interdependence and merging of national economics, trade liberalization, market issues (inclusive of competition, struggle, and uncertainty), transnational education, commercialization of knowledge and shifts in the models of education (Strihul & Khomeriki, 2018). As a result, the autonomy traditionally enjoyed by educational institutions and their experts have significantly decreased as has society's trust of universities (Strihul & Khomeriki, 2018).

In response, HEIs employ various options to address these issues. One such effort is to function as a market player. HEIs often engage in and undertake initiatives to increase their attractiveness to potential students and in doing so, increase their profit margins and market shares (Greaves & Scicluna, 2010). Sometimes, they embark on collaborative teaching and research partnerships with other institutions; referred to as partners. In fact, HEIs' ability to function as research hubs is commercially used with the view of profit-making (Greaves & Scicluna, 2010). This is consistent with Timmerman's (2010) assertion that HEIs can also be described by the different internal and external exchange partnerships forged. However, exchange suggests reciprocity and true reciprocity exemplifies mutual benefits and trust as it relates to the goods and services offered but not necessarily contributions of equal value (Timmerman, 2010)

Within this higher education market system, both the consumers and producers of educational services determine the area and extent of their investment and, this in turn, influences demand and supply (Timmerman, 2010). The cost of higher education is an important determinant in educational services delivery (Timmerman, 2010). The value ascribed to higher education also plays an important role. These assertions speak to the issue of commercialization. Commercialization of education involves the introduction of a new product or service based on the demands of students (Borgohain, 2016). This means that HEIs are constantly competing to provide quality education at a reasonable cost. An inherent aspect of the commercialization of education then is quality education; a concept which includes the quality of learners, the learning environment (inclusive of infrastructure, lecturers, and learning experiences), academic content, processes, and outcomes (Borgohain, 2016). As such, there is need for a mechanism to function as a gatekeeper for quality assurance. This role is often ceded to accreditation agencies.

Moreover, there is a popular notion that education is a public good where nation states are directly responsible for the provision of education. However, with the advent of more diversified stakeholder involvement, varied sources of funding and increased numbers of private institutions, an outcome has been the sustained marketization of the industry. This puts focus on issues surrounding governance in education (Locatelli, 2018). Notably, contemporary HEIs reflect a stakeholder model which is typified by the implementation of shifts in societal values (Fumasoli & Stensaker, 2013). This model is reflective of the impact of marketization of HEIs as well as the current disposition of the university in which the study was conducted. Interestingly, higher education systems that have high degrees of marketization tend to be less effective (Li, 2011). This is perhaps a reason for which Lark (2004) advocates for a more cultured balance between structure and agency so HEIs can exercise the potential latitude they tend to have when dealing with the different frameworks which exist in their environments.These values and frameworks, many of which appear to be policy-related, are strong drivers of change within HEIs.

Interestingly, Marginson and Rhoades (2002) highlight while there is a push for increased efficiency, self-sufficiency and accountability within HEIs, there has been limited analysis of the global forces that promote these ideals. Accreditation agencies play a key role in facilitating the ideals by imposing minimum standards on the HEIs they accredit. However, in the midst of meeting these requirements, HEIs are challenged to preserve and promote their identity and independence. Moreover, as a private for-profit HEI, the university in which the research was conducted does not have state subsidization but enjoys various concessions, as a reciprocal gesture from the local government, in response to its social responsibilities and contributions to the local economy. Thus, it reflects a neoliberal stance. Neoliberalism, by its very nature, epitomizes capitalist policies that maximizes market freedom, reduces the interference of the state and increases the role of the private sector in economic activities (Cohen 2007). Interestingly, HEIs have undergone significant transformations as a result of neoliberalism in order to justify their institutional presence (Olssen & Peters, 2005). Private and for-profit HEIs, such as the research site emerged out of these transformations in the higher education landscape. Evidently, as previously established above, FPHEIs is prioritizes profit. To balance this with

retain higher education as a public good, and to ensure value for money, there is need for a system to do so. Accreditation has become that system.

2.4 Accreditation

It is widely held higher education play a critical role in national development. Kumar et al (2020) makes a simple yet profound observation when they note education takes human beings and turn them into human resources. To do so, it is imperative quality education is received. Accreditation is one of the tools used to ensure educational offerings meet a minimum set of requirements. There are two types of accreditations: program accreditation which focuses on the quality of specific programs and institutional accreditation which speaks to the quality/ effectiveness of the institution (Lubinescu et al, 2001).

The Practice of using Accreditation

HEIs face multiple challenges which demand multi-level reformation and transformations in functioning. Internationalization undoubtedly intensifies organizational responses particularly as it relates to ensuring student get value for money. There is clearly a need for quality assurance and accreditation presents an invaluable avenue for doing so (Burke & Butler, 2012; Stensaker, 2011; Ogden, 2008). Accreditation involves internal and external reviews which serve as quality assurance for the public. Exhaustive lists of accredited HEIs and accreditation agencies are available. There are about 100 US accreditation entities that authenticate more than 6400 HEIs (Schray, n.d.) and 19,000 programs which serve approximately 24 million students (Council for Higher Education Accreditation-CHEA, 2010); the UK and other developed countries have comparable structures and lists (Schwartz & Westerheihjden, 2004). Regionally, only 4 academic quality assurance structures exist although the intention is to establish a regional accreditation body (CARICOM, 2011); an undertaking which requires the full range of resources. HEIs spend considerably on accreditation because of its ascribed value. However, while accreditation influence students' choice of HEIs, several other factors are at play. As such one would wonder if the resources expended on accreditation is worth the while.

The CHEA (2010) notes accreditation boosts the public's confidence in the quality of education HEIs provide and signals that graduates have met widely accepted educational standards. Moreover, it confirms HEIs can accommodate changes in academic thought and public expectations, enables transfer of credits between HEIs, facilitates student access to federal financial aid and fosters entrance into certain professions (CHEA, 2010). Evidently, much can be derived from accreditation, no wonder HEIs' pursuit multiple accreditations. At the research site, for instance, accreditation was already secured for some programs and others are being pursued. However, accreditation also makes demands on HEIs and the globalization of accreditation presents the impetus for the academic community to initiate and improve curricula and assessment practices (Lubinescu et al, 2001). Importantly, while in some contexts accreditations is mainly related to teaching, for American HEIs, there is a strong research component to its criteria.

Impact of Accreditation

Accreditation policies and standards vary based on agency and level as do their impacts on the functioning of HEIs. Van Kemenade and Hordjono (2009) discovered accreditation had negligible effects on educational quality improvement. Nonetheless, while accreditation had no substantial impact on classroom activities, it increased faculty workload as well as transparency within the program studied, and it had material and positive impacts on administration of the program (Collins, 2015). Additionally, a gap between the existing organizational culture and the one encouraged by accreditation agencies; an expected finding given accreditation standards are indicative of ideal situations and not necessarily reality (Collins, 2015). Furthermore, there are correlations between accreditation and high employee attrition (Halasa et al, 2015). However, since a plethora of factors though affect attrition, it may be instructive to explore this correlation further. The New England Association of Schools and Colleges-NEASC (2005) claims accreditation affects organizational practices. Moreover, found external conditions have moderately high impacts on the organization (Haris, 2012). In addition, external forces impact research-related issues (Bland et al, 2005). National states (and the various industries) have considerable influence over university functioning through funding as well as promoting specific areas of research (Brennan, King & Lebeau, 2004). Accreditation agencies exert similar influence on universities by requiring disciplinary research and encouraging research with a

range of stakeholders. These influences result in HEIs adjusting how they function. In fact, external forces are sometimes perceived as being disruptive because HEIs frequently pursue maintenance of the status quo practices and reinforcement of their current identities (Marshall, 2011). In the context of this study, the external force is accreditation and the area under scrutiny is academics' research.

2.5 Research

Different factors spur HEIs to adjust, develop and adopt new ways of functioning; globalization and internationalization compounds the situation (Rumbley, Altbach & Reisberg, 2012). Moreover, considering the focus on value for money and scholarship, quality assurance and research are constant focal points. Inarguably, strong implications exist for knowledge production, researchers and HEIs (Cabral & Huet, 2014). Interestingly, research is a 'positive core' within organizations (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001). This means research add new life to organizations. As such, should research become a positive core at the research site, a new way of functioning could be observed. Undeniably, research productivity and quality are invaluable to innovation, economic growth, and stability (European Union, 2010; Hill, 2006). This could be an explanation for the sustained attention on knowledge commercialization; a focus which amplifies the economic benefits of research (Radder, 2010). In fact, HEIs are often recognized and ranked based on its research productivity. These accolades affect HEIs' ability to compete globally and to attract high quality students and faculty (Finnegan & Gamson, 1996). This could be debated since the research site is primarily a teaching institution and it attracts a wide range of faculty and students. The focus then would be on defining what is 'high quality'. However, this could have merit since the institution is often considered a second chance university for students who did not get into an HEI of their first choices.

Moreover, research is a precursor to transformation, reflective practice, and professional development (Balzano et al, 2013) and fosters discipline-specific knowledge (Fontainha & Gannon-Leary, 2008). Also, research productivity affects faculty salary increases and promotions (Nichols, 2004), tenure (Boyer, 1990) and professional respect (Finnegan &

Gamson, 1996). As it relates to accreditation, failure to demonstrate research productivity, particularly when reviewed against research goals and objective, can result in schools and programs been required to address the issue. If the problem persists, accreditation agencies can withdraw their accreditation; an action which could negatively affect public perception of the quality of educational experiences offered by an institution and affect its viability in the global market.

For-Profit Higher Education Institutions, Profits and Cost of Research

For-profit higher education institutions (FPHEIs) have existed for a long time. Previously, there was strong growth in the for-profit higher education institutions (FPHEIs). This was large due to a favorable business climate, a busines model that responded quickly to market forces and the failure of other education sectors to deliver vocation-oriented education (Cottom, 2017) Although for-profit higher education institutions (FPHEIs) are seen as being distinctively innovative, they are also considered controversial. Moreover, the FPHEIs sector has significantly declined, is inadequately preparing students for the workforce and has questionable practices and policies (Hodgeman, 2018). Interestingly, unlike traditional HEIs, the primary aim of FPHEIs is on preparing students for vocation or trade and not for continuing education (O'Malley, 2012). Moreover, contemporary FPHEIs operate in a space that is driven by large corporations. As such, they are financialized and, as a result, their practices reflect those of the financial sector where the focus is on protecting shareholders' interests (Cottom, 2017). One of the most obvious interests of owners and shareholders in FPHEIs is maximization of profits. As such, buyouts of FPHEIs are observed in the sector. This is a noteworthy since although the HEI in which the research was conducted has not had a buyout per se, over the years it has seen new investors from non-traditional markets such as Asia. In relation to this, Eaton, Howell and Yannelis (2018), in addressing the issue of private equity buyouts in higher education, note buyouts are linked to a tripling of profits. In further highlighting their strong focus on maximization of profits, Klor de Alva and Rosen (2020) assert FPHEIs use a business model where tuition is always greater than expenses, where 95% of their revenue comes from tuition.

On a related tangent, competition in the higher education sphere has caused HEIs to re-examine their functioning inclusive of operating costs and the wise use of resources (Newman, 2001). With reference to research, generally, there are 2 types of costs related to conducting it: direct and indirect costs. The former is typically associated with salaries/ wages, travel, and equipment whereas the latter involves overhead costs including use of facilities. A study commissioned by DG Research and Innovation in 2011 reports that these costs have increased across all industries, and in some cases, organizations are spending more on research to capitalize on emerging market opportunities. Understandably, research costs are determined by the price of inputs, the type and the volume of research done as well as the location where it is done (DG Research & Innovation, 2011). Moreover, there is increasing competition for research funds (Bailey, Badway & Gumport, 2001). Therefore, since conducting research is an expensive venture and the propriety nature of FPHEIs and their focus on maximizing profits, limited investment in that area would occur. This situation would be even more exacerbated in teaching-intensive HEIs such as the one where this study was conducted.

Research as Scholarship-the debate

There is dissent on the definition of scholarship and where academics' focus should be, with ensuing debates on teaching versus research and service. Notably, there is a strong contention as to whether research is part of scholarship or a distinct activity. Research is viewed a careful and deliberate investigation to discover and interpret facts, to revise theories and laws based on new data and the practical application of same (Louis & Reed, 2013). Conversely, scholarship is the knowledge and learning generated by the characteristics and activities of scholars and present scholars as being synonymous to researchers (Louis & Reed, 2013). Scholarship can then be seen as the sum of different activities in which academics are involved. This is consistent with Boyer's (1990) compartmentalization of scholarship based on the functions of the professoriate: discovery, integration, application and teaching perhaps alleviates some contentions; facilitating synergy. He also advocates for departure from narrow definitions/ interpretations epitomized by the publish-or-perish mantra to a broader one that accommodates a wide range of academic work and institutional commitments (Boyer, 2016). Such an all-encompassing scope though could run

the risk of creating role ambiguities. I argue publish-or-perish and scholarship could exist in the same context, as seems to be the case at my institution. However, perish means limiting one's upward mobility in rank.

However, if in line with progressive organizational missions, it could lead to notable changes in HEIs' academic culture, ranging from faculty roles to institutional purpose (Fiddler et al 1996). Nonetheless, the definition of scholarship and research adopted by this research is consistent with Boyer's (1990) compartmentalization as well as Louis and Reed's (2013) definitions. Regardless of definition, great scholarship is unique and needs an effective system and environment in which to thrive (Christensen & Eyring, 2011). A major concern for HEIs is the research scholarship model considering the use of some models do not result in outstanding research. Interestingly, based on accreditation criteria, quality appears not to be as important as quantity; a strong focus being on peer-reviewed publications regardless of the class of the journal/publisher. However, quantity-focused approaches to research scholarship may not be the best route since they promote research of questionable worth (Bok, 2007).

The Research Context, Resources & Determinants

The atmospheres in which research occurs are multi-layered and include aspects of researchers' immediate environment, colleagues, academic traditions, and disciplinary areas (Brew, 2001). Contexts frequently interplay, boundary lines become blurred and conflicting demands are made on academics (Brew, 2001). Research is sometimes regarded with suspicion (Brew, 2001). and perhaps rightly so since an emerging trend is the decline in academics' rights to choose whether to engage in research as well as their choice of research issues and subjects (Brew, 2001). Accreditation-related research requirements potentially exacerbate the situation especially in HEIs without a strong research culture and require adequate research resources. Key is the presence of a Chief Research Officer whose role is a healthy research environment (Smith, 2011). A research strategic plan which addresses specific research goals and high-priority areas is invaluable (Smith, 2011). One is particularly important since failure to demonstrate strategic thinking and planning can jeopardize accreditation. However, securing buy-in and changes in administration are ever-present challenges in this regard (Smith, 2011). Additionally, faculty need finances, space and students; the primary enablers of research activity and productivity

(Smith, 2011) from different and reliable sources. This is paramount since although HEIs receive grants, gifts and endowments, there are sometimes donor-imposed restrictions (Smith, 2011).

However, much is unknown about the determinants of institutional and individual research productivity (Gonzalez-Brambila & Veloso, 2007). Notably, HEIs should gauge research productivity; being mindful of faculty characteristics, their research history, and institutional variables. Therefore, productivity should not be examined solely in terms of output numbers but also inputs (Eagen & Garvey, 2015). This information can be used to create policies to boost productivity and to design plans to create research equilibrium across units (Gonzalez-Brambila & Veloso, 2007). Furthermore, faculty demographics are major determinants of research productivity particularly as it relates to age, gender, and academic position. Notably, publication rates are lower for female academics (Abramo et al, 2009), higher for higher ranked/senior academics (Abramo et al, 2011) and increases with age and reaches a peak consistent with one's career before declining (Aksnes et al, 2011). Additionally, while there is consensus disciplinary knowledge plays a role in research productivity (Rørstad & Aksnes, 2015), research exploring how it affects research productivity is lacking (Gonzlez-Brambila & Veloso, 2007). Also, marked differences exist between S&T communities, particularly between developed and developing countries (Nelson, 1993). This highlights the recurrent issue of resources, and which has implications for meeting the requirements of external accreditation agencies whose standards often reflect those of the developed nations.

Research Productivity Issues

The benefits of research are widely acknowledged. Research increases knowledge and comprehension of phenomena, enhances professional practice, is a precursor to innovation and provides for evidence-based decision-making and policies (McKee, 2003). However, research productivity challenges are also recognized. The way in which research is funded, measured, and evaluated has led to issues of academic autonomy (Brew, 2009). There is a decrease in zealous projects that are not subject scrutiny of objectives and deadlines (Brew, 2009). Moreover, researchers, especially novice ones, find research difficult; encountering challenges such as why they need to research, what to research, how to go about researching, who to research as well as with the dissemination, application and advancement of the knowledge generated by the research

(Remenyi et al, 1998). Nonetheless, research engagement in higher education institutions (HEIs) is progressively becoming an espoused value, and thus an inextricable part of their cultures. In fact, HEIs are frequently considered invaluable to knowledge production; a view that contributes to the renewed focus on the publish-or-perish situation facing faculty members (Smith, 2011). This thrust to produce is facilitated by the American accreditation landscape since accreditation standards require some form of research activity from HEIs. Notably, productivity is seen as the volume of output derived from a given set inputs. Specifically, in relation to research, inputs include human and tangible resources such as researchers, instruments, and material as well as intangible resources such as knowledge and social networks (Abramo & D'Angelo, 2014). Outputs include tangibles such as publications, patents and conferences presentations and intangibles such as tacit knowledge and consultations (Abramo & D'Angelo, 2014).

Funding for S&T has increased exponentially; the resultant expectation being increases in research outputs. In fact, academics are increasingly undertaking research which has the potential to get funding, moving into the realm of applied research and increased focus on knowledge commercialization (Brew, 2009). Failure increase research outputs has resulted in a move to better evaluate and monitor research (Gonzalez-Brambila & Veloso, 2007) as well as to review funding practices. Indubitably, strong researchers are most often granted research dollars to the detriment of younger, inexperienced faculty. Thus, some academics are increasingly negotiating their careers as researchers (Brew, 2009). Additionally, HEIs use research productivity to inform salary increases, promotions and departmental rankings (Gonzalez-Brambila & Veloso, 2007). Also, companies utilize the volume of publication to identify expertise within HEIs for recruiting consultants and employees (Gonzalez-Brambila & Veloso, 2007). Accreditation agencies use research productivity to accredit HEIs. However, there is disparate North-South research productivity; although HEIs in industrialized nations possess robust research traditions (Salazar-Clemeña & Almonte-Acosta, 2007) their counterparts in developing countries lag (Sanyal & Varghese, 2006). Clearly, research productivity is linked to evaluation. What is not clear though is what effect evaluation has on research productivity.

Evaluating Research Productivity

Research has become an area that is thoroughly and persistently evaluated (Cabral & Huet, 2014). Evaluations are part of the quality management system and are undertaken by different stakeholders, including HEIs. Institutions' quests for effectiveness, efficiency and accountability demands research management (Martin, 1996), departing from summative assessment to formative evaluations and encompassing wider research outputs (Guthrie et al, 2013). However, assessment of quality necessitates a clear understanding of the institution and pre-empts a certain degree of flexibility (Cabral & Huet, 2014). As such, appropriate and effective tools need to be developed to assess, monitor, and stimulate quality research (Moed, 2011). However, traditionally HEIs have shied away from evaluating research performance and academic heads attempt instead to establish faculty's research performance to have an idea of what they do and to allocate resources accordingly (Irvine et al, 1983); a practice which could result in sporadic and unstructured approaches to evaluation research performance. Nonetheless, HEIs need evidence if decisions about research are to be made and practices/ policies to be amended. Given the challenges faced by HEIs in objectively assessing their research productivity internally, they often look to external agencies for guidance (Louis & Reed, 2013); accreditation agencies included. If meaningful assessments are to be done, research evaluation structures must be implemented, and choices of benchmarks be established. In relation to this,) generally benchmarking studies use number of articles written by academics and the number of citations these articles receive as methods of assessing research productivity (Hasselback et al, 2012). It should be noted though high publication counts do not necessarily result in high citation counts (Jarvey, Usher & McElroy, 2012).

Another measure employed is the h-index. It represents researchers' lifetime citations which incorporates productivity and impact and is used to measure outputs of individuals, research groups, research facilities and nations (Bornmann & Marx, 2011). Though evidently a useful tool, the h-index is limited in that it is dependent on subject matter and should be used for within-discipline analysis (Bornmann & Marx, 2011). Several indicators used for quantifying research activity and productivity. These include grants, publications, thesis supervision, external collaborations, projects, patent filing, research proposal submissions, research committee membership, peer-reviewers, non-peer reviewed submissions and peer-reviewed submissions

(Caminiti et al, 2015). However, for benchmarks to be chosen for individual faculty members, it is paramount to determine the credit to be given to faculty's contribution to co-authored articles, the level of journal quality, appropriate levels of performance and years since doctoral qualification was achieved (Hasselback et al, 2012). While these parameters seem to be appropriate, a notable exclusion is consideration for faculty without doctoral degrees; the notable prestige ascribed to the terminal degree apparently overshadowing training, competence, and productivity (Finkelstein, 1984) of this group. Additionally, while quantity measures are popular because they are easy to obtain, the issue of quality especially since one does not produce the other (Louis & Reed, 2013). Therefore, research evaluation ought to assess organizations where researchers function as well as the researchers (Louis & Reed, 2013).

Research Evaluation Frameworks & Models

Academia is the natural hub for exploration, speculation, and hypothesis testing whereas governmental and industrial researchers are more focused on developmental and mission-influenced research activities (Louis & Reed, 2013). Moreover, given that academics have relative autonomy over research activities, it is necessary to have performance metrics to evaluate them (Louis & Reed, 2013). Various research evaluation frameworks exist. They are used for accountability purposes, for analysis and learning, for funding allocation and for advocacy (Guthrie et al, 2013).

A notable one is the Research Excellence Framework-REF which uses quantitative assessments to facilitate funding allocation to HEIs in the UK, using a cross-institutional approach (Guthrie et al, 2013). The Excellence in Research-ERA which was widely received, assesses research in Australian HEIs to measure quality and impact at disciplinary levels (Guthrie et al, 2013). The Productive Interactions-PI, a framework used in Europe to measure change-resulting interactions with stakeholders, is best suited for the departmental level where goals are consistent and where there is a focus on performance improvement (Guthrie et al, 2013). While all three are beneficial, the last framework appears to be most consistent with the American system of accreditation because of its strong focus on goals. However, they are all important for generating questions on sustaining faculty research productivity in this case study. Models of factors affecting faculty's research productivity are also used. Creswell's (1985) highlights the influence of research

culture; alluding to the discrepancies in research productivity levels between HEIs based on their focus. Bland et al's (2002) found disconnects between organizational and departmental visions and actions, insufficient time for scholarly activities and the absence of support of a collegial environment and appreciation of the work faculty do (Bland et al, 2002). This is assumingly an indication of the fragmentation highlighted by Finkelstein (1984); though ambiguously done. Interestingly, Dundar & Lewis (1998) highlight faculty size as been a key factor for research productivity. This begs the question of whether increasing the faculty complement would positively affect departmental research productivity. These factors also influenced questions developed for the interview schedule.

2.6 Situated sense-making

Like in other social situations, academics make sense of their social situation within HEIs. According to Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld (2005), sense-making is the process through which individuals ascribe meaning to their collective experiences. As such, it is seen as the ongoing process people use to rationalize what they do. There are seven properties of sense-making. The first is identity and identification which revolves around the notion that who people think they are within their social contexts influences what they do and how they interpret events (Thurlow, 2009; Watson, 2009). The second is retrospection which presents sense-making opportunities (Weick et al, 2005). Therefore, time influences what individuals notice (Dunford & Jones, 2000). As such, attention and anything the interferes with it are key elements of the process (Gephart, 1993). The third is that individuals interact with their environments in dialogues and narratives (Currie & Brown, 2003). So, when individuals speak and create accounts of their interactions, they are able to organize their experiences as well as exercise control over events or predict them (Abolafia, 2010). Moreover, this also helps them to manage change better (Kumar & Singhai, 2012). The fourth is that sense-making is a social activity through which possible stories are either preserved, maintained, or shared (Maitlis, 2005). Additionally, the narratives can be conversations with oneself as well as with others (Currie & Brown, 2003). The fifth highlights

that sense-making is ongoing and, as such, people simultaneously shape and interact with their environments (Weick, 1993; Thurlow & Mills, 2009). The sixth, is that individuals extract cues from their environment to help them filter relevant and acceptable information (Brown, Stacey & Nandhakumar, 2007). These are used to connect extracted ideas to broader meaning (Weick, 1995). The seventh is that individuals prefer possibility over accuracy in narratives (Abolafia, 2010). These aspects interact and intermingle as people interpret events and their interpretations become evident through narratives which communicate sense (Currie & Brown, 2003).

Inarguably, academics, in making sense of their social situations, need to balance their freedom against personal, institutional, and structural constraints (Brew et al, 2018). This acknowledgement is especially important given the scope of work in which academics engage; namely teaching, research, service, and administration. While academics' responses to these constraints are influenced by their self-efficacy, self-confidence and their stage of career, differences in focus and how they attend to their areas of emphasis can be observed (Brew et al, 2018).

2.7 Theoretical Framework

This thesis recognizes human behavior is a complex interplay of personal and environmental factors. In the context of academics' experiences with meeting accreditation-related research requirements, recognizing the complexity of the phenomenon, I was tempted to employ more than one theory on which to couch this study. However, despite the complexity of this phenomenon, and Cobb's (2007) advice to use multiple theories in such situations, and as is consistent with social sciences research, I used one theory rather than multiple ones. I acknowledge Denzin's (1978) assertion that multiple theories facilitate theoretical triangulation and will deepen my understanding of the phenomenon. However, the theoretical framework used in this study is a dualistic one and, as such, I contend is equally effective in framing the focus of this study.

The research that forms the focus for this study is unequivocally sociological. Therefore, the structure-agency discourse is paramount since it suggests that any investigation of social life and

role/identity development necessitates a clear understanding of the relationship between social structures and human agents (Burridge, 2010). Research that is focused on academics' identity/roles and experiences within higher education settings tends to fall within the social constructivist orientation. It assumes that our knowledge of ourselves and our environment comes from our interaction with each other and not from some objective reality (Berger & Luckman, 1966).

In relation to this, this study draws on Archer's (2000) social realist framework. From a sociological viewpoint, it suggests that researcher on academics 'identities/roles and experiences should not be confined to what is empirical, observable/ perceived. In investigating the interplay between structure, culture, and agency in meeting the accreditation-related research requirements, it is important to separate them to effectively analyze the synergies between them. For Archer (1995) structures refer to organizations, positions, and roles while culture refers knowledge, beliefs, conversations, and ideologies.

Social realism holds a stratified view of human agency which is inclusive of one's sense of self, personal identity and social identity. Interestingly, social theorizing occurs at two extremes. The first being an under socialized view of individuals where they are seen as a self-sufficient outsider who functions with a social environment but owes nothing to it (Archer, 2002) The second being the over socialized view of individuals whose functioning is shaped and molded by the social environment (Archer, 2002). Considering these demarcations, in the context of this study, academics may function within their programs but contribute nothing to the research requirements. On the other hand, academics accommodate shifts and changes in their social environment such that the shifts become ingrained in their functioning. as a result, they would make every effort to contribute to the research requirements. Clearly, a social realist framework allows for the identification of structural and cultural apparatuses, and the combination of these different mechanisms in facilitating academics' research identities and experiences. This has bearing on the experiences academics have in meeting accreditation-related research requirements particularly as it relates to maintaining social order and create entrenched habits, skills and dispositions to research engagement and productivity. So, through social realism, I, as

the researcher can begin to understand how and why academics experience the phenomenon in the way they do.

2.8 Summary

This chapter presented a detailed review of the literature surrounding the research topic. This review was presented under four overarching headings: the teaching-research nexus, organizational culture, academic work, accreditation, research, and theoretical framework. These were considered appropriate focal areas since the research problem Moreover, these were deemed relevant for exploration of academics' lived experiences of meeting the accreditation-related research requirements while functioning within an institution where there is a strong focus on teaching.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

This study explores lived experiences of academics in meeting accreditation-related research requirements in the context of an international higher education institution (HEI). This chapter presents the research aim and questions. The chapter describes the research paradigm, outlines the methodology used, its justification and relevance, the study approach and design, sampling method, access to participants and participant recruitment. Afterwards, this chapter highlights the ethical procedures undertaken. Later, it discusses the data collection method and data analysis strategy. Thereafter, it focuses on my positionality as the researcher. The chapter concludes with a summary.

3.1 Research Aim and Questions

This study aimed to explore academics' experiences of meeting accreditation-related research requirements for externally accredited programs within the university. The purpose of this study is to use the experiences shared in the narratives to instigate reflection, review, and action at the various organizational levels, so that the process of meeting these requirements can be improved.

The research sought to answer the following questions:

- How do academics feel about the academic roles in relation to each other within the university?"How do accreditation-related research requirements affect activities undertaken by academics within their professional roles?
- Do academics who are research-oriented have any strategies for pursuing and maintaining a research profile?

The research questions (RQs) were informed by my personal experience and practice-based observations of my colleagues in relation to the topic. Contemporary issues surrounding accreditation and research also informed the RQs. Additionally, existing literature, as well as the lack thereof, on the research topic was used to identify gaps and to guide the development of questions.

3.2 Epistemology

Cameron (2011) advises researchers to locate themselves explicitly and pragmatically. I was interested in the academics' experiences based on the interplay between their academic roles and their participation in accreditation- related research activities within the organization. This locates me within the constructivist paradigm since it facilitates contextual learning of academics' experiences. Constructivism holds knowledge is mainly made up of social interactions and not awareness of external realities (Stake, 1995). Moreover, people construct meaningly differently even when they experience the same event (Crotty, 1998). Additionally, Crotty (1998) highlights three fundamental assumptions of constructivism relevant to this study. First, since meaning is constructed by people as they interact/ experience with the world, researchers like me use open-ended questions to allow participants to share their views. Secondly, people make sense of their environment based on their social and historical perspectives. Thirdly, meaning generation is always a social process which arises in and out of people's interaction with their environment. As such, the findings and interpretations from studies such as this one is always context-specific.

Furthermore, the paradigm is underpinned by exploration, through the collection of information, and interpretation, making meaning of the information, by drawing inferences and matching information to abstract patterns (Aikenhead, 1997). Thus, as Chowdhurry (2014) intimates, this perspective was appropriate because it allowed me to explore what was specific, unique, and different about the academics' experiences. As highlighted by Yanow & Schwartz-Shea (2011), it further allowed me to interpret these elements in a way which enabled better understanding of the issue from the different realities that existed within my institution, using participants' perceptions, background, and experiences. So, by extension, there is an inherent interpretive aspect of the paradigm. In fact, the gatherer and ongoing interpretive role of researchers are prominent elements of qualitative case studies especially since knowledge is constructed not discovered (Stake, 1995).

3.3 Approach

This research focused on exploring academics' experiences with meeting accreditation-related research requirements. As such, a qualitative approach was the most appropriate. Peters (2014) asserts qualitative research fosters the in-depth analysis and understanding of phenomena this study needed. Furthermore, qualitative methods are invaluable to the discovery of meaning people ascribe to their experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Also. qualitative studies facilitate exploration of perceptions and lived experiences (Jones, Torres & Armino, 2006). Moreover, I chose to take a qualitative approach because it could generate data on a topic which has limited literature on it (Stake, 1995). Additionally, a qualitative approach was espoused because it is consistent with constructivism, my epistemological stance. Notably, Creswell (2013) asserts qualitative studies are often referred to as 'interpretive' studies.

Kaplan and Sacuzzo (2005) note a major contention against the use of qualitative methodologies are their subjectivity. Like Ratner (2002), I recognized my subjectivity was intimately enmeshed in this study since it guided my selection of topic, my methodological commitments and my interpretation of the data collected. While I appreciate the concerns raised, I believe acknowledging this subjectivity was as important as situating myself paradigmatically. According to Patton (2015), in doing so, I can highlight, own and reflect on my own voices and perspectives as well as increase my openness to and understanding of the phenomenon. Nevertheless, Sullivan (2002) advises qualitative researchers, like me, to minimize subjectivity and bias. However, Galdas (2017) contends qualitative researchers are integral to the research process and final product and it is neither possible nor necessary. Bumbuc (2016) sees subjectivity as a way of deepening the understanding of a phenomenon. As such, subjectivity could be valuable to data analysis if shapes every aspect of the research process. In this research, it did.

3.3.1 The Case Study approach

Notably, a plethora of factors influenced my choices. Strong factors, though, were my philosophical, ontological, and epistemological perspectives. Tennis (2008) acknowledges they normally influence a researcher's personal paradigm. I am located within the interpretivist paradigm. Within that paradigm, I had different options. After evaluating other methodologies

against the aim of this study and their fit for addressing my research questions, I found case study to be the most appropriate option. Case studies are found to be appropriate for research which seeks to answer 'how' and 'why' questions (Yin, 2003). This approach is also suitable for research which focuses on describing a phenomenon (Darke, Shanks & Broadbent, 1998). My research involved 'how' questions and aimed to explore a phenomenon. As such, selecting a meth for my research was relatively straightforward. Guided by Hycner's (1999) assertion the phenomenon determines the method and not the reverse, I chose to conduct a qualitative case study. Although many recognized case study experts exist, the most prominent of them include Robert E stake, Sharon B. Merriam, John W. Creswell and Robert K. Yin. Each of these authors have written extensively on case studies and have presented steps for effectively undertaking such research. As such, for the purpose of this research, I applied the expertise of these authors.

Case study is the strategy of inquiry used by a researcher to conduct in-depth exploration of a phenomenon such as a program, an event, a process, an individual or group (Stake, 1995). Cases are restricted by time and activity and researchers have a range of data collection procedures at their disposal, over a period of time. For this study, the phenomenon under investigation was academics' experiences with meeting accreditation-related research requirements. And, I used semi-structured interviews to collect the data and I reviewed the accreditation criteria for each of the programs included in the study. Specifically, interviews were conducted, and audio taped. These interviews took place in the academics' location of choice (their offices) to ensure they were comfort and privacy. Creswell (2009) refers to these interviews as naturalistic dialogues. Interviews were transcribed verbatim into MS Word documents and data were manually coded for emergent themes. Another key aspect of case study research is the unit of analysis. This is the area of focus of the research (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). In this study, the unit of analysis was academics who participated in the study.

Moreover, Yin (2009) identifies five components of effective case study design: the research questions, the purpose or propositions of the study, the unit of analysis logical links between the data and the propositions and the criteria for interpreting the findings. As noted in 3.1 above, this study had 3 'how" questions and the purpose of the study is to use the experiences shared in the narratives to instigate reflection, review and action at the various organizational levels, so that

the process of meeting these requirements can be improved. In relation to the unit of analysis, Yin (2009) advises it must be accurately specified. Merriam (1998) explains units of analysis are the cases to be studied. The unit of analysis is directly linked to the research questions. The unit of analysis in this study is academics (as a group). Another component of cases study research are data-to-proposition connections. In this study, connections are made after the data connection phase. In analyzing the data, I matched the patterns which appeared in the data to the theoretical propositions of the case study. These themes served to respond to the research question presented in 3.1 above. The last component of case study designs is the criteria for interpreting the findings. Typically, the researcher codes the data before developing themes (Yin, 2009). After developing the themes, I carefully extracted meaning from the findings and used them to inform the recommendations I suggested.

With case studies, all aspects of the design are linked. However, Maxwell (2005), in likening the connections and interactions between the different aspects to that of a rubber band, contends these links are fluid. This metaphor demonstrates while qualitative research designs tend to have a high degree of flexibility, constraints in any area can negatively the design. Therefore, it is instructive for me to acknowledge some of the contentions surrounding case study research. For instance, Flyvberg (2006) notes case study research cannot be generalized. While I acknowledge that, the aim of my research was consistent with the general principles of qualitative research which are to describe, understand and explain (Myers 1997). While I expect common themes to emerge, I did not expect the experiences of faculty to be widely generalizable based on their demographics, community of practice and variations in the accreditation requirement by program. However, I anticipated the research would contribute to a deeper insight of the phenomenon at the research site as well as contribute to wider knowledge in the field.

Case study research are also decried for lack of rigor (Yin, 2003). By extension, Darke et al (1998) highlight a range of challenges associated with this. Included in that list is the influence that I, as the researcher can have on the data collection and analysis processes. I recognized the potential for this to occur before the study began. In fact, as an Insider-Researcher, I not only occupied the same situated space as the participants but also experienced the phenomenon. Based on this situation, as Cohen Manion and Morrison (2011) intimate, I was the portal through which

participants condensed and channeled their experiences. So, as Smith *et al* (1999) put it, I was the main analytical tool. However, I adhered Walsham's stance of providing deep descriptions to effectively address the complex synergies surrounding the phenomenon. As a result, I provided clear and in-depth description of the case study site and verbatim interview excerpts when reporting the findings.

3.4 Study Design

This study used a qualitative case study research design. A purposive sample of academics who experienced the phenomenon was used. Consistent with the study design, a small, relatively homogenous sample was employed. Semi-structured interviews were used. They were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and subsequently analyzed.

3.4.1 Sampling Method

Gray (2014) advises researchers to choose the sampling strategy that most adequately addresses the research question. Purposive sampling was used. Palys (2008) supports its use for identifying and focusing on potential participants who were deemed important to a study based on who they were and their current position. Cohen et al (2011) note this method should be used with participants who have in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon. Therefore, purposive sampling is appropriate since this study needed participants who experienced the issue under investigation.

The selection of academics for this bounded case was uncomplicated. Since the overall study aimed to explore academics' experiences with meeting accreditation-related research requirements, a sample of faculty from all 3 externally-accredited programs were included. Sampling for this study was based on a strategy referred to as, "purposeful selection" which, by Maxwell's (2005) definition is "a selection strategy in which particular settings, persons or activities are selected deliberately to provide information that can't be gotten as well from other choices" (p. 88). I was interested in observing similarities and differences between faculty at the various levels. In relation to this, Robinson (2014) asserts purposive sampling supports homogeneity and heterogeneity and add richness and depth to the data collected. Creswell (2013)

claims using sub-groups increases the reliability of the data collected. Moser and Korstjens (2018) contend even when exploring a shared experience, participants should be sufficiently dissimilar in characteristics and individual experiences. Furthermore, Creswell (2013) advocates for the use of a sampling criteria. He claims this improves the quality of the data collected. Therefore, I created the inclusion and exclusion criteria below.

3.4.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The criteria used to select participants were:

- Current full-time faculty at the university
- At least 4 years working as a faculty at the university
- Faculty who experienced an accreditation cycle for their program
- Faculty who currently work within an externally (regional/international) accredited program.

The exclusion criteria for this study are as follows:

- Former faculty of the university
- Part time faculty at the university
- Current faculty with less than 4 years work experience at the university
- Current faculty who did not experience an accreditation cycle for their program
- Faculty members who do not currently work within an externally (regional/international) accredited program.

3.4.3 Sample

The research site has only three (3) externally accredited programs. I intended to have a larger sample with the same number of participants from each of these programs. However, due to challenges related to participants' workload, holiday schedule and the time remaining to complete the thesis, I adjusted the sample size. Qualitative studies allow for flexibility of sample size. In fact, Emmel (2013) notes any number presented by an author was based on a particular phenomenon with a specific population in a given setting. Moreover, Patton (2015) suggests focus on validity, meaningfulness, and insights instead of sample size. I contend the research focus is also a strong determinant. Nonetheless, Guest et al (2006) propose 12 interviews would

suffice. However, Moser and Korstjen (2018) claims phenomenological studies require fewer than 10 interviews. Smith et al (2009) suggest 3-6 participants for meaningful observation of similarity and differences between participants. Considering this, I decided a sample of 10 was judicious to get breadth and depth of experiences.

Ten (10) academics/ faculty members participated. Dibley (2011) contends this sample size holds rich and thick data, where richness equated to quality and thickness to quantity and data saturation. The sample included the academic heads (n=3) and a total of seven (7) faculty members representing the three (3) externally accredited programs. The academic heads of the three externally accredited programs were selected from departmental lists published on the organization's website. The sample included different categories of faculty in terms of rank and level. Section 1.2 provides an explanation on ranks and levels. The faculty were selected from the lists in the different accreditation self-study reports. Table 5 below presents the sample, using the pseudonyms assigned.

Table 5: Demographics of Participants

Pseudonym	***Years at the HEI***	***Current Rank***	***Faculty Level***
Mark	18 years	Professor	Senior
John	10 years	Professor	Senior
Jim	20 years	Instructor	Junior
Anne	13 years	Professor	Senior
Mary	9 years	Instructor	Junior
Jane	6 years	Instructor	Junior
Tom	17 years	Professor	Upper Junior
Jill	11 years	Associate Professor	Upper Junior
Alex	5 years	Associate Professor	Upper Junior
Dave	13 years	Professor	Senior

3.4.4 Access to Participants

The Office of Research advised permission from the Provost, the Deans of each school and the Chair of each program were not needed, as was originally thought. However, the university's research protocols required me, as an insider-researcher, to take a three-pronged approach to access. Firstly, a departmental review of the project was needed. Secondly, IRB approval was required. Thirdly, approval from the University Survey Committee (USR) was required. These approvals are discussed below. At the research site, access was hinged on the ethical approvals.

Navigating the issues to access research participants can be very challenging and particularly so when undertaking practitioner-research in one's own organization (Blaxter et al, 2013). However, I anticipated the university's focus on accreditation and increasing its research outputs would help with gaining access. Whether this play a pivotal role or not, the process of accessing participants was quite smooth except for delays in receiving approvals. However, major challenges were experienced, as highlighted in 3.4.3 above and 3.4.5 below.

3.4.5 Participant Recruitment

Upon receipt of the ethical approvals from the research site and the UOL ethics committees, recruitment began. Based on their position, the academic head of each program, who was also the Department Chair, was identified for inclusion in the study. Faculty lists found in the respective accreditation self-study documents of each of the regionally/ internationally accredited programs were used to create a list of potential participants. A total of one hundred and eleven (111) faculty, inclusive of the academic heads, met the inclusion criteria. Sub-lists based on rank were created. From those lists, others, based on level, were obtained and faculty were randomly invited to participated. Thirty (30) were invited to participate. The initial thought was to have twenty-one (21) participants. However, for reasons stated in 3.5 above, I reduced the number to fifteen (15); five per faculty level. A generic email invitation (Appendix E) was sent to prospective participants using their university email. Fourteen (14) faculty responded positively but only ten (10) participated.

3.5 Ethical Approvals & Considerations

In keeping with the protocols, the Research, Service and Scholarly Activities Committee in my department conducted an initial ethical review of the university's Internal Review Board (IRB) application and the interview protocol. Formal application cannot be made to the IRB without first having departmental approval. After approval, I directly applied to the IRB for ethical approval. This review involved a complete review of all documents to be used during the research project inclusive of certificates for doing research with human subjects. After receiving approval from the IRB (Appendix A), I also applied to the University Survey Committee (USC) for approval. One of the USC's aims is to alleviate research fatigue among the university's faculty, staff and students. Approval was received from the USC and subsequently from the UOL's Virtual Programs Research Ethics Committee **(**VPREC).

My role as Accreditation Coordinator could create power relationships. In this role, I occasionally, directly or indirectly, guide participants' behavior. This could cause participants to be uneasy. So, at the beginning of each interview, participants were reminded of my student-researcher role in the research and that their involvement had no links to their jobs. Additionally, the purpose and value of the research, use of the data, the interpretations of the data, and the possible outcomes of the research were discussed. Dick (2016) applauds these as ways of involving participants and building trust and rapport. As advocated by the Social Research Association-SRA (2003), during the recruitment stage, all potential participants were provided with the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix C). This document outlined important details about the study and their rights. They were also provided with my contact information, those of my thesis supervisors and ethics personnel at the research site and at the UOL, if they had further questions or encountered a problem. Additionally, participants' concerns were clearly and honestly addressed. This dispelled apprehensions and resulted in participants being keener to participate in the study.

Before each interview, participants were given a consent form (Appendix E) and written consent was taken. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any time. Regarding anonymity and confidentiality, an individual external to the institution

transcribed the interviews. This ensured respondents were not identifiable. Upon receipt of the transcripts, I listened to each recording to verify the transcripts. Moreover, guided by Weiss (1994), participants' names were neither documented nor reported. Pseudonyms and aliases, known only by me, were used. Additionally, I am the sole custodian of all study related documents. signed consent forms. Soft copies were stored on my password-protected laptop and hard copies in a secured filing cabinet in my office. Recordings of interviews were secured in a password-protected cloud location and deleted from the recording device. The data collected will be kept for five years after which they will be permanently destroyed.

On a related tangent, since I am an insider-researcher, it was impossible to mask the identity of the institution. Nevertheless, I made every effort to mask it for the readers. In doing so, I resolved to keep both the participants' departments and participants' identity confidential; given the nature of the institution and the focus of the study.

3.6 Data Collection

This study used a qualitative case study design. I was aware my choice of methods must be reflective of my chosen methodology. Also, they had to be able to adequately address the research goals and objectives. Additionally, Komegay and Segal (2013) claims data sources impact the integrity of the data. As such, I paid close attention to my choice of them. Patil and Yogi (2011) highlight various challenges if poor choices are made. They range from collection of inadequate data to improper analysis and presentation. Therefore, as advocated by Peersman (2014), I made clear, goal-directed data collection plans and opted to do qualitative interviewing since I was exploring the lived experiences of academics. Kvale (1996) confirms qualitative interviewing is appropriate for such a study.

Importantly, a connection exists between the core of phenomenology and qualitative philosophy. The phenomenological tradition allows researchers to investigate the issue with a new outlook through the eyes of those who experience it (Hay & Singh, 2012). My intention was to gain a first-hand, in-depth understanding of how academics' experience meeting accreditation-related

research requirements. In doing so, I would produce an account Smith (2011) refers to as 'experience close'. As advised by Willig (2013), this would reflect key contextual information which clearly locates the experiences shared. Seidman (1991) asserts interviews provides access to the context of participants' behaviors as well as a way of understanding the meaning of those behaviors. Moreover, case studies create a story which reflect participants' perspectives; a story which is essential for meaning-making. Seidman (1991) states "I interview because I am interested in other people's stories. Telling stories is essentially a meaning-making process. When people tell stories, they select details of their experience from their stream of consciousness". For Patton (1987), the purpose of interviews is to what is in and on participants' mind with a view of finding out things researchers cannot observe. As such, as a rule, I used active listening and consistently placed my 'insider' position in check. Moreover, the interview takes the form of a conversation between the interviewer and interviewees where the researcher asks questions, and the participants respond accordingly (Esterberg, 2002).

Qualitative researchers employ various data collection methods. Yin (2009) asserts the robustness of such studies benefit from having multiple sources of data. This is known as triangulation. Stake (2000) and Yin (2009) contend triangulation is invaluable to the reliability of case studies since it allows for a more comprehensive reflection of the phenomenon. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) agree. I used the full transcripts from the semi-structured interviews with participants as the main data source. Semi-structured interviews are in-depth, involves a less rigid process than structured ones and allows for freer dialogue between the researcher and participants (Esterberg, 2002). The various accreditation criteria (document analysis), field notes and memos supplemented the transcripts, where necessary. Those are indicated by the use of texts inside brackets, such as this […].

3.6.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Considering the scope of this research and its focus on meaning-making, I opted to use semi-structured interviews to capture the academics' perspectives. Moreover, Cassel (2009) and Holstein and Gubrium (2004) identify interviews as the most universal research methods. Importantly, they allow for depth of data collection. And, as suggested by Smith and Osbourne

(2008), my role was to facilitate and guide the conversation rather than dictate it. Additionally, qualitative interviews facilitate thick descriptions of the phenomenon such that readers can determine the transferability of the results (Merriam, 2002). Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest & Namey (2005) assert semi-structured interviews allow for the collection of perspectives and experiences of individual participants. Hence, given the focus of this study, they were appropriate. Moreover, Cassel (2009) avows they facilitate an authentic view of the phenomenon. Additionally, semi-structured interviews allowed flexibility in questioning where participants responded, and I probed; when necessary. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) endorse the use of probing and/or follow up questions since they facilitate elaboration and clarification of participants' responses.

3.6.2 The Interview Protocol

There are six types of questions to use during the interview process for case study research: background/ demographics, experience/ behavior, knowledge, feeling and sensory (Patton, 1987; Merriam, 2009). Furthermore, Esterberg (2002) presents general guidelines for open-ended questions (general and specific) and advises against leading and dichotomous questions as these could result in limited data collection. Additionally, for interviews to be successfully conducted relationships, rapport, and trust ought to be established (Patton, 1987).

Using the research questions as a foundation, I created an initial list of questions which were reviewed my thesis supervisors. During the development stages of the research, excluding four demographic questions, the interview protocol consisted of twenty-two questions, excluding four demographic questions. Based on the feedback received, the interview schedule was modified, and a more discursive stance was taken. The new interview schedule consisted of 16 questions; 4 of which required demographic information. An interview protocol was then created and was reviewed by my thesis supervisors and the Research and Service committee in my department as part of the ethics approval process. Additionally, acknowledging the value of piloting the data collection tool to having a good research design (Hazzi & Maldoan, 2015), the protocol was piloted with 3 former faculty members of the university who experienced accreditation cycles. Following this, the interview protocol was again updated; questions were made clearer and rearranged to flow better. This iterative process culminated in the interview protocol (Appendix

F) which was used to collect data for this study. A summary of the information collected from the interviews is presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Interview Template

Research Question	Correlated Interview Questions	Summary of information sought
How do academics feel about the academic roles in relation to each other within the university?	1 (with 2 probes) 2 (with 2 follow ups) 3 (with 1 probe and 1 follow up) 4 (with 1 probe and 2 follow ups)	-Academic roles and the time spent on each -Faculty's understanding of their role as researchers in an externally accredited program. -Satisfaction with research productivity.
How do accreditation-related research requirements affect activities undertaken by academics within their professional roles?	5 (with 1 follow up) 6 (with 1 probe & 1 follow up) 7 (with 3 probes & 1 follow up) 8	- Research requirements of accreditation agency. -Effects of the research requirements on the work faculty do (teaching, research service, other).
Do academics who are research-oriented have any strategies for pursuing and maintaining a research profile?	9 (with 2 probes) 10 (with 2 follow ups) 11 (with 1 probe & 1 follow up) 12 (with 1 probe and 2 follow ups)	-Faculty successes and challenges in meeting accreditation-related research requirements. -Strategies used by the programs and individual faculty members to meet accreditation-related research requirements. -Perspectives on the effectiveness of these strategies in meeting accreditation-related research requirements.

The interviews therefore enabled the gathering of contextual information to understand academics' experiences in meeting accreditation-related research requirements and to collect the rich data needed to answer the research questions and for doing deep exploration (Carson *et al*, 2001). I also made field-notes throughout the interviews. Each interview was conducted at the convenience of the respondents and in their preferred location and lasted approximately 40-60. A

professional agency was used to transcribe the interviews verbatim. Participants were given the opportunity to review the transcript of his/ her interview before the data was analyzed. None opted to do so.

3.6.3 Document Review

As noted in 3.6.1 above, semi-structured interviews were the primary method of data collection. However, I also collected and reviewed relevant documents. Document review was used to deepen understanding of the academics' statements (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and to enrich the description of the case (Esterberg, 2002; Merriam, 2002). The following documents, which were given random labels, were used:

1. Accreditation Criteria for Program A
2. Accreditation Criteria for Program A
3. Accreditation Criteria for Program A

Specifically, the research related criterion from each one was used to get a clear understanding of the requirements. It is important to note that each of these programs is accredited by a different Accreditation agency. Equally important is the fact that I am the Accreditation Coordinator for one of the programs in which some participants were employed, I was aware of the research requirements from agency which accredit it. However, I was at the point of the beginning of the research unaware of the requirements for the other two programs. The research requirements for each of these programs from their respective accrediting agencies are presented in 1.2.2 above.

3.6.4 Researcher Field Notes

Congruent with their use in qualitative research as a means of documenting important contextual information (Phillipi & Lauderdale, 2017), I recorded notes and observations during and immediately after each interview. During the interviews, the researcher noted participants' overall dispositions and non-verbal communication, changes in disposition, facial expressions and tone of voice. The notes added depth to the transcriptions. I made notes made immediately after the interviews while the experience was still fresh in my mind, in accordance with Hellesø,

Melby & Hauge's (2015) advice. This allowed me to reflect on the information shared by the participants and to help with the analysis and interpretation of the data.

3.6.5 Researcher Memos

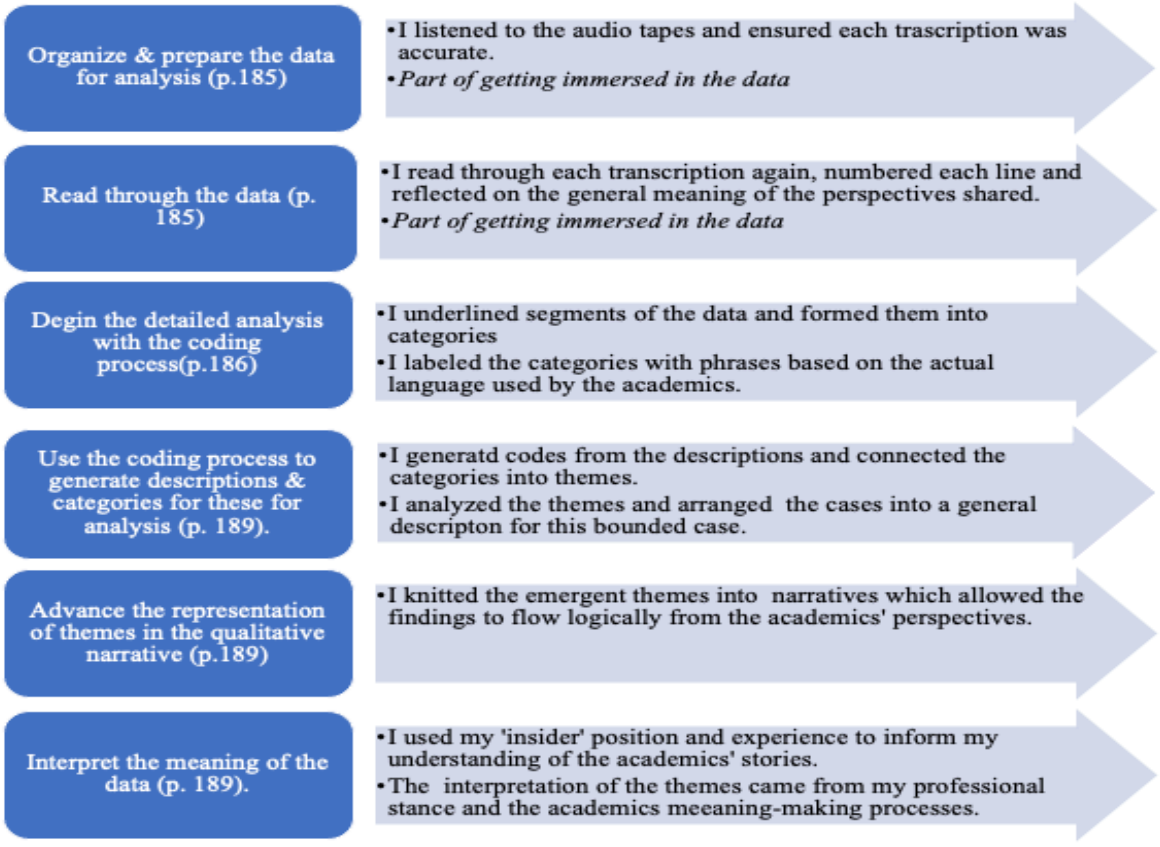
Memos are analytic or conceptual notes made by researchers. As suggested by Lempert (2007), I used memos to capture the internal conversations I was having with myself about the interview as well as the data collected. Memos were made when I listened the recordings of the interview to verify the transcripts as well as when reading the transcripts during the analysis process. In accordance with Birks, Chapman & Francis' (2018) suggestion, this allowed me to have a heightened awareness of the meaning embedded in them. I used the memos to preserve my thoughts and to used them in extracting meaning from the data.

3.7 Data Analysis

The interpretive theoretical perspective presented provided a framework for understanding the phenomenon. Merriam (2002) states the interpretive tradition holds that researchers begin with an examination of the context being studied, assumes the researcher is attempting to understand how participants make meaning and that meaning is facilitated through the researcher as an instrument. Therefore, the strategy is inductive, and the outcome is descriptive (Merriam, 2002). This study reflected the continuous back-and-forth between data collected and their analysis spoken about by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Moreover, data analysis is a not a mechanical process but a creative one (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). And, like Eatough and Smith (2008), I acknowledge the complexity of the data lodged in in-depth experiential accounts. I also affirm the richness and value of these accounts in understanding the phenomenon. Thus, instead of being simply descriptive, data analysis was interpretative. I endeavored to undertake a well-defined, rigorous process. I explored different elements of the phenomenon while maintaining the general context in which it occurred. The analysis focused on both the differences and similarities of the experiences shared by the participants. Understandably, the data analysis was anchored in academics' 'stories', examples and extracts from the data.

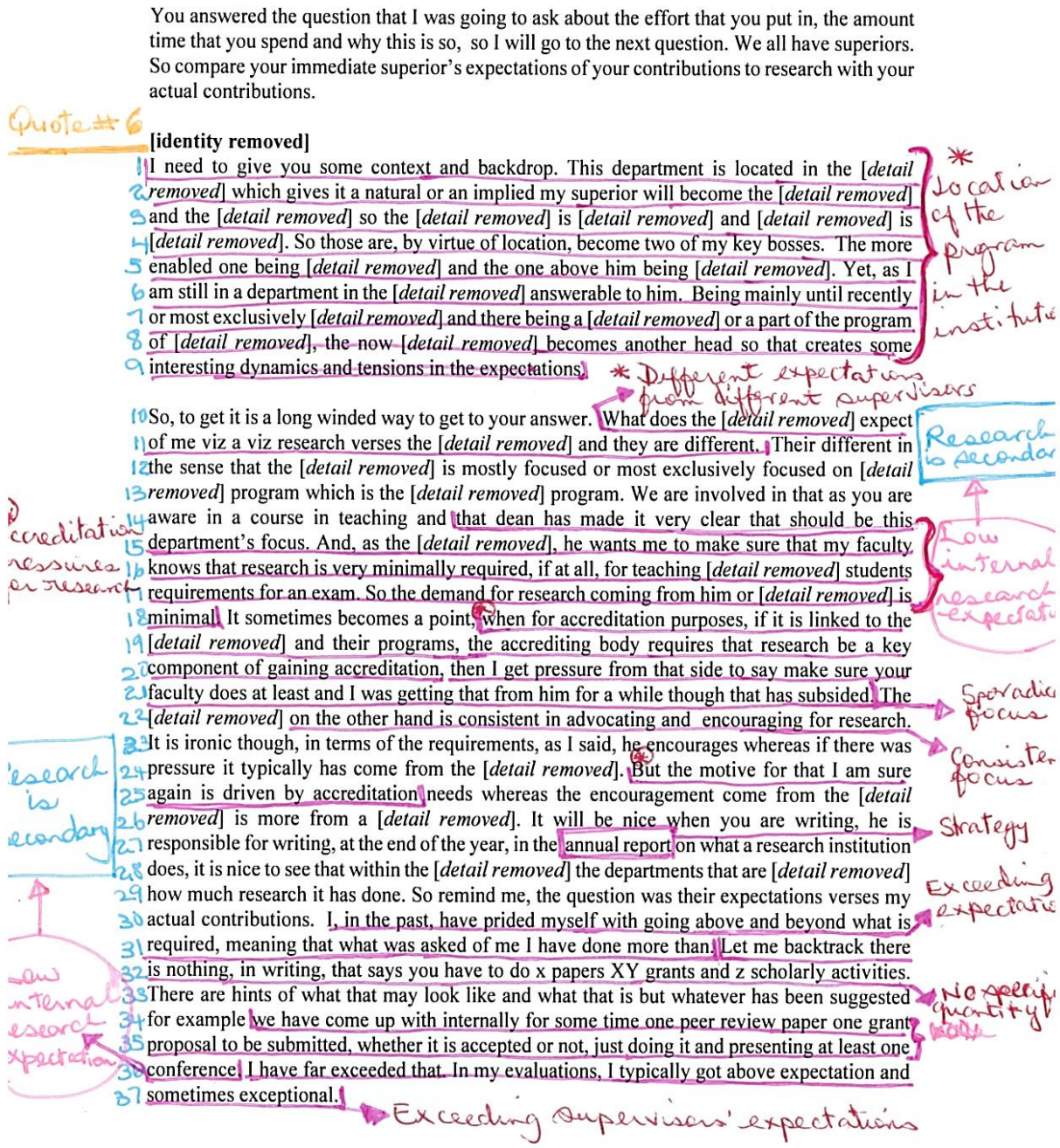
Notably, data analysis exploits ordinary ways of sense-making and there is no specific moment for data analysis to begin once they are available (Stake, 1995). Although Strauss and Corbin (1998) encourage analyzing the data after the first interview was conducted, since I used a professional service to transcribe the interview, this was impossible. However, Fade (2004) suggests initial analysis be done consecutively. This was a more feasible and practical option, so I began analyzing the data after I received all the transcriptions. Furthermore, methodologically, Esterberg (2002) advises researchers to get intimate with the data by immersing themselves in the interview transcriptions. This study used the data analysis sand coding procedures proposed by Creswell (2009) and Esterberg (2002). This study followed Creswell's (2009) six steps for analyzing data. Figure 5 below highlights these steps.

Figure 5: Creswell's (2009) Steps for Analyzing Data



Although the steps tend to illustrate a linear order and are discussed as such, Creswell (2009) impresses that the process is an interactive one. This alludes that the process can be an iterative one. During the data analysis, I went back and forth through the data, revisiting and updating categories, labels, and themes as I proceeded. This was relatively easy since I manually coded the data. I worked through each transcript, line by line, identifying themes and categories of interest as they emerged. Esterberg (2002) refers to this process as open coding. This process allowed me to return to each data source and further interrogate the data, themes and patterns. Additionally, through this process, I developed a coherent framework of themes which captured the commonalities and dissimilarities in experiences shared. Bazeley (2009) declares themes can only be considered significant if they are connected to create a synchronized view of the phenomenon using the three-step process: 'Describe, compare, relate'. I also included the meanings attributed by participants to the phenomenon. Figure 6 below presents a sample of part of one of the coded transcripts that allowed me to create the themes.

Figure 5: Sample of Coded Transcript



Additionally, I used my field notes, memos, and the various accreditation criteria to contextualize the data. Once all the data were thoroughly examined, I reviewed the codes to identify emerging themes.

3.8 Researcher Positionality

A distinctive characteristic of qualitative research is that the researcher is the primary data collection and analysis instrument. As such, considering the impact they could have on the outcome of the research, I ought to acknowledge that and consider my own biases, limitations and perspectives throughout the data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting stages (Merriam, 1998). My biases though could be valuable if connected to the data collected (Peshkin,1988). Additionally, to enable users of my research to judge the validity of the conclusions drawn from the data, as part of the study, I should bracket my biases by clearly stating them (Altheide & Johnson, 1994). Therefore, in the interest of full disclosure and to guard against unintentional and unethical influences on the interpretation of the phenomenon, I share my experiences germane to this study.

I am the Accreditation Coordinator of a degree program at the research site. This position, a faculty one with teaching and administrative duties, requires me to function as the total quality manager of my program and to teach in courses assigned. Consequently, I interact with a wide cross-section of the university's constituents. I also have in-depth knowledge of the accreditation criteria for one of the programs sampled and its responses to these criteria. Hewitt, (2007) contends individuals carry a 'self' which consists of personal, situated, and social identities into any given social situation. The research process is one situation to which researchers bring their identities and through which identities are created. Notably, Neuman (2006) remindsqualitative researchers most often begin a research project with a series of self-assessments and self-reflections within a given socio-historical context. These are strong self-aware acknowledgements of researcher's social positions in society, particularly as it relates to the research being undertaken. In other words, my positionality and reflexivity. For me, these were done through reading/reflecting on the self-study documents and my research memos.

My insider roles meant I also experienced the phenomenon. This allowed me to benefit from three key advantages. Firstly, I had a clear understanding of the context and phenomenon studied. This is important because the context is complex, and that complexity can interact with the phenomenon. For instance, this helped me create appropriate probes for the Interview

schedule. Secondly, and quite possibly because of my insider roles, there was a natural flow of interactions with participants. Based on my work, many of the participants and I interact in relation to accreditation. As such, they were quite comfortable with me interviewing them on the issue. By extension, my familiarity with the phenomenon potentially facilitated the honest sharing I observed during data collection. Bonner and Tolhurst's (2002) affirm these are experiences insider-researchers often undergo.

Conversely, I had constant internal conversations as it related to my objectivity and making sure I was correctly representing the academics' experiences. These conversations extended to the issue of role duality and the need to unremittingly balance my insider roles my researcher roles Additionally, my substantive role as Accreditation Coordinator gives me access to sensitive information. Hewitt-Taylor (2002) and DeLyser (2001) highlight these as insider-researcher challenges. As such my researcher memos, highlighted in 3.6.4 above, helped with this.

Notably, Holloway (1997) and Chamaz (2006) hold interpretative research, like this one, should be reflexive. Patton (2015) advises it should direct the researcher to a specific kind of reflection which is indicative of the "in-depth, experiential and interpersonal nature of qualitative inquiry". In this research, reflexivity translated into my self-aware of how my insider roles and that of being as a student-researcher, in the same environment where the research was located, influenced the research process. I had constant mental conversations with myself which help me to keep my own experiences in check. It also ensured participants' experiences and perspectives were emphasized. Mays and Pope (2006) note the need for reflexivity in such situations. Indeed, my reflections helped me to clearly acknowledge my place in the researching setting, context, and the phenomenon I was investigating. Moreover, during my reflections, I critically considered my biases, theoretical predispositions, and preferences, as it relates to this study. Underwood, Satterthwait & Bartlett (2010) indicate this would be the case. Furthermore, Underwood et al (2010) and Patton (2015) submit such reflections is a good way of improving the quality of the research process.

3.9 Summary

In this chapter, I highlighted my research aim and questions. I described my epistemological stance. Here methodological choices were also justified, the study design was discussed. Additionally, the study design, sampling strategy, access to participants, participant recruitment and the ethical steps followed were explained. Furthermore, I presented the data analysis process, featuring the model used and the coding procedures. Finally, I reflected on my positionality as an insider-researcher. The next chapter delves into the discussion of the finding; each focusing on the discussion of one research question.

CHAPTER 4 - FINDINGS

This chapter presents the research findings using two sections: individual stories/ narratives and the emergence of common themes. The first section presents each individual case. This formed the first level of analysis for themes and sought to ensure a clear presentation of the data gathered in relation to the phenomenon and the subordinate emergent themes from each case. The second section presents the emergence of common themes which emerged from the interpretation of individual narratives; the second level of analysis where themes were connected across the data. This second level formed the basis for the bounded case and the interpretation of the findings which informed the discussion, conclusions, and recommendations.

Appreciably, the findings section is a very important one for case study research. As such, it needs to be clear, coherent ,and logical. Therefore, this section is necessarily extensive and discursive. In this section, no literature was used. This ensured the findings presented were as close as possible to experiences shared by participants. Analytic annotations were made to raw data segments. This was done to transparently capture and interpret participants' experiences. As advised by Willig (2009), I adopted a tentative interpretative stance to ensure participants' experiences were not obscured. This was particularly important since I was an insider-researcher who experienced the phenomenon. Where used, the symbol […] indicates parts of the participant's account was removed due to space limitations. Occasionally though, it was used to present greater clarity in statements. Care was taken not to distort participants' experiences. Wherever identifying information was removed, this was clearly indicated.

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

- How do academics feel about the academic roles in relation to each other within the university?"
- How do accreditation-related research requirements affect activities undertaken by academics within their professional roles?
- Do academics who are research-oriented have any strategies for pursuing and maintaining a research profile?

4.1 Individual Stories/ Narratives

The key findings of the ten (10) individual cases are reported, presenting their narratives in response to the research questions, using verbatim quotes. This is not to rule out that qualitative data often applies to more than one area but is designed to help the reader have a clearer insight of the academics.

Mark

At the time of the interview, Mark had been employed at the university for almost twenty years. He was a full-time Professor and senior faculty at the university. He had administrative responsibilities in his program. When the interview was conducted, he had these responsibilities for two (2) years. He also had other administrative responsibilities in the university. He experienced more than one accreditation cycle of the program within which he worked. He was aware of both the accreditation agency and the accreditation-related research requirements.

For Mark, research was a secondary role. He noted that the type of university and its culture dictated this. He stated:

> *"Well, [**detail removed**] is a for profit institutions which is founded not on research dollars but on student fees. Therefore, teaching, the requirements for teaching are non-negotiable … So, regardless of what the accreditation agency wants to do with research … the university does not treat as important but to hire more faculty that became the genesis to teaching is never relaxed in the sense that that must always be covered from the institutions point of view. They are willing to fund research for the purpose of accreditation. Accreditation enables them to attract students it is what pays the bill so the research is always the tail and it never wags the dog. It makes the dog looks prettier and if the accreditation say dogs with no tails will not get accredited therefore you will not get students. Therefore, we stick the tail on the dog. But if we can get by without a tail and the accreditation says no problem, I have no doubt that that will go away quickly, like a morning mist in the tropical heat".*

This assertion from Mark is not only an indication of the university's unwavering strong focus on teaching but also highlights its relaxed stance toward research despite the accreditation agencies' research requirement and its own recognition that accreditation attracts students to the university and positions it to succeed financially. Moreover, it points to the fact that research

would not be a main focus especially if the university is getting by with its current research situation.

In presenting the issues of the absence of research in employment contracts, John shared his experiences as an academic head. He noted:

> *"I have to get creative in trying to encourage faculty who might say that I am teaching you want me to make so many questions for this exam, you want me to do research, and you are not giving money. In fact, you are increasing my time in teaching and where is it in writing and it is not in my contract. That is what it comes down to, it is not in my contract. I have to back off"*

This means that the issue of ensuring research productivity fall squarely on the shoulders of the department heads since faculty contracts do not require academics to do research. It also points to the need for these leaders to innovatively encourage academics to do research since they put up a resistance based on their contracts. Moreover, it appears that a department heads sometimes feel there is nothing they could do since they are restricted by the clauses outlined in faculty contracts.

He also identified his current academic role as a reason for research being secondary. At the time of the interview, he was doing more service, which for him, was synonymous to administration.

Mark also pointed to low internal research expectations as another reason for research being seen as a secondary role. He indicated that his supervisor had low research expectations from him. He asserted research is minimally required and that the demands for research productivity from supervisor are low.

Moreover, he outlined the research expectations. He affirmed:

> *"We have come up with, internally, for some time, one peer review paper, one grant proposal to be submitted, whether it is accepted or not, just doing it and presenting at least one conference".*

This statement points to the fact that there are different research expectations for academics based on their department. It also shows these expectations are low and that they are the same for every faculty member regardless of rank, teaching load, seniority, or research experience.

Additionally, Mark indicated the fact that there were no repercussions for low research productivity contributed to research being a secondary role. In expressing his personal stance, He confirmed:

> *"They are not firing me if I don't do it so I am going to slow down".*

Furthermore, as an academic head, he noted:

> *"It is hard for me to push faculty to do something that they know the [detail removed] is not going to hold their feet to the fire for".*

These assertions reiterate the relaxed stance at both the institutional and departmental levels. They also highlight that academics' research activities are influenced by the lack of repercussions. It points to situations where academics reduce their research activities because there are no adverse effects for doing so. Academic heads find it challenging to counteract this stance as supervisor do not provide support for doing so. t

For Mark, being a researcher was challenging. He pointed to low institutional support as a contributor.

He shared some interesting experiences in this regard. He declared:

> *I came literally straight out of my PhD where I have been eating, sleeping, drinking research for the last 4 years and was interviewed here and was shocked that the R word never came up and it was all about teaching. And so, I kept saying what are your expectations and I was told emphatically [**detail removed**] there was no expectations. They went further to say if you do it, it is all on your own we are not giving you support".*

He added:

> *"I want to do a lot more, but I cannot due to the demands especially as being the administrative demands. I would like my teaching too but I cannot do as much. So, it is more of a pragmatic assessment of reality that what I would like to do in terms of research I cannot do because I don't have the time and I don't have the money the grants and the resources".*

These declarations mean there are possibly academics who were motivated to do research when they joined the university but based on the institution's disposition toward research and its

limited support for faculty members' research activities. Also, realistically, based on time, money, and other resources, it is impossible for academics to have strong research profiles.

Concerning the effects of the accreditation-related research requirements on Mark's academic work, Mark only identified impacts related to research but there were several of them. He noted that the research requirements changed his research planning process; a move which is also indicative of a shift in research focus where adequacy appears to be the target.

Furthermore, Mark claimed that the research requirements instigated support for research activities. He asserted:

> *"So, the goal to seek accreditation for our program has allowed research to become now an issue that when I go, I no longer have to bring it up. They are coming to say to you need to do this. And it has given us the option to push back if you want to. You will have to cut back or you will have to give us the resources or the time. In a way, the accreditation has helped facilitate research or put it on the table".*

He added:

> *"It does affect it in the sense that it gives me, for someone who wants to do an argument, and encourages the school to give me support and others who want to do it support. But without that, I will literally be doing this all on my own. So, it is a good thing in the fact that we have determined that accreditation is important and because the school has determined that it is important and one of the requirements is research. The school is now coughing up at least the minimum required to ensure that we get that. In a way, it is a blessing that we are. If we did not want accreditation, we did not need it then, I do not think research will be pushed the ways it is being right now".*

Moreover, Mark said the research requirements motivated research collaborations. He claimed:

> *"You know that, that expectation if you want to consider yourself a reputable researcher this is how you should look and smell like and so it encourages you to look to collaborate with fellow faculty members work with students look for collaborations externally it gives you that motivation so at least you can do look like the researcher the accreditation body expects you to look like".*

These assertions mean the research-related requirements has a positive effect on support for research which alludes to the university's changing disposition to research because of the accreditation agencies. Additionally, the requirements have instigated academics to explore research collaborations as a means of boosting research productivity.

Regarding strategies used to maintain research outputs, those identified by Mark were ones at the institutional level. He pointed toprofessional development support, small research grants and specialized support. He confirmed:

> *"We give faculty grants every year to go to a conference of their choice to professionally build them. We have small grant initiative up to [**detail removed**] US dollars that you can apply for to fund your research. We encourage faculty to work with students. We have hired a university wide biostatistician who can help if you are not a statistician. I guess we are trying. Could we try harder? I would say yes. But again, that is an evolving issue where again there must be a push for there to be an output, and when you are dealing with the for-profit institution that push for research really comes from inside".*

This means the university has several strategies aimed at addressing academic's research productivity. However, much more is needed, and academics understand the nature of the university and its role in the current state of research productivity.

Mark also alluded to the potential of research collaborations as a strategy to maintain research outputs. Mark felt all research should be collaborative. He identified knowledge sharing, expertise, opportunities to verify research elements, the promise of a richer product and efficiency as reasons for his stance. However, he noted time and commitment of collaborators present challenges to collaborations. Moreover, research collaborations with colleagues within the university were influenced by availability and personal choice. Interestingly, while he wanted to collaborate with university colleagues, quality collaborators were not available. A similar situation existed with student collaborations. However, he appeared more willing to accommodate those collaborations. Collaborations with individual who are not faculty at the university though were most appealing.

Mark used the flexibility inherent in the accreditation-related research requirements to his benefit, as an academic head and a faculty member. Mark confessed to being creative with identifying research activities. Interestingly, he noted:

> *"If I am wearing my research hat, I would have liked that everyone pull their load but, as an administrator, I can say I can get away with 3 people carrying the department … then I look for what do I need to just get over the line. I may not be the way I would have liked to come over the line, as an individual researcher".*

This declaration means Mark may be dissatisfied with the research contributions of his colleagues. However, since the accreditors focus on aggregated outputs, he resolved to doing just enough to contribute to keep his program compliant.

Mark was dispirited about the research situation and resolved to realign his research activities given the institutional research situation. Mark had several observations and suggestions in relation to the phenomenon. Mark claimed there was no research culture. Still, Mark needed clear and specific research goals. Without those he felt he can do whatever is acceptable in his sight. Moreover, although efforts were being made, the institution needed to push for research outputs. However, he anticipated push back from university administrators since research outputs were expected by the accreditor. Nonetheless, he suggested updating faculty contracts to define research, to make it an explicit faculty responsibility and to provide clear guidelines and expectations for it. He also felt research should remain part of performance evaluations, but rubrics should be available to justify evaluations. He mentioned linking salaries to grants. Mark hoped these would propagate a research culture, inclusive of the label 'researcher' and sabbaticals for research.

John

At the time of the interview, John had been employed at the university for ten (10) years. The university was not his first place of employment. He was previously employed at another HEI where he held different positions. He was a full-time Associate Professor; having been promoted from the lower ranks. He had teaching responsibilities in two programs. Though not an academic head, John also held a senior administrative position in one of the schools for three (3) years and had different administrative roles within his primary program. He experienced more than one accreditation cycle of his primary program. He was aware of both the accreditation agency and its research-related requirements. He was noticeably thoughtful when speaking of the strategies used to meet the accreditation-related research requirements and their effectiveness.

In terms of academic roles, John had difficulty assigning different values to them. He felt they were equal and significant, and faculty and students should be exposed to all. Thus, he engaged in all. However, the time he dedicated them has changed over the years. He had transitioned from mainly doing administration to teaching and research but was, at the time of the interview, doing more teaching, some research, and some community service.

As an academic in an externally-accredited program, despite being involved in different academic roles, John's primary focus was on teaching. He saw his research role as a secondary one and one that was evolving.

He ascribed the fluidity between his academic roles to changes in his responsibilities. However, at the time of the research, John had a significantly increased teaching load which resulted in a reduction in time for conducting research. But he pointed to a degree of flexibility when he said:

> *"When I would have done more research, I would have done less teaching now I am doing more teaching and less research so like one has to compensate for the other. If you are really focusing on more research it takes away from time to do everything else so there has to be a balance that is struck I try at least to not necessarily to reduce my research time and effort but sometimes with the increasing in teaching load I have no choice but to so it is a give and take sometimes but if I were to give you a trend and say over the years my research involvement engagement has reduced overtime and that is because of an increasing type of teaching responsibility".*

This means despite flexibility in their academic roles, as facilitated by the FTE system used, academics want to balance the various roles and responsibilities they have.

Interestingly, his academic roles were teaching, research, service and administration, in that order. In relation to this, he indicated the university is focused on teaching and as a result, research is seen as supporting teaching and is not a priority.

In highlighting changes in his research activities, John saw himself as a facilitator of student research and, by extension, students' professional development. He noted:

> *"The research that I am doing now is primarily geared towards achieving publications and conference participation for students and it is because the nature and the category of*

> *our students are … (***detail removed***) and to their post graduate benefit whether it is (***detail removed***), they need that type of research outcome and productivity. So, as a towards publications".*

As such, for some academics, their research activities are not necessarily aimed at meeting the accreditation-related research requirements but for students' development and potential post-graduation outcomes.

For John, collaborations were inherent to research, and he endeavored to include different people in his research activities. He also felt being a researcher was a challenging role. He found research collaborations with students to be easier than with those with faculty to collaboration issues. He declared:

> *"I have found collaboration with students to become very easy because the students are driven and because they are driven to have that research output and productivity. They put the work in. They seek me out as a mentor that makes my life very easy. For faculty, within (**detail removed**), we have some core faculty I have worked with two to three main faculty and I have continued to work with them. It is difficulty to expand the collaboration outside of the individuals that I have worked with for many years. Faculty have changed. Numbers have changed. People have changed. But I have had difficulty getting new and different people on board".*

This means academics are potentially more inclined to involve students in their research activities because students are motivated to engage in research. Moreover, since they are challenged in expanding research collaborations with their peers, the scope of academics' research activities may be restricted.

Also, part of this challenge involves demographic and attrition issues. John indicated changes in faculty have resulted in him having difficulty in getting new and different academics involved in his research. He added that this affects the sustainability of research since a stable faculty complement is needed to build the relationships necessary for conducting research. John identified funding and a disjointed system of approvals as additional challenges.

In relation to this, John noted some of these strategies were largely driven by students. Based on my insider knowledge, this means that this research stems from a student capstone paper. As it relates to the effectiveness of the strategies, John highlighted their usefulness in terms of availability and outputs but questioned their impact and value. He doubted the strategies changed the variety, scope and depth of research done and claimed they were de-emphasized during

faculty evaluation. In relation to this, John pinpointed positive experiences he had when doing research. He spoke of lives being improved because of research outcomes, students' achievement of research goals and a boost for his research portfolio. He also highlighted challenges with meeting the requirements. John had one suggestion in relation to these challenges. He believed streamlining the approvals could eradicate delays.

In relation to the delays hestated:

> *"We are to let's say the approvals are all done not simultaneously per say but continuously then that will hopefully allow for a more efficient way a more timely way of getting all the approvals done from the perspective of let's say the different festive and cultural idiosyncrasies that happens everywhere. I think that the researcher must become more aware of the cultural issues the societal issues and work within that or around it".*

He also acknowledged:

> *"But sometimes it is a timing issue. Because if you spend so much time getting approval sometimes you miss the window of opportunity to do your research and that is where everything goes hand in hand. Where time is important, the planning process, the scheduled of your activities etc. should be done in such a way where you are able to meet your window of opportunity to actually do the research. I think those are some of the things we need to probably encourage and certainly the institution has to change their whole idea from their Vision Mission Goals and Objectives their policy position, their articulations of research if in fact we are to see meaningful type of effort and activity and outcomes in the areas of research".*

These declarations mean the turnaround time for approvals hinde faculty motivation to do research and, by extension, their research productivity. A system that takes faculty down time into consideration, with regard to getting approvals, is seen as a means of improving research outcomes.

In relation to the impact of the accreditation-related research requirements' impact on academics' work, they neither had impact on his service activities nor other academic work he did. However, not only were they a stimulant for research projects John did, but they also changed what and how he researched. He affirmed:

> *"So, I think my work would have changed in the sense where when I worked on research, I did not necessarily work on a research specific paper or research project by itself. It would have been an overall project with some type of service community involvement, different stakeholder engagement, and then that would have had research elements to it.*

So, I think for me, what is happening now is that the narrowed but focuses aspect of research I have also narrowed and focused how I do research".

This means John reduced the topics/areas and the type of research he did. Additionally, he linked their research projects to their community service engagements, and this could make it difficult to detach one from the other and could potentially result in some research projects not been counted as such.

John identified various strategies used for maintaining research outputs. On a personal level, he employed a researcher-to-researcher strategy because it allowed ease of adjustments to projects. Moreover, program level tactics included research committees, annual reports, research workplans and research advisements. At the institutional level, John indicated faculty had access to funding for attending conferences as well as a travel grant as part of their annual contract. Furthermore, annual performance evaluations and their resultant benefits were also used. He claimed these "would have been effective to some point". This assertion indicates some uncertainty in relation to the status quo. Based on my insider knowledge, the effectiveness of these strategies was questionable. Many faculty members who attend conferences do not engage in any activities that are directly related to research projects. They neither do oral or poster presentations.

On a related tangent, John believed the research requirements were subject to different interpretation. He claimed the issue of quantifying products, on an individual faculty level, was debatable. He claimed the new interpretation was exposing students to research in coursework not doing actual research. John stated the research requirements were discussed a lot less because they were no longer prioritized by the institution. He claimed:

"Well, the research requirements are probably discussed a lot less now, because the institution is not necessarily prioritizing it anymore. We would have discussed it. Over the years, we would have let's say, for example looked at the whole criterion. We would have looked at how different tracks, different faculty can actually organize themselves but that was years gone by. So there was concerted effort and planning strategically for meeting research outcomes but that has changed. In terms of research, it is still encouraged but I cannot necessarily indicate that the research is as strategically planned and streamlined into the daily and annual functions of the department anymore".

This statement means there is a high possibility that this program is having difficulty in having high levels of research productivity among academics due to the lack of clear strategic planning for research.
He reminisced [*appearing a bit distraught*] of a time when his program strategically planned to achieve research outputs and where research was incorporated into the regular functioning of his program.

Jim

Jim has been employed at the university for twenty (20) years. The university is his first place of employment. At the time of the interview, he was a full-time Instructor. That was his sole position at the university. He has experienced more than one accreditation cycle of the program within which he works. Jim was aware of the accreditation agency and the accreditation-related research requirements. He appeared to be a bit uncomfortable about his contributions to the research outputs of his program. [He seemed defensive about these contributions and at times, he got agitated when discussing these].

Jim was involved in primarily in teaching. He did community service and very little research. He explained that the research he did was predominantly for teaching his classes. However, the accreditation agency's research requirement for his program is the conduct of primary research. Moreover, based on my insider knowledge, he was not involved in any research projects at the time of the interview. He confirmed: "I tend to research a lot more for my classes and so and research more to write a paper or produce".

Jim acknowledged research was important and necessary. In fact, he defended the role of research in academia and as part of the accreditation process. However, as an academic in an externally-accredited program, Jim did not consider himself to be a researcher and he openly expressed this: "I am not a researcher". This was because he had no research outputs.

He highlighted that many of his colleagues were also not conducting research. In relation to this, he explained that historically his department was heavily focused on teaching and service. He further pointed to inattention to research when he said:

> *"I also believe based on the history of the department our initial focus heavily on teaching and service to an extent, neglected the research was neglected for so long that it is difficult to get up and start doing it".*

This statement also alludes to the fact that academics find research a challenging activity. The reasons he expressed for this include research is self-driven and challenges with the quality of secondary data in terms of accuracy, quality, and timeliness. Combined, these assertions appear to allude Jim was not confident in conducting research by himself. He also claimed research was challenging due to a lack of support for collaborative research and the lack of a research policy. He added:

> *"We talked about us working with peers but that was general guidance but not policy sort off to encourage and facilitate research and have a pool of resources that you might not have to necessarily apply in a formal way as an individual".*

This means that although there have been conversations on using collaborations to improve research productivity, these conversations have not translated in actionable plans/ policies to ensure it happens. This indicates implementation of research plans is a challenge and interferes with research productivity.

With regard to the impact of the accreditation-related requirements on his academic work, Jim highlighted they had no effects on teaching and service, noting they do not hamper him on those activities.

In relation to strategies to maintain research outputs, Jim had no personal strategies for improving his research productivity. He had resolved to simply focus on meeting basic departmental expectation.

However, Jim identified program-based strategies. Performance evaluations were used by his program. He indicated the research expectations are highlighted during performance evaluation meeting with the program chair. He also indicated reference is made to the requirement at department meetings. He further noted the existence of a committee structure; one of which is focused on research. My insider knowledge confirms the use of the research committee whose mandate was to monitor research activities of his program, evaluate these activities in relation to meeting the accreditation requirements and propose initiatives to maintain and expand research engagement and productivity. However, these committees were dysfunctional.

Interestingly, for Jim research structures reflect the passion of the leadership. He ventured to share some experiences and suggestions for initiating and maintaining research outputs. He hinted to the idea of a research repository when he stated:

> *"If I want to know what research is being done throughout the department, I cannot go to any repository of information to see that at least I do not think so because I am not aware of it".*

Moreover, part of the accreditation agency's expectations was that faculty would work with students on research projects. However, Jim questioned the feasibility of that given the intensity of their studies. My insider knowledge confirms this situation. He also pointed to the need for a better process to facilitate research (35:13-14). Furthermore, although the university has made certain provisions for research, there was the need to create an environment to facilitate it. He mentioned:

"I think the University have acknowledge that yes research is important, and they have definitely put things in place. That has definitely given me the impetus to make sure that something happens this year. I think that is a positive step. However, we can go a few steps deeper in terms of creating an environment that helps facilitate that through peer discussions dialogues".

This declaration means that although academics appreciate the moves made by the university to make research a more prominent role, they anticipate much more than what is currently available. This indicates a gap between what exists and what academics need.

Anne

At the time of the interview, Anne had been employed at the university for a little over ten (10) years. The university was not her first place of employment. She also had a senior administrative position with the program where she was based and other administrative positions within the university. She experienced more than one accreditation cycles of the program within which she worked. She was aware of both the accreditation agency and its research requirements. [Anne seemed quite comfortable throughout the interview but was a bit concerned about the research productivity of some of her colleagues].

Anne indicated she was involved in all three academic roles. However, she had heaving teaching responsibilities. She pointed out:

> *"Currently, I probably still devote more time to teaching because that is a requirement here. We teach every term but increasingly since I have been here, I have been doing more and more research and more and more administration which is where is put service".*

This means that Anne has a strong research profile and is one of the academics who is enabling her program to meet the accreditation-related research requirements.

In fact, she saw herself as a researcher since she has been doing research for a long time. She was exceeding her immediate supervisor's expectations. And, although she had a strong desire to do more, she was satisfied with her research activities. In addition to being a researcher, she mentored newer academics in research. She indicated:

> *"I have been doing research for [**detail removed**] years I feel that one of my roles is to facilitate newer faculty to get involved in research and how they can not only do good research but how they can be better mentors for students and graduate students. What I have found is that just because someone maybe has done some good research and gotten good publications, it does not mean they are really know how to be a good mentor. So, I see my role as a more senior person here now to facilitate newer faculty in doing research".*

One way of mentoring she engaged in was helping faculty become more proficient in scientific writing by editing their manuscripts. Anne was also a research mentor for students. She highlighted:

> *"I also care a lot about our graduate students and getting them appropriate [**detail removed**] training. So, I participate in graduate courses, and I work with other research mentors on the quality of their research projects with these students and how they can become better mentors*".

These assertions Anne's desire to conduct research goes beyond her personal interest. It extends to having a responsibility to her colleagues and her students to help them improve their research engagements, productivity, and outputs.

Despite being a researcher for a long time, Anne found this to be a challenging role. She identified late arrival of research supplies as one of the main challenges. Another was insufficient internal funding.

She also pointed to lack of external funding as a challenge. She said:

> *"We do have limitations barriers to research such as getting supplies in a timely fashion and access to external funding. We are not eligible because we are a for profit institution although we can apply through [**detail removed**] but we are still limited in availability for external funding for research so that is a limitation".*

This means that the nature of the university is an impediment to grant funding for research. As such, it must use its own financial resources to pay the costs associated with doing research.

Additionally, lack of qualified researchers and time constraints were challenges. She noted:

> *"If I had more time, I would have more output. But I really enjoy research and I feel that that I am as productive as I can be given the amount time that I have for it".*

This means, considering the constraints, she is satisfied with her contributions to her department's research outputs.

In relation to the effects of the accreditation-related research requirements on Anne's work, they affected her teaching Specifically, they caused her to revise her course content.

They also impacted her service activities. As a result of those research requirements, she used service as a teaching opportunity for cultural competence given the origin of the students in her program. Moreover, the requirements impacted her consultancy as they help her to stay abreast with her areas of interest.

The accreditation-related research requirements were discussed at least yearly and to coincide with accreditation reports. Anne had a good knowledge of what the reports contained. She confessed to having carefully examined the research requirements but questioned whether her colleagues did the same.

Interestingly, the agency that accredits her program was more focused program outputs than individual ones. Review of the accreditation agency's research criteria for her program confirmed this. As such, Anne felt she was doing her fair share. She proudly highlighted:

> *"… the quality of the research … the importance of the kinds of research … has markedly improved since I have been here. When I first came not much was happening, but more and more, people are interested".*

This means there has been a shift in the stance of academics in Anne's program, as it relates to the number of them engaging in research and potentially the volume of research outputs.

Regarding, strategies to maintain research outputs, the university also used yearly performance evaluations to maintain research productivity. Additionally, a small grant research initiative was available to academics. Anne asserted:

> *"[**detail removed**] has these small research grand initiatives projects which has been extremely helpful for us because it really allows faculty who are interested in research to get small grants to do some good research so that has been absolutely instrumental in facilitating faculty to do that".*

This means some areas of support provided by the university to academics for research activities have been effective in improving research productivity.

At the program level, new hires were used to maintain research outputs.

Anne also pointed to the use of research forms as a strategy. She acknowledged:

> *"We developed a special faculty research productivity form which is part of their annual evaluations".*

This statement reiterates the association between research productivity and promotions.

Moreover, her program used a committee structure to maintain research outputs.

Furthermore, Anne's program created a research enhancement program for mentoring students. Her program also implemented a special collaborative research initiative where researchers from outside the university come on campus to do teaching and research with academics from her program. The expenses are shared by the university and the researchers' home university. Additionally, Anne's program engaged in curriculum revision as a strategy. It reviewed the curriculum and included research elements in all the core courses. Also, her program developed courses targeting research. She noted:

> *"We do have in the curriculum very specific courses devoted 100% to training our students in [detail removed] research".*

This means Anne's program believe research skills can be taught to students and could get them interested in conducting research with faculty.

Anne was a strong supporter of collaborative research. For her, no good research gets done without collaborations.

Anne spoke of several collaborative initiatives undertaken with her program and external organizations. She noted though some were not as meaningful as they could have been. However, she indicated there were collaborations that resulted in publications. In relation to this, she felt good research should lead to publication in a good journal or it would be just a waste of time. Interestingly, in addressing the issue of research for promotion, she noted:

> *"Everyone in academia is interested in promotion at some point so they are very aware of the requirements and expectations are for that. But quite frankly do not want to do research".*

This means despite being interested in getting promoted and the requirements for doing so, some academics still do not conduct research. This stance negatively impacts the volume of research outputs in the department and ultimate the program's ability to being compliant with the expectations of the accreditors.

Mary

At the time of the interview, Mary had been employed at the university for nine (9) years. The university was her first place of employment. She was an Instructor. She had been in that role for six (6) years. She was previously a Demonstrator and had been promoted to Instructor. She experienced more than one accreditation cycles of the program within which she worked. [While she was collegial, she appeared eager to finish the interview. Her responses were relatively short compared to interviews conducted before]. She was aware of both the accreditation agency and its research requirements.

For Mary, research was a secondary role. In addressing the issue of academic roles, she pointed out:

She also acknowledged her research activities were minimal, far apart and that she had not published any research for a while. Moreover, when she did research, there was no student involvement. She confessed that she supported research but, at the time of the interview, she was not conducting any. She also admitted to doing less research than her program chair expected. She stated:

> *"The Chair requires you to do more than average; I do average*". [She looked uncomfortable]

This means academics are prepared to do the bare minimum expected by their supervisors. Meeting the accreditation-related research requirements is not taken into consideration when academics conduct research.

Mary found being a researcher a challenge due to teaching responsibilities, and time constraints.

Related to the time issue, Mary pointed to data collections and collaboration issues as challenges. She stated:

> *"Data collection and just collaborations and there is always a drama with [**detail removed**]. When people hear you are from [**detail removed**], there are usually challenges. Otherwise, I do not think there were many challenges. Just timeline you have to wait on [**detail removed**] if you get two months for data collection, it will be five months. Those type of challenges but nothing beyond that".*

This means the university itself is an impediment to academics' research activities, particularly when they attempt to do secondary data analysis projects.

Mary indicated the research requirements wanted academics to be active researchers. Based on the accreditation criteria, she was correct to some extent since individual academics' research outputs was needed to accomplish the aggregate outputs. However, based on my insider knowledge, she was convinced that the criteria measured each academic's contribution. Concerning the effects of the accreditation-related research requirements, Mary's academic work, they directed her research activities.

They also impacted her teaching in that they improved her classroom delivery. She claimed:

> *"It gives more experience to bring to the classroom. Because you have done the research, you know from hands-on experience, these are the challenges you can use with students and prepare them".*

She added:

> *"It aids in the program in terms of delivery experience we can bring to the students. The fact that students can get on board with some of the research to get that practical experiences themselves".*

This means there is a positive association between teaching and research and overall student learning experiences.

The research requirements had no impact on Mary's service activities.

Mary identified several strategies used to maintain research outputs at the program level, the only level she highlighted. She mentioned the use of special events aimed at research. These were discussed 3 years prior to the interview but they were never implemented. My insider knowledge confirmed this. Research work plans were also used. Mary contended that if these were used more often, they could be very effective. She also pointed to the use of performance evaluations and research documentation.

Mary's interview revealed research is important for growth and as a means of revenue. Mary clearly appreciated the value of research to the program where she was employed. However, based on her assertions, she was not an active researcher. Mary had no personal strategies for contributing to her department's research outputs. Mary felt there was the need to foster better collaborations. However, she believed external collaborators to drive the process.

Moreover, she questioned whether new faculty recruits are made aware of the research requirements and suggested this should be done.

Jane

At the time of the interview, Jane had been employed at the university for less than ten (10) years. The university was her first place of employment. She was a full-time instructor. She also has an administrative function. When the interview was conducted, she had been teaching for six (6) years and had, in the last year, an administrative role added to her responsibilities. She experienced one accreditation cycle of the program within which she worked. She was very open and conversational. I found it interesting that she was unable to correctly identify the agency which accredits the program. Additionally, since she was unaware of the research requirements, I reminded her of them.

For Jane, research was a secondary role. She pointed to heavy teaching duties.

In relation to this, she confessed that the research she did was linked to an academic program and her research activities stopped there. She reiterated that she was actively involved in doing research. Interestingly though, Jane believed she was meeting the expectations of her program chair. She stated:

> *"I think it is kind of on par at the moment because based on the last evaluation nothing really was said about research".*

This means that some faculty, despite having a performance review, are not engaged in relation to research and self-evaluate their productivity. As such, they may have a false sense of research achievement.

Jane felt being a researcher is challenging. She attributed that to a low research culture at the university.

In relation to that, she mentioned that she was not pushed to do research. However, she believed research was important even though, at the program level, academics did not follow through on research activities.

Another challenge for Jane were time constraints and she has no way of addressing this challenge.

Limited research collaborations were also an area of challenge for Jane. She stated:

> *"I don't think I have ever been exposed to external collaborations. Whenever I think external of [**detail removed**], I think more service, you know, as opposed to research*".

This assertion means Jane is dependent on her department to seek out research collaborations.

Moreover, Jane also ascribed lack of a research support system to research being a challenge for her. She confessed:

> *"I feel like [trails off] I would not say discouraged but there was not really a support system for it".*

She admitted:

> *"As a new person, sometimes you would need a little more motivation or pushing. Yeah. In that regard, that support was not always there. So, I think that kind of allowed me not to do anything".*

Jane also expressed the lack of mentorship as a challenge.

These statements mean Jane was not satisfied with the type and level of research support provided to her. This negatively impacted her research activities and, by extension, the volume of research outputs of her department; a situation which puts her department in a disadvantaged position in terms of meeting the research requirements.
As it relates to the effects of the accreditation-related research requirements, Jane was ignorant of the requirements.

Intriguingly, Jane acknowledged similarity between the research activities and the research requirements.

Specifically, in relation to the research requirements on Jane's academic work, there was neither impact on research since she was not doing any nor on service.

Jane alluded to a lack of focused research strategies. She spoke of the absence of sustained discussions, claiming that these never happened. However, she indicated at some point discussions were held. She said:

> *"There was a point in time that was all that was the talk of the town research, research, research".*

Jane was unaware of any departmental strategies. She also alluded to colleagues being used as proxies to ensure compliance with the research requirements. She stated:

> *"I know there are people who do research. That is great and we are safe and I am happy about that".*

Jane's declarations above mean, she had not given much attention to the accreditation-related research requirements. As such, it is impossible for her to contribute her program's research outputs and its compliance with the research expectations.

Jane's interview revealed faculty's personal interests drive their research (20:1-3). She acknowledged the importance of research and affirmed that she engaged in , reflective conversations with herself which she used to try to boost her confidence and motivate herself to engage in research activities. . She confessed:

> *"I see the importance of it. I do and I try to encourage it within myself even if it kind of hard. I do see the importance I think it is very important".*

This was an interesting situation because Jane had she indicated her research activities came to a halt after the completion of her graduate studies.

Although Jane seemed satisfied having colleagues in her program carry the research activities which would allow her program to meet the research requirements, she found research collaborations were appealing. She admitted though to have never been exposed to external research collaborations. On the personal level, she has strategies to re-initiate her research activities. Among her plans was the intention to pursue a terminal degree, to work with and shadow and active researcher in her program and to work with students on getting papers published.

Tom

At the time of the interview, Tom had been employed at the university for almost twenty (20) years. The university is his first place of employment. He is currently a full-time professor at the university. At the time of the interview, he had been in this position for six (6) months. He had recently been promoted from an Associate Professor to a Professor because he had finished his doctoral studies and met the criteria for promotion. He has experienced more than one accreditation cycle of the program within which he works. He was aware of both the accreditation agency and its research requirements

For Tom, research was secondary. At the time of the interview, he was primarily teaching. He noted that he was comfortable with this situation. He mentioned:

> "*I am just comfortable teaching and using people's research*".

He added:

> *"I can read about it and I can apply it".*

These comments mean Tom's research activities were negligible.

Tom ventured to provide reasons for research being a secondary role. Tom highlighted he was failing to meet his research targets. He indicated that he was looking forward to publishing 4 papers but had reduced it. In fact, he affirmed that he had never met his target. He confessed:

> *"I have never met my target. Right now, for this academic year, my target is 15% of my time as research. I am looking forward to publishing maybe 4 papers but the best I think I will do, it is already march and this is March, and I have not even published. I think 2 or 3 will be good for me. It is difficulty to meet our set goals".*

He added:

"Yes, I set them and we meet and trade and verify but I do not think I have met my research expectation over the last couple of years. I do not think anybody did".

These statements not only highlight Tom's poor research productivity but also his way of rationalizing it.

In fact, his failure to do research had no negative repercussions.

However, he also pointed to the fact he did research as a means of getting promoted. He affirmed:

> *"That was true for me as well once I got promoted, I cannot get promoted beyond that so I that was another thing I pushed myself so much with research because I had to ensure*

that I get promotion. After that I kind of took a down fall because honestly I just figured it was time to take a break.".

This assertion means that some faculty who are conducting research to get promoted, once they achieved their desired rank, their research outputs begin to dwindle.

For Tom, it was difficult being a researcher. He noted the conducting research was difficult. He noted:

> *"It is pressuring in the sense that you would not get the kind of quality of research you are looking for especially with a limited small grant initiative. It is so small that it would not push you to the kind of quality that you want. That is a frustration. And, you are only allowed one whereas you could do three or four concurrently".*

This means the financial support available to academics did not allow them to do high quality research projects.

He recognized the challenges related to large class sizes, time, and inequitable contributions in research collaborations. Concerning the last, he acknowledged:

Tom also spoke of unsustainable special projects. He described a project which was developed to address research deficiency in his program by having students engage in research activities across the semester. However, Tom noted:

> *"… it was so energy demanding after that I told them the program was not self-sustaining because it is [**detail removed**] students every semester is the same faculty that volunteer to do".*

He further explained:

> *"Yes, especially when not all of the faculty are involved. You ask for faculty volunteers and you get the same people [**detail removed**] people out of [**detail removed**] faculty its [**detail removed**] people. Every semester you have to assign students to faculty so you end up with one person having [**detail removed**] students and it is just not manageable".*

As it relates to the effects of the accreditation-related research requirements on Tom's academic work, there were impact on his research, teaching and service activities. Concerning the research ones, Tom indicated that the requirements helped sustain his research activities. He mentioned:

> *"It has put more pressure really on. One thing for sure, you do not want to lose accreditation because research is a key area so you push yourself"*

Moreover, he acknowledged:

> *"Without accreditation, I will probably not have pushed myself as much. Most faculty that are doing it is not to generate new information but just to uphold accreditation".*

He added:

> *"I don't think we would be doing as much research if it is not a necessity or necessary for the [**detail removed**] accreditation".*

These declarations mean efforts were being made to improve research outputs. However, with the same academics engaging in research, some efforts are not sustainable. Additionally, accreditation is a key driver of academics' research activities in Tom's program.

In relation to his teaching activities, Tom indicated that the research requirements reduced his teaching preparation time. He mentioned:

> *"It does take away preparation time one semester I endeavor to update my lecture it put a lot of pressure on me one thing for sure I like to post my lecture 2 days before the lecture what was happening now is because I have to revise them put in something new I end up posting my lectures 4 hours before and then obviously students hit me on that in the evaluation, they are asking for it earlier it is a lot of stuff it took time away from my preparation especially preparation for the lectures".*

In relation to his service activities, Tom adjusted and reduced most of his engagements. At the time of the interview, he was planning to give up some more*.".*

Tom's program used several strategies to maintain research outputs. He mentioned that his program had a minimum of 2 meetings every semester and that research was an area that was always discussed. His program also used research committee activities.

His program also employed special projects which included manuscript writing training, student research initiatives, and a tuition free program.

Jill

At the time of the interview, Jill had been employed at the university for a little over ten (10) years. She was employed elsewhere before, but the university was her first place of employment in her chosen field, as she put it. She was an Associate professor instructor; she had recently been promoted. She had been teaching for just over ten (10) years. She also had an administrative role. She experienced more than one accreditation cycle of the program where she worked. She correctly identified both the agency which accredits her program and the accreditation-related research requirements.

Research was a secondary role for Jill. She highlighted that she was a student-researcher. As a result, her research activities resolved around her program of study. She mentioned:

> *"My recent interest in [**detail removed**] has given me an opportunity to do research. I am actually in the process of … [**detail removed**] …data collection will take place next term".*

This means Jill's research activities were driven by an academic pursuit and were not necessarily aimed at addressing the accreditation related research requirements since this type of research was not counted by the accreditors.

Interestingly, she considered the research activities she was doing for her program of study her contribution to her program's research outputs. She stated:

> *"I have to do my thesis for [detail removed] that will be my contribution".*

Moreover, she indicated heavy administrative/ service duties were main reasons for this. Interestingly, for Jill, administration was considered to be service to the university. She

highlighted that she did a lot of administrative activities which was the role she was most interested. She also confirmed that research was not one of her priority areas.

Jill noted the accreditation-related research requirements impacted different academic roles. They reduced her teaching time. However,
on the positive side, they created a research-teaching synergy. She explained:

> *"The good thing is that where I am doing my research data collection is in a course that I teach so I can use the time combined".*

Additionally, the research requirements increased her service activities, particularly through university committees. She noted:

> *"Yes, definitely a lot of committee work … there are lots of things we have worked on … that have been driven by accreditation standards".*

Jill indicated only program-based strategies were used to maintain research outputs. She highlighted several initiatives at that level. The program had a reporting structure which Jill indicated were annual reports on the program's research activities. Jill also mentioned that her program revised the curriculum to ensure better coverage of research areas. She asserted:

> *"We changed the curriculum as far as what research and evidence-base methods the students were getting exposed to"*

This means, in Jill's program the focus is on the development of students' research abilities.

Jill also noted the used of new special hires as an initiative to maintain research outputs. Her program also had a strategic plan which addressed research and was using it to streamline research activities and outputs.

Jill's interview divulged research expectations, at the departmental level, were unclear. She claimed [*sounding a bit frustrated*] to have continuously requested analysis of research outputs for her department as well as others. However, faculty knew they were expected to do research. Nonetheless, there was an absence of specific research expectations. In fact, faculty made their own FTEs. All of this was captured when she stated:

> *"That is not very clear. Something I have been pushing for to do an analysis of departmental outcomes and what it is expected of each department. I do a lot of administration as well. Just to say what is expected from the department and then individually so that is not we basically make our own FTE's and there is no set expectations. They just say that it is expected that we do it but not the specifics, output or papers or whatever. We do not have that"*

This assertion reiterates the flexibility that is available to academics based on their job descriptions. It means can decide not to do research, if they so desire, and this can impact the program's ability to be compliant with the research requirements.

Interestingly, she shifted her rhetoric from 'research' to 'scholarship' when indicating satisfaction with her research outputs and included her contributions in various activities under the latter heading. Based on the time she had, her research outputs were adequate. But, her research activities were less than her personal expectations due to time constraints.

Moreover, promotion was the lone influencer of her research activities Additionally, her stance was her colleagues' contributions would address the accreditation-related research requirements.

On the question of how frequently the research requirements were discussed, Jill said:

> *"They have been discussed quite a bit especially after that major deficiency. We were on probation for a little bit. We have made changes in personnel, getting a new [**detail removed**] and we get asked yearly what we have done. I think luckily it has been adequate. We are looking at it a bit more closely trying to put some more structure to it. I hope we do get to where we are ok. We can expect this kind of output for this year, realistic or not, and if it is not why I would love to know why are we not putting out as much and then do we need more propel to do research. Do we need to lighten the load of teaching faculty or get more teaching faculty. That will be key for us to continue"*

This means Jill's program was focused and strategic in relation to meeting the research requirements. Her interview disclosed, the existing performance evaluations could be incorporated.

Alex

At the time of the interview, Alex was relatively recent employee of the university. The university was not his first place of employment. He was previously employed at another HEI. He was an Associate Professor; the rank at which he was recruited. He also had an administrative position within one of the schools. However, he was not the academic head for the program where he worked. He had been in that position for one (1) year. He had experienced one accreditation cycle of the program. He knew both the agency by which his program is accredited and the accreditation-related research requirements. He appeared quite proud of his research activities. However, he looked concerned when discussing issues surrounding faculty research. His responses were very brief.

For Alex, although he seemed satisfied with his teaching activities, research was secondary. He identified heavy teaching and service activities as reasons for this.
As an academic in an externally-accredited program, Alex saw his role as that of a facilitator of student research.

Moreover, Alex felt being a researcher was challenging. In relation to this, he identified faculty-related issues as contributing factors. He affirmed:

> *"The main challenge is getting faculty to mentor students".*

He highlighted:

> *"The students are amazing in research for the most part. Sometimes faculty complain that students are not doing their research. We lack enough faculty to mentor in research".*

He further explained:

> *"Too few faculty participating in research. Also, many of the faculty do not have training in research".*

This means Alex's program focus heavily on students' engagement in research to assist in meeting the research requirements.

Alex also pointed to limited scope of research as reason why being a researcher is challenging. He contested:

> *"The issue is faculty only think about [detail removed] research and do not appear aware that there are other types of research".*

He added:

> *"[**detail removed**] is not taking advantage of educational research … we are in a position to address many educational questions".*

These declarations mean academics' scope of research is limited.

Another reason put forward by Alex as it relates why being a researcher is challenging is lack of support from administration.

In relation to the effects of the accreditation-related research requirements on Alex's academic work, there were neither impacts on his teaching activities nor on work he did outside of the three academic roles. However, interestingly, the requirements negatively affected his teaching activities.

As it relates to service, the requirements had a reverse effect.
He also noted that the requirements helped to positively impact his reputation as an academic. He explained:

> *"Research activity enhances my academic standing".*

Alex contended there were no strategies to maintain research outputs outside of the academic head. He indicated:

> *"Our research outputs are driven by 1 person [detail removed]. There are no strategies to increase output"*

This means academics in this program had no point of reference/ guide to direct their research activities. As such, they could be less productive than they could be.

Alex's interview revealed some important institutional factors as it relates to research. There have been modifications to policies that have implications for research productivity. These changes have negatively impacted academics' perception of the importance of research. He highlighted:

> *"It all depends on whether administration emphasizes this. Recent changes in policies give faculty the impression that research and collaboration are not important to [**detail removed**]".*

This means current policies as counterproductive, as it relates to improving research productivity.

Alex disclosed he was active in research and that he was meeting the expectations of his superiors as well as the accreditation-related research requirements. Alex had an overall positive attitude to collaborative research. In fact, he disclosed he had many collaborative research projects. In relation to this, he loved collaborating with students. Moreover, he had research collaborations with persons outside the university. He also has intention to collaborate with academics within his program on publications.

Alex recognized the need to have faculty more actively involved in research. In fact, he indicated that was the overall perception within his program. He believed though that was the responsibility of administrators to do so. This was seen when he said:

> *"Administration needs to find positive and constructive ways to encourage faculty to do research".*

Additionally, he was opposed to the use of punitive measures to incite research activities. He stated:

> *"We need to increase faculty research output. Punitive measures are not the best way to increase this output".*

This means academics see administrations as playing a pivotal role in improving research productivity. However, in doing so, they need to be creative.

Alex had some ideas for boosting research at the institutional and faculty levels. He proposed a program to provide academics with the necessary training to empower them to do research. He

also believed the implementation of online research courses for faculty could help in addressing the issues. Moreover, he felt teaching and research performances should influence faculty bonuses. He suggested:

> *"We can have faculty training sessions, online research course etc. Bonuses should be dependent on teaching and research".*

In his administrative role, Alex highlighted one initiative to boost research. He beamed when he spoke of them. He instituted an online research course which exposed students in his program to basic research knowledge and skills as well as ensured they actively interacted with their research mentors.

Dave

Dave has been employed at the university for a little over ten (10) years. The university was not his first place of employment. He was previously employed at other HEIs. At the time of the interview, he was a full-time Professor at the university. In addition to being a teaching faculty in two of the schools, he had an administrative position within one of the schools. He is also an academic head. At the time of the interview, he had recently been appointed to this position. He had experienced one accreditation cycle of the program within which he worked. He was aware of both the accreditation agency and the accreditation-related research requirements. He appeared proud of his program. However, he became noticeably serious and pensive when speaking about the importance of research, using research for promotion as well as the challenges of balancing academic roles.

Dave acknowledged teaching as his primary responsibility. However, for him, research is secondary because of his strong focus on administration. He confirmed:

> *"So mostly I am doing administration which is not part of that and the second one will be research. My teaching is minimal and my service is minimal".*

He added:

> *"My main focus is administration; the second is research".*

These statements mean there is limited time to do research and, as a result, it interferes with the program's ability to address the accreditation-related research requirements.

In relation to research being a secondary role, Dave spoke of the issue of research for promotion. He asserted:

> *"It is hard to force somebody, but the ones that want to be promoted they will go after promotion. Suddenly, you know within the week they have to teach ten hours now they have five that is a help".*

On a related tangent, Dave confirmed the expectation of having one peer-reviewed journal article publication per year and affirmed the university's environment was enabling research. He indicated:

> *"It is hard to get good teachers then say don't do your good teaching but start doing research there has to be good balance. That is why throughout the promotion period, from instructor to full professor, the mandate for that if you want is one paper per year, which is I think comfortable. It does not take away the teaching component. We are not mandating somebody to publish in Jonas or be first or second third author. We are not mandating that other things which could have done, and it would be much more challenging. So, I think we have done a fairly comfortable environment for people to do research as part of the promotion obviously".*

This means the current research expectations linked to promotion was chosen so that they do not interfere with faculty teaching responsibilities and low enough to allow those who are interested to get promoted.

As an academic in an externally-accredited program, Dave saw himself as facilitator of research;

He stated:

> *"I could not see myself as a full-time researcher. It is not satisfying for me 100% I think it is good to produce something, but I really like my administrative side may be like my administrative side more than research".*

He reiterated:

> *"I will not go 100% as a researcher not at this stage of my life anyway".*

He declared:

> *"Yes, so from my position is try to create policies and procedures to facilitate research".*

These statements mean that while Dave personally contributes to the research outputs of his program, he also ensures that others do so as well. His stance helps his program meet the accreditation agencies' research expectations.

Dave presented an interesting view of the academic roles across faculty's professional lifespan. He pointed out:

> *"Yes, I think research, I think for somebody to be a real academician, cannot do one or the other It is the right of passage. I think, at the beginning of the career of any academician, you need to have research and teaching. You need to do all full pillars of being academic. At the mid end of your career, you can choose where is your strength or you can chose what you like or you can choose. I think this is what we see we see faculty towards mid of their career. And towards the end, they use their strength. Somebody can be very strong on teaching. That is when they spend maybe 80% of their time on teaching and 20% of the rest or for some other it could be 20% teaching and 80% research. But I think in the beginning everybody needs to be exposed and pass through that normal passage of writing papers, producing new ideas and producing new knowledge that is key".*

This means academics should have a personal career trajectory that encompasses the various roles they play.

As it relates to the effects of the accreditation-related research requirements on Dave's academic work, he indicated that they neither had an impact on his teaching activities nor on his service activities nor on his service activities. It is important to note for Dave's program, a requirement was a conducive environment for faculty and students to do research. The accreditation agency reviews the program's research policies and procedures to decide if this is the case. Interestingly, the accreditation agency does not focus on the number of products. I examined the accreditation criteria and found this to be correct. Astoundingly though, he declared he was uncertain of students' awareness of the research-related requirements, and he had no idea of how faculty felt about them.

Concerning strategies used to maintain research outputs, Dave only indicated ones at the program level. He mentioned that his program engaged in continued quality improvement exercise. He explained:

> *"Yes so we have a CQI continued that we do every year so we go back and check obviously the outcome the processes and we get feedback from faculty and Chairs and Course Directors and students on what we can do better how we can do that that happens on an annual basis".*

This means Dave's program has a system that allows for continuously evaluating its progress. As a result, the program's research outputs should be such that it is compliant with the accreditor's research requirements.

Dave's program also employed curriculum reviews and changes as a strategy. He affirmed:

> *"We try to see how we can change the curriculum to accommodate more flexibility. So, one of the big things we did was reduce the lecture hours [**detail removed**] from 4 hours a day to 2 hours a day. We did a lot of curriculum mapping to see how many things we over teach, we maybe teach a little bit less since our students they are so smart they can pick it up that liberates time from our faculty. And now faculty have a little more free time, it can be used towards research. It is the first time we are trying this so hopefully within a year that would give the faculty a little more time."*

As alluded in Dave's statement above, increased free time for faculty was also a strategy used. He reiterated this:

> *"But the projection is that typically faculty would have potentially less teaching responsibilities because we are not using that hours".*

Moreover, for Dave, it is important for early academic should be exposed to writing papers, producing new ideas and producing new knowledge. This presents an interesting situation since, according to Dave, as evidenced by faculty employment contracts, there is no defined research expectation for faculty. He pointed out:

> *"Contract wise, it is not expected that I am producing X amount of papers or X amount of books. It is open. Whatever I feel is valuable or whatever I do. So, we don't have a set expectations. Expectations in general is that every faculty member should do something some type of scholarly activity".*

This means academics are free to determine their own research contributions although the accreditation agency expects research productivity that is reflective of the number of faculty in the program.

Despite the apparent lack of definite expectations, he annually oversees many submissions to journals. He expressed satisfaction with that research productivity, considering available time for

research, and the institutional culture. Dave confirmed the research is not mandated. Nonetheless, Dave exuded optimism and ambition. Interestingly, in his program, only collaborative (intra and extra-university) research endeavors were undertaken because these enabled effective and efficient use of expertise. In relation to this, he explained when more persons are involved, the odds of a paper been rejected is reduced. He noted:

> *"It has to be a mix it is always good to have a mix there is a lot of expertise inside [**detail removed**] and outside [**detail removed**]. It is good to use both and it is good to use a lot of people on a paper. I really like when there is about 6-7 authors on a paper rather than 1 or 2. There is more eyes to see the paper. There is more people that they can give insights to the paper the rejection rate after having 6-7 people reading the paper becomes minimal".*

Moreover, he noted this approach enabled students and junior faculty to be involved in research and to be mentored. This method appears to be consistent with his role as a facilitator of research. He cautioned against letting publications be the scope of faculty's existence and supported the balancing of academic roles. He explained:

> *"The same with them. It is good to have a student with junior and senior faculty always we would it involves a lot of mentoring. I think that it's a good part of a research paper. I don't see it only like I write a paper and just publish. But it includes mentoring for the students. It includes junior faculty which is important for their promotion. It includes senior faculty that publish that have their ideas and expertise to make sure that the younger ones they learn which shows that the paper will be published. it's a group effort".*

This means Dave sees research as having different component not simply engaging the traditional process of research.

Dave bragged that his program was outperforming other neighboring schools in terms of publications. He credited the institution's policies, faculty's and students' commitment and compliance as well as the synergy across the university for this. However, Dave acknowledged they faced challenges. In explaining the situation, he stated:

> *"Challenges is we are expanding so fast and so much so sometimes I think the rate of expansion of let's say the buildings, the number of students we have does not meet the rate of expansion with research. So, if we get an extra hundred students does not mean we can accommodate the extra students in research. That takes us some time that is a challenge and we try to solve. So, I think that maybe that we have very good support from the budget, the finances, so the support in our research its just how we can*

effectively I think distribute the workload of our faculty to meet the student expansion both on teaching, administration, service and research. Sometimes that rate of expansion is does not go seemingly in every single pillar of the academic job. And because teaching is the number one, the rest they have to give for this year, they will catch up the next year. And we are expanding more students the year after so it is always a challenge to try to keep everything growing proportionally the same. Nobody says that they have to grow proportionally the same way, it would nice. So that is a challenge we try to keep everything proportionally moving."

This means academics in this program will continue to have issues with heavy teaching loads due to the university sustained focus on teaching as well as the consistent and contuous influx of students.

Dave was cognizant of the culture of research. He acknowledged:

"I think that where we are right now it is hard to go and suddenly change the culture that had zero requirements for research".

However, he suggested research productivity could be increased if faculty performance bonuses should be a percentage calculated based on the number of research outputs rather than a single fixed number. Dave proposed a similar system to US schools where research is not mandated but a percentage of faculty salary comes from grants. He indicated:

"I think that where we are right now it is hard to go and suddenly change the culture that had zero requirements for research when you were going after promotion I think that could change everyone needs to get used to that and I think it could reach the point where we could say that everyone needs to have one abstract linked to the bonus if you produce X amount your bonus is hundred percent than the research so you getting some extra money it has to be something to give and take rather than be only that. Other schools in the school in the US what they have done they do not mandate the research what they say 80% of your salary comes from grant. Despite the fact that they do not mandate they say if you can live with 20 thousand a year that's fine but if you want 80 percent then you should get grants".

This means the challenges experienced by academics, in relation to research, will continue until there are standard research expectations not related to research.

Additionally, in highlighting the intention to increase the research expectation, he pointed out this will be done after observing the expectations of other HEIs in our geographic location. He confirmed:

> *"We are looking within the year to bump it up a little bit we need to see how [**detail removed**] and other schools in the Caribbean to see what type of promotion criteria they have we cannot be at the very end we need to somewhere between the other school to keep a good balance within the region".*

This means there are plans to review the promotion criteria to include an increased number of research outputs.

4.2 Analysis of Data: Emergence of Common Themes

Through an analysis of these 10 cases, four common themes emerged. These themes are instructive for the understanding of academics' experiences of meeting accreditation-related research requirements in the externally accredited programs at the research site. Those were:

Theme 1: Academics understanding of their research role.
Theme 2: Dynamics between academic roles
Theme 3: Institutional research culture and academics' agency
Theme 4: Strategizing for research productivity

These themes will be discussed in the following section.

4.4 Summary

In this chapter, I reported the findings of the research. Consistent with Creswell's (2009) method of analysis, the findings for each individual case were presented. The narratives were structured in a way that allowed participants' stories/ narratives to unfold and the stories utilized their words. The four common themes that emerged from were presented. The next chapter delves into the discussion of these findings.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a discussion of the major findings from the research project. Specifically, it begins by restating the research aims/objectives. It then provides the overarching research focus and restates the research questions the study aimed to answer. It provides a discussion of the research findings presented in the previous chapter and connections to the theoretical framework and review of literature. Supplemental literature, in addition to those presented in Chapter 2, was incorporated into this chapter to expand the discussion of the findings.

This study aimed to explore academics' experiences of meeting accreditation-related research requirements for externally accredited programs within a single American-owned institution based in the Caribbean, using a qualitative case study design. The research has three objectives. The first objective sought to ascertain faculty members' perceptions of their roles as researchers within accredited programs. The second objective was to establish the effects of having to meet accreditation-related research requirements on academics' work, in terms of quantity and quality. The third objective sought to highlight the strategies that academics use to meet and maintain the accreditation agencies' expectations as it relates to research productivity outputs.

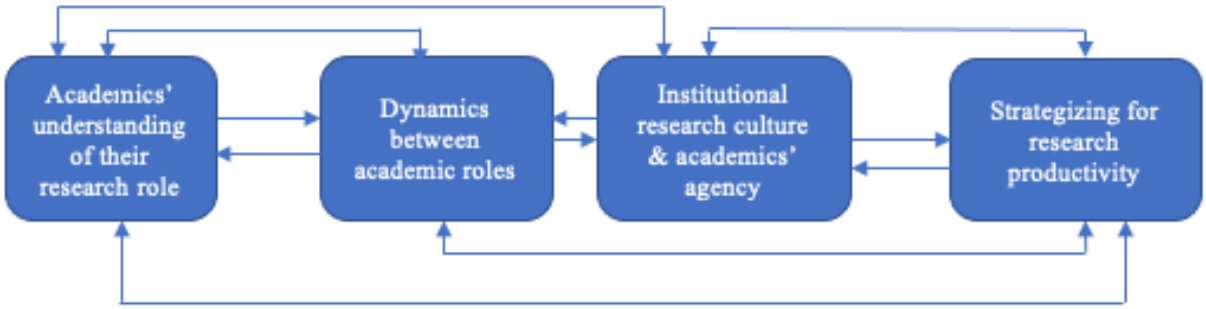
Based on these objectives, this research focused on the issue of how academics experience meeting accreditation-related research requirements. The research sought to answer the following questions:

- How do academics feel about the academic roles in relation to each other within the university?
- How do accreditation-related research requirements affect activities undertaken by academics within their professional roles?
- Do academics who are research-oriented have any strategies for pursuing and maintaining a research profile?

Four major themes emerged from my interpretative analysis of the data. Those were: theme 1- academics' understanding of their research role, theme 2 - dynamics between academic roles, theme 3 - institutional research culture and academics' agency and theme 4 – strategizing for

research productivity. In reviewing these themes against the sub-questions, I noted what appeared to be connections among the themes. These are presented in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6:Connections Between Themes



As can be seen, the phenomenon under investigation is complex and multi-faceted. Themes have several synergistic connections with each other. Additionally, these connections impact individual academic's disposition to the accreditation-related research requirements, their program's response/ compliance with those requirements and the institutional research landscape.

5.1 Academics' understanding of their research role

It is important to reiterate the university's self-identification as a teaching-led one. This is indicative of its organizational culture; a culture where teaching has consistently been the primary focus while other academic roles take second place. Moreover, based on that identity, one would expect the university to have an organizational infrastructure that strongly supports teaching (and learning), as it relates to the academic programs offered. Additionally, notwithstanding academics' autonomy, where academics may see themselves having control over their behaviors and attitudes (Fein, Ganguly, Banhazi, Danaher, 2017), the university culture would also have some level of influence on academics. But universities are not static. In fact, in terms of their identity and culture, as Sharp et al (2013) allude, universities though can and do transition and transform. The HEI in which this study was conducted was clearly not immune to evolution. In this regard, it is important to note the university began as a private institution aimed at providing medical education. As such, its focus was on teaching. Moreover,

given the pronouncements of the academics in this research, over the years, teaching is still its primary priority. As indicated by Tomas and Jessop (2013), this is to be expected in teaching-intensive HEIs.

5.1.1 Prioritization of academic roles

'Ranking' of academic work within the institution is perhaps expected, given the university's identity and culture, as discussed in 5.1 above. Additionally, the university's unwavering focus on teaching over the years, its all-round expansion, and its success in what is assumingly a niche market are perhaps indicators its focus could be considered well-placed. In relation to this, the university's focus is consistent with Bennet, Lucchesi and Vedder's (2010) assertions that for-profit universities need to provide a valuable service to students while being self-sufficient and effectively responding to market forces. Notably, over the years, in response to the apparent shortfall of physicians in the US, as highlighted by Zhang et al (2020), the university has boasted of being a leader in medical education. While this presumably points to high academic standards and outputs, it also means that the university is securing the financial interests of its stakeholder; a claim made against FPHEIs by Cottom (2017). This situation sustains both the university's thrust to continue focusing on teaching and the interests of current and potential investors.

In relation to this, in terms of institutional focus, the academics indicated other academic roles were prioritized over research. However, this was reflective of the position they held within the organization. Given their specific job descriptions, research was always second to teaching or administration. Notably, recruitment efforts by the university typically do not fall into a research stream where individuals are employed solely to conduct research. While having a strong research portfolio is considered an asset, instead, recruitment falls into a teaching stream, where the recruited professional takes up a teaching position, or the administrative stream where the person recruited has a specific administrative position. In both instances, the individuals recruited are also encouraged and sometimes incentivized, with a stipend based on the additional responsibility, to take up an administrative role. However, the same is not done for research as there are no research positions at the university; there are teaching or administration positions

where academics may be asked to fulfill a research-related role. This is done in an attempt to facilitate students' research interests and are often linked to the education of the medical students in the university. As such, the other 2 programs in the study, do not benefit from such an arrangement.

Relating this to the phenomenon under investigation, academics would use these situations and their experiences to make sense of the situation, as explained by Weick et al (2005). Inarguably, the sense the academics make is influenced by the way they see themselves. As highlighted in the data, few of them identify as being researchers. This being the case, it is understandable why they find it challenging to be researchers in an externally-accredited program. The nature of the university obviously exacerbates the situation. Moreover, according to the sense the academics make, they would use it to rationalize their activities. In this study, this would translate to whether they engage in research activities. An important element here is the conversations the academics have with themselves and their colleagues as this would also influence how they organize and exercise control over their lived experiences as they make sense of them (Abolafia, 2010). Connected to this is the fact that most of the academics, based on the data, had similar experiences. As such, when they share these experiences within their communities of practice (their individual programs) or with academics from other accredited programs in the university, they would collectively decide how they respond to the prevailing situation. Bandura (2001) refers to this as collective agency; a process which could impact their research activities based on the diffusion of their academic roles.

In relation to that, administrative dutiesat the university includes, but are not limited to, directing courses, heading committees or other leadership positions within the specific program as well as at the university level. An important factor which potentially influences how academics prioritize their academic role is their employment contracts. Understandably, academics may have the tendency to focus on the roles/ responsibilities highlighted in their contracts. Remarkably, teaching is strongly focused on in faculty contracts, as noted by Mark (18:18), but research is not mentioned. Instead, faculty contracts have a clause which speaks to performing any other duties/ responsibilities assigned by their Department Chairs. However, there is no direct mention of research and service being faculty responsibilities. This is potentially an

indication of a laxed institutional approach to these two roles and brings into question research as a core role in HEIs, as suggested by Cooperrider and Whitney (2001). It also alludes to the possibility that the university is ensuring it maximizes its profits. This is a particularly important point in relation to the phenomenon being studied because the chances of FPHEIs receiving grants funding for research is very slim. Moreover, the competition for these funds is increasing (Bailey et al, 2001). Consider all things, it is not surprising the university has a strong interest on teaching.

Moreover, based on their narratives, teaching was their main focus, followed by administration (inclusive of university service, at times) and then community service and or research. This prioritization somewhat reflects Pickersgill (1998) assertion that academics' time was increasingly used on administrative duties. However, it is not fully in line with Coaldrake and Stedman's (2009) observation of academic work where teaching and research are the center of academic work and other roles occupy less esteemed positions. Interestingly, it is not consistent with Schuster and Finkelstein's (2007) claim that teaching, and research form the dyadic core of academic roles with administration and service occupying the periphery. However, it is noteworthy that while the ranking indicated by the academics is not congruent the established triad, this should not be a cause for concern since each university would have its own unique mix of these academic roles (Laredo,2007). In fact, despite the prioritization of academic roles as seen in the data, the university is a complex system of interdependencies and as such, activities in one area are linked to those in others (Orton & Weick, 1990). This represents concept of coupling which was originally introduced by Weick (1976). Based on the conceptualization, couplings can be loose or tight. The former refers to actions that do not significantly affect the activities of another while the latter speaks to activities that considerably impact others (Sandberg, Löwstedt & Räisänen, 2012). In the context of this study, the coupling between the academic roles is relatively tight in relation to time spent by academics on each one but loose in terms of the actual activity itself. In relation to meeting the accreditation-related research requirements though there is tight coupling since research productivity of each academic significantly affects the outputs of the program and ultimately compliance with them.

Moreover, it is important to note that, while they are not necessarily presented in terms of ranking, academic roles tend to adhere to the teaching-research-service triad; and typically, in that order (Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, 2000; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; Tight et al, 2017). While it could be argued it is merely a coincidence the roles are listed in this order, I contend this order indicates some sort of hierarchy in the diffusion of academic roles because there is rarely any departure from this order; Boyer's (1990) listing being a notable one. Notwithstanding, it is instructive to highlight the blurry boundaries that exist between these three roles, as acknowledged by Tight et al (2017) when they the extension of service to include leadership responsibilities and community engagement as well as the fact that academics are increasingly required to perform a variety of academic and administrative roles. This perhaps is a viable explanation for different academics identifying dissimilar roles, apart from their strong focus and primary responsibility on teaching.

An important layer to this discussion is the fact that universities face pressures, one of which is accreditation, that cause academic engagement to be reconstituted (Fitzgerald et al, 2012). So, it may be fair to expect or anticipate when these forces are brought to bear down on HEIs, these institutions would undertake some structural and or procedural transformations. The responses of HEIs could result in the shrinking of the triad of academic roles, the unbundling of academic work and ultimately the emergence of a myriad of other specialized roles (Tight et al, 2017). But, as mentioned above, the university's stance, in relation to teaching, research and service, has not significantly changed despite the accreditation-related research requirements. In relation to this, however, both the university and the academics openly acknowledged the value/ importance of accreditation. One would perhaps expect the esteem given to accreditation to filter down to research requirements of accreditors and resulting in the provision/ modification of enabling research structures as well as improved research activities among academics. However, the latter appeared not to be the case as most academics reported low or no research activity. This will be discussed in 5.1.2 below while the research engagement enablers used will be explored in 5.4.

In addition, faculty appointments reflect Gravestok and Greenleaf 's (2008) teaching stream appointments; a situation where the academics' primary responsibility is teaching. This brings into focus time to conduct research. Importantly, sufficient time for research can significantly

affect faculty's research productivity (Chen et al, 2010; Jung 2012). This, in turn, can impact on which faculty members get promoted and the frequency with which they do so. In fact, in sync with the strong focus on teaching as an academic role, teaching is the most prominent area of faculty performance evaluation. However, other activities, such as mentoring are also considered. Moreover, there is a weighted approach to the performance benefit evaluation with teaching being the heaviest weighted followed by service (inclusive of administration, service to the university and service to the community) and then research. Intriguingly, resources used on service activities are not considered worthwhile investments as it relates to career advancement (Macfarlane, 2005). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that, within the university, the focus is on the quantity of articles published and not the quality of the articles, based on the journal in which they were published and their impact factor. Based on my insider knowledge, faculty are required to list their publication and present a link for access to them. The sole purpose for of this is verification. The university is not concerned with the journal, its quality or its impact factor. Once the faculty meets the minimum number of publications, which is 1 per year, that criterion for promotion is considered met. The issue of promotion also related to institutional culture and academics' research agency which is discussed in detail in 5.3 below.

5.1.2 Research is a secondary role

The strongest (in terms of frequency in participants' account) theme to emerge from the data was that research was a secondary role. Each participant indicated so. The emergence of this theme as a strong one is understandable given the university identifies itself as a teaching-led/ intensive institution. But as Sharp et al (2014) point out a university's teaching-led identity does not preclude research. In fact, research is widely seen as being a central element of universities (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001). As such, it would be reasonable to assume these types of HEIs do have research agendas as well as they may only be sporadically highlighted. In relation to this, different factors appear to have contributed to the academics' perception that research takes second place to the other roles they perform within the organization. For the most part, these elements are external of the academics'; factors over which the academics have no direct control. In fact, they seem to be related to the culture of the organization. Moreover, in relation to this, Eyring and Christensen's (2011) claim that universities exhibit a certain degree of stasis when

they have achieved success and prestige in the education environment. Considering the university's successes in relation to its teaching agenda, it makes sense for it to sustain and strengthen teaching as its stronghold. Additionally, these factors appear to be linked to Eyring and Christensen's (2011) 'predictive genetic tendencies' where universities are expected to behave in a particular way based on their mission and vision. However, not only is there a possibility this could negatively impact academics' motivation to engage in research activities but, as a domino effect, also their FTE as it relates to research. Additionally, the university's disposition to teaching has direct impact on enabling research infrastructure across the university and constricts the individual program's ability to respond to the accreditation agencies' research requirements.

It is important to make the connections here between research productivity, accreditation, and marketization. As previously established, each of the agencies that accredit the programs represented in this study has research-related requirements. Therefore, to be compliant with these requirements, programs must demonstrate the specifically requested research activities. This brings to the fore Smith's (2011) concept of publish or perish, albeit at a program and possibly a university level. Failure to consistently and continuously be compliant results in the withdrawal of the accreditation status, potential loss of students, and economic constriction caused by loss of tuition. Keeping on the positive side, compliance with the requirements secure the accreditation status which in turn attracts students based on it ascribed value related to curriculum (Lubinescu et al, 2001). By extension, the most students a private, for-profit institution, such as the research site, attracts, the more economically stable it becomes and extends the issue of marketization. Clearly, being an FPHEI, the university is already intrinsically involved in marketization. Pursuing and securing accreditation for its programs is also reflective of that since one of the goals of accreditation is to ensure students get value for money (Burke & Butler, 2012). This has a multiplier effect because meeting the research requirements ensure continued accreditation which leads to enrolment and improved ability to compete in the market and more profits for its investors. Interestingly, this could also address the research requirements while, at the same time, further secure the university's identity as a teaching-intensive university.

Obviously, there is synergy between teaching and research or what is referred to the teaching-research nexus. The strength and direction of the teaching-research synergy is influenced by the

type of academic program (Gros et al, 2020). Evidently, the type of HEI would also and possibly more so determine the strength of its research pursuits. Traditionally, universities are categorized under two broad types: research-focus/ intensive or teaching-focused/ intensive. As highlighted in the Literature Review chapter above, research-focused/intensive universities are generally those that prioritize the necessary resources and time for research as well as ensuring teaching loads do not impede academics' ability to conduct research (Fung et al, 2017). On the other hand, teaching-focused/ intensive universities are epitomized by a strong core focus on teaching and have a culture where research is less prominent (Tomas and Jessop, 2018). It is important to note here that regardless of their research activities or the lack thereof, academics retain their jobs. This contradicts Magi and Berkens' (2015) declaration that it is impractical to hold academics positions without research activities and outputs. To reiterate, as highlighted in 1.2.2, the university is primarily a teaching-focused/intensive institution. As such, research is secondary. This seems to be evidence of Arimoto's (2015) assertion that globalization and marketization detangle teaching from research. Moreover, taking into consideration both Fung et al (2017) and Tomas and Jessop's (2018) categorization, it is perhaps understandable why academics believe being a researcher in the institution is a challenge. In fact, the institution's characteristics suggest research is not its main priority. Notably, it identifies as a teaching-intensive institution, faculty members have heavy teaching or administrative workloads and no dedicated time for research. Therefore, it was not surprising that an institutional culture in which research is not mandated contributed to academics having challenges in being researchers in the institution.

On a related tangent, the academics identified time constraints as one of the major hurdles that make being a researcher a challenge. One can appreciate that to engage in research activities and to produce research, even if it is one product, sufficient time to do so is critical. As can be expected, the time issue is symptomatic of the fact that research is secondary, as discussed in 5.1 above and the discussions at the beginning of this section on research productivity being a desired goal. In relation to this, Schwartz's (2012) fifth feature, which points out that values are ranked by importance and his sixth (and final) which holds the importance of these values, in relation to each other, guides behaviors, are also applicable. It is understandable that because research is secondary to teaching and, in some cases, administration/ university service, the

institution's behavior/ ways of functioning would reflect this. Moreover, because of their heavy teaching loads and large class sizes, academics' research activities are directly curtailed. Given that the university is a teaching-driven institution, it is to be expected this situation will continue as the demands for higher education increases and the massification of education becomes more intense. It would therefore be prudent for the university to have an established framework to support the academics' research interests and engagement (Falola et al, 2020). Furthermore, it is the university's responsibility to provide an environment where quality research is promoted, where engagement and participation in research is fostered and where research is translated into practice (Cleary et al, 2011). It should be noted here the academics acknowledge there are micro and macro level-level initiatives to support their research, as discussed in 5.4 below. While this is commendable, a pressing need appears to be increased time to do research and to meet the accreditation-related research requirements more equitably. An important step in doing so is to acknowledge the synergistic relationship between academic roles and the inherent tensions.

5.2 Dynamics between academic roles

It is critical to consider how employees work and how they optimally do so. In this regard, the fact that academics have challenges with being researchers is also symptomatic of other issues related to their professional work. Clearly, this situation and the fact that the academics have openly affirmed their low research engagement and productivity have implications for other areas of their professional lives. While this does not necessarily indicate a cause-and-effect scenario, there appears to be some degree of association. Balzano et al (2013) capture the areas that can be potentially affected: transformation, reflective practice, and professional development. As such, although these could positively impact other professional activities, limited research activity means academics would be restricted in their efforts to upgrade professional profiles in terms of research. The current research productivity situation at the academic programs suggests most academics do not have strong research profiles. Such a situation could negatively impact research collaborations; so much so that Stvilia et al (2017), in proposing a model for selecting collaborators identified, among other things, culture and reputation as important factors. The issue of collaboration is discussed in 5.2.2 below.

Additionally, based on Louis and Reed's (2013) definition, academics may not be regarded as scholars since this is a term that is synonymous to researchers. Academics' limited research engagement and productivity also suggests that academics' may not be as reflective in their practice since they would have reduced opportunities to incorporate their own research in their classrooms. Interestingly, Mary acknowledged the positive impact of academics' research on their classroom functioning (17:1-4; 19:1-3). This was particularly related to the academics being able to apply/ share their own experiences into their teaching as well as providing first-hand content in their areas of expertise.

Considering the type of university, the demographics of the faculty in this study and the phenomenon under investigation, I can appreciate the emergence of this theme. It is expected that no culture, event, occurrence, decision, or initiative, internal or external to the institution would have the same impact on academics' work. As discussed in 5.1 above, there are variances in the roles played by academics, research is a secondary role and being a researcher is challenging. These assertions present the grounds for this theme. Additionally, the accreditation-related requirements' impact on academics' work exacerbates the situation even though academics had only positive experiences in relation to this. This is in line with Brown et al's(2004) stance that accreditation is a performance management process as well as a springboard for quality improvement. This a possible explanation for which accreditation does not negatively/ adversely impact the work academics do. However, the faculty in this study, in some instances, changed the way they functioned because of the accreditation-related research requirements. The impacts were couched under two headings: research-related and teaching-related. While there is extensive literature on the impact of accreditation on research is virtually non-existent. Therefore, discussion on this theme is a bit restricted. Thus, a more general discussion will be pursued.

5.2.1 Linkages and Agency

The academics indicated links between their teaching and research activities. Maggi and Maarja (2015) had similar findings in their study. In this study, for some academics, there was a positive relationship between the accreditation-related research requirements and teaching, a negative one

for others and no relationship on any of the academic roles for one academic. On the positive side, the research requirements reduction of teaching responsibilities which led to more time for research better delivery of classroom experiences, revision of course content and learning because of doing research. These positives could perhaps be housed in Chow et al's (2015) concept of teacher research (research conducted by teachers) which has positive effects on teacher competence. Additionally, teacher research is an important factor for improved innovation in education (Fullan, 2013). This was alluded to in a couple of the academics' narratives. More specifically, teacher research can provide student with up-to-date knowledge and can improve students' critical thinking skills (Jiang & Roberts, 2011). On the negative side, the impacts included reduction in teaching time. This impact was also noted by Benedict and Benedict (2014). Furthermore, there was a reduction in teaching preparation time. The former is understandable because adequate time is needed to engage in research. The latter, though also comprehensible, has a good degree of flexibility since the FTE system employed by the university allows employees to determine the time spent on teaching, research, and service (inclusive of administrative duties).

Although the other academics did not blatantly point out they were not researchers, as Jim did (15.1), there is a possibility that some feel the same way. This brings Bandura's (2006) concept of human agency into play. It also into the forefront Lent and Brown's (2013) concept of career self-management, an inherent aspect of the SCCT. Despite the accreditation-related research requirements on the respective programs, some academics were not engaged in research activities. Clearly, the academics were exercising the flexibility afforded them through the FTE system the university uses where they determine how much of their time/ effort is spent on the differ academic roles. This is an indication of them exercising personal agency. Based on my insider knowledge, while the university encourage research, academics' employment status is not negatively affected by failure to conduct research. The academics are also apparently using those who are conducting research as proxies. From my insider knowledge, some faculty relegate conducting research to those who are research oriented. Bandura (2006) asserts persons tend to do this when they are either unable to directly contribute, perceive other to be more competent to contribute or prefer not to be burdened with the responsibility. Interestingly, none of the accreditation agencies require research activities from individual faculty members. Instead,

research activities are presented at the program level. As such, even if few academics within the various program engage in research, but they have many activities, the accrediting agencies do not penalize the program. What matters is the overall research activities of the unit/ academic program under review.

As highlighted above in the discussion on research being secondary, most academics indicated they had heavy teaching responsibilities. As such, their research activities could have been impeded by this, making Bandura's first assertion a possibility. But, since some academics were conducting research, it could also be that the others were allowing their colleagues to fulfill the accreditation agencies' requirement for research productivity. This stance could also be indicative of the academics' perception of their self-efficacy in terms of research. A primary source of self-efficacy is performance indicators (successes and failures) on specific activities (Lent & Brown, 2013). On one hand, heavy teaching and or administrative responsibilities could prove to be the challenge, as was established above in 5.1.1 and 5.1.2. On the other, the challenge could be the academics' negative self-efficacy beliefs in relation to conducting research.

Notably, the accreditation agencies check for research productivity at the program level, where aggregated outputs are taken into consideration as opposed to the outputs of each individual faculty member. The academics is aware of this practice as they were able to recall the research requirements. Therefore, it seems the academics were relying on the research activities of some colleagues to address the requirements. This has some semblance to Bandura's (2001) collective agency. However, in this case, the academics did not purposely agree some colleagues would carry their respective departments; it was left to chance. I will return to this situation in more detail below, in my discussion on strategies used to maintain research outputs.

5.2.2 Collaboration issues

Some respondents acknowledged collaborative research is necessary. Nevertheless, they also indicated being a researcher was challenging due to collaboration issues. I was not alarmed at the emergence of this theme given the general dynamics of establishing and maintaining

collaborations, particularly as it relates to the selection of collaborators as well as the time and effort needed for effective working relationships. In fact, from personal experiences in working collaboratively with others, the issue of inequitable contributions, as raised by Tom, was a recurring challenge. Based on Delgadillo's (2016) definition of collaboration, this should not be the case; collaboration should be an equal partnership. Dewulf et al (2007) posits that among the reasons for inequitable contributions is poor communication and mismatched expectations. It would mean then academics should spend more time before any collaborative research projects are undertaken so that the expectations of each collaborator are openly communicated and discussed. Focus ought to have been placed on the research goal, objectives, approaches, and methodologies (Delgadillo, 2016). This is particularly important since these collaborative projects often bring together researchers from different disciplines and who have different expertise (Brun et al, 2019). Still, Tom's situation, where collaborators were sometimes ignorant of the work being done, was a bit astounding as one may expect academics to demonstrate more attention and interest into research projects on which they agreed to collaborate. However, it is important to note researchers sometimes fixate on their own disciplinary backgrounds (Vourc'h et al, 2018). Interestingly, this could potentially be an explanation for John's habit of working with a core set and faculty and why he found it difficult to work outside of that group.

Additionally, John's research team may have withstood the challenges of collaborations because of the strength of their commonalities. The most basic, yet important, element may be shared topics of interest (Vourc'h et al, 2018). Again, this throws Tom's situation into scrutiny because academics would be expected to collaborate on research projects in which they were interested. Notwithstanding, there appears to be several expectations of researchers; expectations which affect collaborations. Interestingly, Tom's challenge of finding quality collaborators is perhaps indicative of some of his expectations. It also raises questions; one of which would be: what is a quality researcher? Toledo-Pereyra's (2012) qualities of a good researcher (interest, motivation, inquisitiveness, commitment, sacrifice, excellence, knowledge, recognition scholarly approach and integration), could provide an answer to this question. This list, however, focuses on researcher characteristics and appropriately so in response to the question. But the quality of researchers is also affected by factors external to researchers. It would be remiss not to consider these and perhaps even an unfair expectation that academics demonstrate excellence in research

without adequate and effective infrastructure. Moreover, these expectations would only be reasonable if academics had research training, exist in an environment with strong research support and were incentivized for research. It would be challenging to be a researcher without experienced and prolific research collaborators and particularly so in an environment where there is a low research culture.

5.3 Institutional culture and academics' research agency

As highlighted in 5.1 above, the university is a teaching-intensive one. Research is encouraged but is not a requirement unless academics are seeking to elevate to a new rank. Moreover, the FTE system used by the university allows flexibility in the time and effort academics spend on each academic role. Nevertheless, no faculty is allowed to use less than 60% of their FTE on teaching. Inarguably, there is a relationship between the organization's culture and academics agency in terms of their research engagement and productivity. Those that emerged from the study are discussed below

5.3.1 Values and value conflict

Based on the findings, the 'research culture' at the university was not as enabling as it should be. As highlighted in the Literature Review chapter, researcher enablers include zealous and effective leaders, collaboration, a research community framework, positive relationships among colleagues, ethical practice, and opportunities for research training (Cleary et al, 2011). The academics pointed directly to some of these enablers of research and alluded to others. Clearly, limited research enablers negatively impact the research culture and vice versa. Also, by extension, both contribute to making research challenging for academics. Specifically, the different issues raised in the data included the institutional culture, the low number of active researchers and absence of full-time researchers, insufficient PhD programs and limited research-related accommodations. While these were acknowledged as separate and distinct issues, institutional/ organizational culture is an umbrella concept under which the issues that were identified are couched. Hofstede et al's (2010) onion model of organization culture, which was presented in the Literature Review chapter, supports the notion of culture encompassing all areas

of institutional life. As such, all the issues highlighted by the academics will be discussed under the heading of institution culture.

Based on Hofstede et al's (2010) model, symbols, the first layer, represents aspects of the organization that can only be recognized by those who share the culture. They include elements, such as architecture and service models and is seen as the most superficial layer because it can be easily replaced by another system. None of the factors identified by the academics, as contributors to making their role as researchers challenging, can be directly linked to this layer. Since all organizations should have this layer, according to the model, a probable explanation may be that the academics neither consider this to be an impediment to their research activities nor their agency in relation to research. Or, since this layer is seen by Hostede et al (2010) as being inconsequential and existing on the surface, they could be overlooked by the academics as factors that make research a challenge for them.

Heroes, the second layer of Hofstede et al's (2010) model, are representative of employees who are highly recognized and who serve as models for the values espoused by the institution. Interestingly, this has some connect to the first layer, as it relates to architecture, not necessarily in the design and location of the buildings but by the fact that some of the buildings are named after key contributors; some of whom are founders of the university. It may be worth mentioning here there are also scholarships and awards in the names of the contributors, but none are specifically focused on research. Applying this to the focus of this study, heroes could be exemplary researchers at both the organizational and departmental/ program level. While recognized researchers (heroes) could serve as motivators, they could be more impactful if they have more direct and closer interactions and collaborations with colleagues, particularly the less experienced ones. Interestingly though, they pointed to a lack of research mentorship as one of the challenges of being a 'researcher' within the university. While this does not necessarily point to a deficiency in heroes, it does raise a red flag. Lack of mentorship can influence academics' research agency. And, especially for faculty with no or limited research experience, it can negativity impact research productivity (and promotion, as discussed will be discussed below) and potentially accreditation outcomes.

The third layer of Hofstede et al's (2010) model, rituals, are collective activities that may not be needed to achieve a goal, but which are believed to be essential and necessary by members of the institution. Consequently, academics undertake these activities because of that merit. For instance, having senior faculty mentoring junior faculty on research, whether at the institutional or individual level could serve a ritual that can positively impact the institution's research culture. However, as discussed above, this ritual is lacking. Moreover, enrolment of smaller class sizes, institutional support, inclusive of incentivization of research, an effective and efficient research approval system and procurement of research supplies could be considered important factors that are linked to research rituals. These rituals are part of the immediate environment and give insight into the research environment at the institution. In fact, the immediate environment is a stimulator of innovation (Griffin, 2010). Given the relationship between research and innovation, where research guides the development of ideas (Altbach & Balan, 2007), it stands to reason that the immediate environment impacts academics' research agency and by extension, their research productivity. The fact that these rituals were seen to be lacking by academics is an indication, of some degree, of inadequacies in the research environment at the university. Interestingly although Hofstede et al's (2010) model holds that rituals are not necessary for goal-achievement, in this study they appeared to be invaluable to academics meeting the research expectations as well as the academic programs meeting the accreditation-related research requirements.

More specifically, considering the challenges identified by the academics, the fact that these elements are lacking could mean research is not overtly valued as one may expect. However, given the pervasiveness of institutional values, this could only be a tentative claim. Still, the apparent deficiencies in the first three organizational layers implies a level of value conflict since the accreditation agencies have research as a criterion. Accordingly, it would be a reasonable expectation that the institution ensures the presence of an environment that enables the programs to meet that requirement. Notably, Marini's (2000) definition of values recognizes their cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements and the fact that these are used to rationalize decisions and the associated implications. As such, it is to be expected that the university has clearly thought-out and justifiable reasons for the existence of a low institutional research

culture, as indicated by the academics; one of which is undoubtedly its forecasted trajectory as a teaching intensive HEI. However, discussions on this fall outside the scope of this study.

Nonetheless, the apparent value conflict situation discussed above is not a novel one though as Collins (2015) established a gap between organizational culture and those encouraged by accreditation agencies. Nevertheless, this value conflict is potentially one of the root causes why academics find being researchers a challenge. In relation to this, Schwartz (2012) assertions on the nature of values may be applicable. point to desirable goals which drive action, transcend specific behaviors and situations. Understandably, every value cannot have the same importance and, based on the importance ascribed, they influence beliefs and experiences differently. It is also understandable that individuals and groups have dissimilar value priorities and hierarchies and that these would affect how they function. Schwartz (2012) notes that values: are beliefs that are infused with feeling. As such, if research was a prominent value, both the university and the academics would despair if it were threatened or jeopardized in any way. The academics have accepted research is not a major value. However, feelings about research being challenging seem to manifest on both ends of the continuum; frustration, as expressed by Mark (21:13-15) and apathy, as conveyed by Jim (9:10-11). In relation to this is Schwartz (2012) second feature, which highlight values refer to desirable goals that motivate action, and the third, which notes that values transcend specific actions and situation, are both applicable. If the university places high value on research (and not simply to ensure accreditation requirement), there would be specific research goals to direct academics' behavior. In fact, Schwartz (2012) fourth feature, which highlights values as standards or criteria which guide evaluation actions and policies, is also relevant. It could be argued that the research outputs linked to promotion/ elevation in rank positively reflects this since there appears to be an established research expectation of which the academics are aware; even though there are no mandatory internal requirements.

5.3.2 Low research productivity

The findings highlight low research productivity among most of the academics in this study. This seems to be part of the domino effect of the university's deeply rooted identity and culture in teaching and the low expectation of research at the institutional level, as Mark alluded (6:16).

Based on the discussion above, it is evident research holds a lower position in relation to teaching and it is not mandated, as per faculty's employment contracts. This situation clearly communicates the university's stance and possibly its expectations, as it relates to research, to academics. It can also be a determinant in both the quantity and quality of faculty's research outputs. In fact, employees form perceptions of organizational expectations of them (Zhang et al, 2014). And, these perceptions influence performance (Jiwen, Song et al, 2009). It comes as no surprise then that most of the academics were either not actively engaged in conducting research or had a non-existent research profile; reflecting the organizational culture as it relates to research. Fortunately, the research productivity of the academics who are conducting research appears to be sufficient to address the research criteria of the various accreditation agencies. While few faculty appear to be conducting research, the volume of research they do, and their research related activities are sufficient to meet the related accreditation criterion. As highlighted in Boxes 1, 2 and 3 in the Introduction section, none of the accrediting agencies ask for research activities by individual faculty. However, this is the case only for as long as aggregated research productivity and outputs are accepted by the accreditors. Interestingly, Bandura (2006), in his Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) argues individuals are neither fully autonomous nor are their activities fully determined by environmental factors. This alludes to an intriguing interplay between individuals and environment., where, as seen in this study, some persons engage in research while others do not. In relation to this, Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), an extension of Bandura's (2006) SCT discussed in the Literature Review chapter above, which holds individuals' behaviors are reflective of their self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goals, is applicable. Academics' low research productivity could result from beliefs they are unable to do research and or personal goals that are neither aligned to or reflective of research activity.

Remarkably, but not unexpected, the academics indicated there were no repercussions, in terms of their employment, for not doing research. Absence of consequences for low research productivity is associated with Lent et al's (1994) outcome expectations which form part of the SCCT. Moreover, this situation brings to the fore the fact that employment contracts do not require research from faculty. This could be an indication of the university shying away from having to evaluate research performance, as some HEIs traditionally did (Irvine et al, 1983).

Presumably, it could also be a covert acknowledgement of the university's inability to internally assess research productivity and the need for external assistance; a situation which is posited by Louis and Reed (2013). This, though, does not exempt HEIs, through their academic programs, from having to respond to accreditation-related research requirements. In fact, despite having experienced one or more accreditation cycles, some academics mentioned they had low research productivity. Others relegated their research roles to colleagues within their respective programs. This behavior is consistent with Bandura's (2006) concept of human agency where persons either prefer not to engage in certain roles, where they believe others are more competent than they are or where they prefer not to be burdened with certain roles or responsibilities. It also juxtaposes, for the most part, the prospect of accreditation positively affecting academics research outputs. Interestingly, the academics who were doing research alluded to the positive impact of accreditation-related research requirements on their research. This will be discussed below in 5.3.

On a related tangent, some academics indicated their research productivity was lower than that of their supervisor's expectations. In the context of this study, the academics' supervisors were their Department Chairs who also serve academic heads. This assertion brings to light a thought-provoking scenario; one where there are no research expectations at the organizational level but at the departmental level there are. Plausible explanations for this could that the accreditation-related research requirements are implemented at the departmental level and the fact that each of the accredited programs has its own research criteria, as was presented in Chapter One. As such, an important aspect of this discussion is the level of influence academic heads exerts on the diffusion of academic roles and research productivity. Although, limited by the terms of the employment contract, it is not unreasonable to expect academic heads to encourage faculty into doing research and to do so by conducting research themselves. In relation to this, Segun-Adeniran (2015) claims leadership can positively impact research productivity. Remarkably though, Mark, an academic head, not only expressed he had challenges in getting faculty to do research but also mentioned his administrative duties reduced his time to undertake research. While this is a concerning situation in and of itself, it is perhaps reasonable to expect academics to have a personal responsibility to contribute to the research outputs especially since it could jeopardize accreditation and since they claimed to value accreditation. Consideration must

therefore be given to individual characteristics that influence research productivity and outputs. In relation to this, a major factor influencing research productivity is motivation (Bland et al, 2005; Hardré & Cox, 2009; Cheng-Cheng Yang, 2017); the strongest one emerging was that of promotion.

5.3.3 Research for promotion

This issue reflects two pillars of the SCCT; outcome expectations, which focuses on the outcomes of specific behaviors, and goals, which highlights the attainment of certain personal achievements (Hackett, 2002). Six academics mentioned promotion as an impetus for conducting research. However, I hasten to clarify they were not necessarily speaking of themselves but also of colleagues. This situation is aligned with the concept of career self-management, which emphasizes an individual's purposive behavior (Lent & Brown, 2013). Currently, based on the performance benefit evaluation at the university, faculty are encouraged to demonstrate active research profiles to be considered for promotion/ elevation. Typically, this translates to having at least one publication per annum. This practice is consistent with Hasselback et al's (2012) guide of using the number of articles written by academics as part of the process to determine faculty's eligibility for promotion. However, other indicators such as grants, other publications, thesis supervision and research committee membership, can be used to gauge faculty research productivity (Caminiti et al, 2015). Interestingly, the level of research productivity required by the accreditors are more than that needed for promotion. Also, the outputs/ activities expected by the accreditors are more varied than those formally measured by the university, as can be seen in Figures 1, 2 and 3 in the Introduction section. This is in line with Musick's (2011) claim that many faculty responsibilities go unmeasured. Additionally, being an insider-researcher, I am aware that the diffusion of academic responsibilities at the departmental level reflects Caminiti et al's (2015) list and is closely linked to the accreditation-related research requirements.

Some may argue having to do one publication annually is a minimalistic 'expectation', in relation to the criteria for being promoted. However, Mampane (2020) notes faculty in the lower ranks are expected to have 2 research outputs every 3 years and those who are in higher ranks are expected to have 3 outputs in 3 years or 4 within 5 years. Considering this, the university promotion practices, as far as it concerns research, appears to be consistent with the practices of

other HEIs, based on Mampane (2020) assertions. While this may be the case, it is also important to reiterate the university is primarily a teaching institution, faculty's teaching load tend to be high and there is no tenure. Absence of tenure means academics do not have any obligation to ensure they get promoted within any specified period. Additionally, based on my insider knowledge, many academics get promoted within their current ranks, and not necessarily promoted to a new rank, despite no research productivity. Moreover, several of them seems are not interested in being promoted to a new rank. As a potential consequence, and as seen in this study, this could lead to low research productivity even within the construct of the university's performance benefit evaluation system.

In light of this, it is important to note the typical trajectory of an early-career faculty member at the university is to be recruited as an Instructor and progress through to Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and then Professor. Intriguingly, the point was made that all academics were interested in being promoted (Anne 19:14). This is a noteworthy assumption and one that has some implications for this discussion. Anne's statement could possibly be linked to Evett's (2013) contention that professionals have certain normative behaviors that others in the profession have come to expect. As such, Anne's statement could be either her own expectation or the expectation within her community of practice. But, despite Anne's statement, it is fair to expect differences in personal academic/ professional trajectories among faculty. These trajectories could be influenced by a plethora of factors. Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) in their Social Cognitive Career Theory acknowledge the variety of influencers of career trajectories, noting individuals are not simply recipients/ beneficiaries of the forces which situational forces; they play key roles in their career-related activities and outcomes. Applying this theory to research productivity and promotion, faculty's career and academic interests, educational and career choices and academic and career achievements come into play. Clearly, variations in these areas, among academics, are inescapable. This would also be true for academics' research productivity as well as all other related activities such as promotions. Given the synergy between these areas and their potential impact on accreditation outcomes, it is necessary to have initiatives aimed at maintaining research productivity.

5.4 Strategizing for research productivity

It is imperative that strategies, at the different levels of an institution, be identified to meet, and remain compliant with, the various accreditation criteria/ standards. Synergy between the strategies at the different levels is also important. Participants indicated various strategies and initiatives were seen at the institutional and program levels. Strategies at the program level were most frequently highlighted. This is perhaps, at that level, academics are in closer proximity to the accreditation-related research requirements. Furthermore, the fact that they were able to identify the strategies could be an indication of the level of involvement in developing them. It could also mean the strategies were communicated to them. It could also mean that the academics see the strategies in use. A combination of these is also a possibility. In fact, given the heightened scrutiny of the quantity and quality of research outputs (Lodewiks, 2011), it would be imprudent for academic programs not to employ an appropriate complement of approaches. Moreover, Aithal (2016) believe HEIs should have objectives aimed at knowledge creation as specific strategies to foster research productivity. The academic programs appeared to have autonomy over their strategies. This type of freedom should auger well for the programs, since at that level, program-specific strategies would be best placed/ aligned with the research requirements. Interestingly, the two most frequently strategies identified by the participants were those of research committees and special initiatives and projects. These were aimed at boosting research engagement and productivity and more specifically, to maintain research outputs for accreditation purposes.

5.4.1 Research forms

Observing the various types of strategies used, there is evidence of both customization and innovation. For instance, both Anne's and Mary's program developed research forms as reporting mechanisms for research activities, productivity, and outputs. Without seeing those forms, I can guarantee they are different because the programs have different accreditation-related research requirements. As such, the forms would need to have been created to capture relevant information on academics' research activities. While this clearly helps with data

collection for the reports that are periodically sent to the respective accrediting agencies, the forms appear to also be an indirect way of encouraging and maintain research activities. The data collected from the form are shared with academics within the same program. While this sort of information sharing could simply be a means of keeping colleagues informed, it could also be an indirect way to get academics to review their research productivity, negative or positive, and to motivate them to engage in (more) research. In the case of academics with low research productivity, this could spur them to do better and if they have good research productivity, they could potentially endeavor to do more. According to Eker (2020), the former is considered a balancing loop, where the individual attempts to address a gap in performance, while the latter is a reinforcing loop where good performance instigates more of the same.

5.4.2 Research committees

A committee structure is a panacea for the effective administration of various aspects of university functioning (Okai & Wordu, 2019). As such, the use of research committees, as indicated by some academics in this study, could indeed prove to be a veritable tool for managing the research outputs of the different academic programs. One would expect that in undertaking their duties, these committees would employ different initiatives and make recommendations to ensure the programs' research goals are achieved. Therefore, it is important to be cognizant of the fact that the existence of research committees is not an end in themselves. In fact, Okai and Wordu (2019) highlight different challenges with the committee structure; challenges ranging from and related to the whims and fancies of administrators to wastage of resources when proposed recommendations are not implemented. Applying this acknowledgement to this present research injects the issue of effectiveness of the research committees. Although not specifically referring to committees, Jim opined the research structure in his program was non-functional and noted specific areas that led to this conclusion (Jim-25:7, 27:1-3). Assumingly, this assertion has negative implications for the effectiveness of the research committee since it is a component of that structure.

5.4.3 Special initiatives

Typically, recruitment of faculty takes via a centralized system through the Office of Human Resources. This process includes establishing a vacancy within the given department, an internal invitation for applications from current faculty members which, if not filled is extended to professionals outside the university, an invitation for shortlisted professionals to do a presentation to the university community on a selected area of their research or a chosen topic, an evaluation of the presentation by those who attended after which a selection is made. However, this process does not mean schools/ programs within the university do not propose and employ other necessary strategies. In fact, inarguably universities use and will continue to use creative means aimed at improving their functioning, at different levels of the organizations, and in specifically demarcated areas of focus. On one layer, the internal dynamics of the university itself may create situations which require its departments and academic programs to adjust, expand and diversify their functioning. On another, universities themselves must remain viable and respond to an array of demands by stakeholders and other external forces; one of which is accreditation agencies. As such, the use of special initiatives and projects, as had emerged in this study, would be considered appropriate or even necessary. For instance, both Anne's and Jill's program altered their recruitment approaches by hiring academics with strong research focus (Anne-33:29-32; Jill-14:33). This strategy is by no means a novel one as other HEIs have used the same strategy to achieve the same goal (Guskov, Kosyakov & Selivanova, 2018). However, there are other determinants of research productivity; some of which were identified by (Abramo et al, 2009; Abramo et al, 2011). Interestingly, Guskov et al (2018) found only slight (and questionably) increases in the average research productivity. Appreciably, use of research-related characteristics as factors for recruiting faculty holds the promise of a good degree of success in maintaining, and potentially boosting, academics' and their programs' research output. It is important to note though having a strong research focus does not automatically result in higher research outputs.

5.4.4 Performance evaluations

At the institutional level, the findings show the most frequently used strategy was performance evaluations. It was not surprising this theme emerged since, based on my insider knowledge, performance evaluations are a regular part of organizational functioning; HEIs included. In fact, because HEIs currently function in an extremely competitive global environment, performance evaluation is a staple because it helps universities to achieve different organizational goals and specific targets (Jalaliyoon & Taherdoost, 2012). It is important to mention at this juncture performance evaluation is a concept operationalized using tools such as performance appraisals and, by extension, performance benefits. Based on the findings, it seems the focus was on the latter and was synonymous with promotion or elevation, as it is sometimes called. The issue of promotion itself, in relation to research being secondary, was discussed above in 5.1.3 so it will not be explored again here. Nonetheless, suffice it to say, expectedly, an inherent and welcomed part of being promoted is financial bonuses. The terms 'performance evaluations', 'performance bonus evaluations' and 'bonus' were interchangeably used in the narratives of the academics who indicated this strategy. The use of this strategy to meet and sustain the research requirements could be questioned since there is low productivity among the academics.

5.4.5 Research committees

Regardless of the terminologies used, as part of their appraisal tool, universities would be expected to have key performance indicators -KPIs (Vincent, 2010). Therefore, the presence of research criteria and discussion during performance evaluations, as acknowledged by the academics, are in line with accepted standards. Moreover, the focus on research as part of the performance evaluation process is reflective of Vincent's (2010) research activities compartmentalization. Interestingly, although the research-related requirements for each of the programs are different, the KPIs are the same as there is no program-specific performance appraisal tool.

Obviously, based on the scope of this study, the appraisal tool used by the university will neither be scrutinized nor discussed. Notwithstanding this, it is not sufficient however for research activities to be included on performance appraisals. To effectively manage performance, these

activities must be linked to objectives and in turn organizational goals (Aquinis, 2013). In relation to this and considering that persistent non-compliance with the accreditation-related research requirements can have adverse effects, it is perhaps paramount for the programs to undertaking meticulous strategic planning. Interestingly, none of the academics pointed to a strategic plan, at the institutional level. For the sake of argument, if this situation means the university does not have a strategic plan that definitively speaks to research, it is understandably why research is secondary and possibly why academics encounter some of the challenges they do. However, based on my insider knowledge, the university has on site a research foundation that has a strategic plan. Based on the for-profit nature of the university, the foundation must function as a separate entity from the university to attract grants. This is potentially a reason for which none of the academics mentioned an institutional research strategic plan.

5.4.6 Strategic plan

It was quite intriguing that only Jill's program appeared to have a strategic plan; one which was being reviewed with a view of improving the structure (Jill-28:1; 29:4-5). There could be different reasons for this. It could be the apparent lack of a research strategic plan at the institutional level has filtered to the program level. This is a plausibility since organizational culture is quite pervasive and, as emerged in this study, could inadvertently have negative and counter-productive effects. It might also be Jill's program is proactively seeking not only to meet the accreditation-related research but potentially to create a subculture within the program. Whatever the reason, the importance of strategic plans/ planning is widely acknowledged for its guide for directing and sustaining behavior at all levels of the organization. In fact, Smith (2011) advocates for its use to address research goals and high priority areas. However, Hinton (2012) highlights the tediousness of developing a strategic plan, likening it to conducting an orchestra. Perhaps, this why the other two programs in this study possibly did not have a strategic plan. However, this may not necessarily be the case. Hinton's (2012) proposes a bipartite list of strategic plan components, namely goals and objectives and implementation. This list is a generic one that can apply to different areas of institutional functioning. Since the three programs must have goals and objectives based on accreditation requirements, the difference between Jill's

program and the others could be the implementation plan. In relation to this, de Haan (2014) points to a gap between the creation of a strategic plan and its implementation. Likewise, Hinton (2012) notes strategic plans can become "shelf documents" (p.7). While it would be unimaginable the other two programs had research strategic plans, but they were not used to maintain research outputs, this could indeed be a plausible explanation why some academics did not mention strategic plans as a strategy to maintain research outputs. It could also be the programs did not have a strategic plan that focused on research. Based on my insider knowledge though one of the other two programs had a research strategic plan. However, it was not fully implemented although reference was, from time to time made to it. Still on the topic of strategies, it was surprising some academics indicated there were no strategies for maintaining research outputs given strategies provide the impetus for the achievement of goals (Nikols, 2016).

5.5 Summary

This chapter began by restating the research aims/objectives. It provided the overarching research focus and restated the research questions the study aimed to answer. It provided a discussion of the research findings presented in chapter four and made connections to the theoretical framework and review of literature. Each theme was discussed in turn and connections were made across these themes. Major theoretical and conceptual contributors to the discussion were Hofstede et al's (2010) model of organizational culture, Bandura's (2006) Social Cognitive Theory and, by extension Lent, Brown and Hackett's (1994) Social Cognitive Career Theory and Lent and Brown's (2013) concept of career self-management. The discussion revolved around the position of research in relation to other academic roles and the factors that contributed to the academics experiencing research as a secondary role. It also discussed the fact the academics felt being a researcher was challenging and the contributors to the experiences they had in this regard. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the dynamics between academic roles, the institutional culture and its connection to academics' research agency. The section ended with a discussion on the strategies used to ensure achievement of the accreditation-related research requirements.

CHAPTER 6- CONCLUSION

This study explored the lived experiences of academics in a Caribbean-based HEI of meeting accreditation-related research requirements. The study aimed to answer the following three research questions:

1. How do academics feel about the academic roles in relation to each other within the university?"
2. How do accreditation-related research requirements affect activities undertaken by academics within their professional roles?
3. Do academics who are research-oriented have any strategies for pursuing and maintaining a research profile?

This chapter summarizes the key research findings and presents the main conclusions from the study. It also discusses the potential limitations of this research. It also proposes recommendations for practice in relation to the focus of this study.

6.1 Conclusions

In response to RQ1, the academics understood they had control over their decision to be researchers or not regardless of the fact they work in an externally accredited program which needs research outputs to be compliant with the accreditation standards. Being a researcher was challenging for the academics. In fact, only few academics consider themselves to be researchers. Additionally, only a couple of them were actively involved in research even while acknowledging it importance to the institution and for positive accreditation outcomes. This stance appears to be influenced by the fact that research is secondary to other academic roles that often constitute academic work, namely teaching, service and administration. In relation to this, it seems the university, which prides itself as a teaching-led institution, continues to function as such even though three of its programs are externally accredited and must respond to research requirements.

This strong teaching culture is evidenced by the dominance of teaching where academics have heavy teaching workloads, inclusive of large class sizes. This translated into less time to engage in research activities both individually and collectively. While this has resulted in low research productivity among the academics, it appears some were not interested in engaging in research, especially since there were no repercussions for not doing so. Moreover, the university polices encourage faculty to do research, it does not mandate it. It is not part of the academics' employment contracts, but it is part of the performance benefit system. In addition, the FTE system used allows academics some leverage over the percentage of time spent on teaching, research, and service/ administration. Consequently, the academics who were engaging in research activities were doing so primarily for promotion/ elevation in rank.

As it relates to RQ2, having to meet accreditation-related research requirements had mixed impacts on the work academics do and different academics experienced the same type of impact in different ways. However, this was particularly the case with their teaching-related activities where several positive impacts were highlighted. The FTE system used appeared to be one of the factors that contributed to this as some faculty were able to reduce their teaching time to allow them to do research. It can also be concluded doing research has a positive overall impact on the teaching and learning experiences within the externally accredited programs. This included improved delivery of course content and necessary revision of course content. Having to meet accreditation-related research requirements also negatively impacted the academics' teaching activities. The most prominent impacts in this regard are reductions in teaching preparation time, and time spent on teaching.

Regarding RQ3, it can be concluded varied strategies are used to maintain research outputs. Additionally, it can be established personal strategies to this end are negligible. However, strategies at the institutional and program levels are prominent. It can further be concluded the academic programs have autonomy over the choice of strategies. Research forms, research committees, performance evaluations and special initiatives are most often used. Moreover, only one academic program has a research strategic plan.

Altogether these conclusions highlight the university exhibits loose coupling in its undertake of the three academic roles. The roles appear to be fragmented, based on the FTE system used, since academics are given the freedom to direct their FTEs and there is no standardized policy for the diffusion of academic roles across the university. They also point to the tensions in the academics' lived experiences of functioning within the clauses of their job descriptions while at the same time contributing to the accreditation-related research requirements, Given that academics are not mandated to do research, this situation demands that academics navigate different interests and the individual, program and institutional levels. This points to the complexities academics face being employed in a teaching-intensive HEI where a dominant external force, in the form of accreditation requires research productivity and where there is no room for negotiation on the matter.

The conclusions also reiterate that academic work, in and of itself, is very complex. This complexity is exacerbated by trends in higher education, such as marketization. Although these conclusions are stated in simple terms, the issue of academics' agency, or the lack thereof, is quite ubiquitous and even more so considering the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon. They put the spotlight on the very important issue of structure and agency and the extent to which stasis instigates reflection on academics' and universities' autonomy to embark a particular trajectory in the pursuit of their vision. Additionally, the conclusions allude to the difficulties that academics would have if they decide to develop a research profile and pursue a research trajectory. Moreover, the conclusions draw into focus the space that the university has to navigate these complexities. Any efforts to do so must clearly address the institution's stance on enhancing academics' research capacity using a robust research infrastructure, concretely connect teaching to research and effectively motivate academics to engage in research activities. These would facilitate meeting the accreditation-related research requirements.

While there has been substantial knowledge on accreditation and its relationship with teaching, evidence on its impact on academics' research activities is largely absent. As such, the findings and conclusion that emerged in this study is invaluable to closing the knowledge gap that currently exists. Additionally, given that accreditation of private, for-profit is a relatively new

area in the higher education landscape, these conclusions serve as a point from which other studies can be developed.

6.2 Limitations

I opted to use this section to highlight the limitations related to the study design and the study itself. Although this is a departure from the normal structure, given the impact that one has on the other, I thought it best to keep both within the same section and to discuss each in turn so readers can get a better appreciation of them.

6.2.1 Limitations of Qualitative Case Study Design

Qualitative case studies involve the interpretation of the narratives of those who experience the phenomenon first-hand. Therefore, there is reliance of the participants' ability to effectively articulate their perspectives on what could be a complex phenomenon. Willig (2013) asserts this could indeed be a veritable challenge especially if the participants are not used to having such conversation and under research conditions. Moreover, researchers can only get an understanding how people speak about their experiences and not necessarily the actual experience (Willig, 2013). Furthermore, Smith et al (2009) note language shapes, limits, and enables interpretation of experiences. This could also be regarded as a limitation of the study design.

Another limitation of qualitative case studies is that it focuses on the participants' experiences and not the reason why individuals experience the same phenomenon in different ways. Willig (2013) claims this could hinder understanding of the phenomenon. Additionally, the researcher plays an active role throughout the research process. This could affect researchers' ability to interpret, present and make sense of the data (Brocki & Wearde, 2006). As a novice researcher, this was concerning to me especially as I conducted the research in my own institution. I made every effort to follow the guidelines which govern IPA studies.

6.2.2 Limitations of this study

As an insider-researcher, I took an active role throughout the research; the exception being the transcription of the interviews. I acknowledge my proximity to the phenomenon and the possibility this could affect the research process and specifically in coding the themes which emerged in the findings section. However, I made took reflective stance throughout the process. Inarguably, it is impossible to undertake such a study without the infiltration of some aspect of self into the research process. To be transparent, I presented a sample of part of a coded transcription in 4.0 above. Moreover, I explained my positionality within the research process. But this may not allow the reader to get full idea of the complete context. Given the word limit for this thesis, it was impossible to include all the transcriptions in this report.

This study employed a small sample size in relation the target population. Although the findings can be used to inform reflection and future decisions related to the phenomenon, they cannot be generalized. Nevertheless, transferability of the findings to other contexts and groups is possible.

6.3 Implications for Practice

I chose to structure this section to coincide with the superordinate themes that emerged from the findings to allow the academics' experiences shape it. Additionally, given the scope of the study and the fact that it reflects experiences at various strata of the institution, implications for practice will be discussed at the individual, departmental/team and organizational levels, wherever appropriate.

This study highlighted, based on the academics' experiences of meeting accreditation-related research requirements, research is a secondary role compared to teaching and service (inclusive of administration, university, and community service). This finding reflects and has implications for the university's FTE system which is used to facilitate the time faculty spend on academic work. The institution places value on accreditation, as highlighted in the academics' narratives, and is moving to have more of its programs externally accredited. As such, research productivity may become more widely prominent in the university. This could potentially result in a review of

the FTE and subsequently a more formal pronouncement and policy on research productivity/ outputs. In relation to this, faculty employment contracts may need to be modified to include research requirements. These would auger well for the university in its response the research-related requirements for accreditation. It would also boost the profile of the institution since research intensity is an important marker in relation to the quality of the university (Mägi & Beerkens, 2016). Consequently, this finding suggests departments/ academic programs and faculty would need to review their research perspectives and practices to better accommodate/ foster meeting the accreditation-related research requirements.

Furthermore, the study also showed the academics feel being a researcher, in one of the externally accredited programs at the university, is challenging. The findings show low research culture, poor internal research culture, time constraints, faculty-related issues, and collaboration issues as key contributors to this experience. I am cognizant of the fact that shifts in organizational culture are political, take a while to be implemented (if decisions are even made to do so) and for changes to be observed. Still this finding has implications for the FTE system, as discussed in the paragraph above. It also supports the need to review the existing research infrastructure, policies and procedures and the provision of capacity building ones which are better aligned to academics' needs in relation to meeting the accreditation-related research requirements. Additionally, this finding suggests the need for a more supportive environment at the department level, possibly in the form of mentorships to encourage and support academics' individual and collaborative research endeavors. Moreover, it supports academics being proactive in the development of their research capacity.

Additionally, the study revealed having to meet the accreditation-related research requirements has mixed impacts on academics' teaching responsibilities, more positive than negative. This finding highlights the symbiotic relationship that exists between teaching and research. It also suggests the need for both to be equally focused on. It further supports a more definitive requirement for academics to be engage in research as well as the modifications in the FTE system and research capacity building infrastructure, as discussed above. At the department level, this finding supports collaborative research and team teaching as a means of professional development.

Moreover, the study disclosed varied strategies are used to maintain research outputs to meet the accreditation-related research requirements. Specifically, research committees, special initiatives and projects are most often used. Based on the findings that research is secondary, and academics find being a researcher is challenging, this finding supports a review of the strategies in use with a view of better enabling research productivity and outputs. It also supports an inclusive and iterative approach for selecting strategies where academics and departments can influence the choice of strategies.

6.4 Opportunities for Future Research

The findings of this study have demonstrated, based on academics' lived experiences of meeting accreditation-related research requirements, research is secondary to other academic roles, being a researcher is challenging, mixed impacts of the research requirements on teaching and the use of varied strategies to maintain research outputs.

It would be formative for this study to be replicated to include academics from each of the departments involved within the externally accredited programs. This would establish the perspectives of a wider cross-section of academics, facilitate analysis at the program level and foster a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

A possible area for future research is to conduct case studies with each of the externally accredited programs to get a deeper insight of the experiences of the academics in relation to the phenomenon. This could be instructive for establishing interventions and initiatives that are more program specific.

Given the small sample size used in this research compared to the population of academics in the three externally accredited programs in the university, a further area of study would be for a quantitative study to be done on the phenomenon to establish the extent to which these experiences exist.

Interview accounts of a phenomenon are retrospective in nature. This may affect the accuracy of the experiences shared. It would therefore be informative to conduct a longitudinal study which would provide a cause-and-effect analysis of the academics' experiences of meeting the accreditation-related research requirements.

6.5 Dissemination Plans

The findings from this study can be beneficial to the HEI in which it was conducted as well as to other local and regional institutions which are already accredited or contemplating accreditation. I plan to share the aggregated finding with a cross section of stakeholders using different means. The following represents my intention for dissemination:

Firstly, my department has time allotted for sharing of research activities during department meetings. Additionally, faculty can request a special lunch break session to present their research. Given the scope of this research, I anticipate approximately 45-60 minutes would be needed so I intend to use the latter option. A soft copy will also be made available. I plan to the findings my department because of their relevance to her academic role, the implications for professional practice and to the 'smartness' of departmental goals and objectives.

Secondly, I intend to share the findings with other departments especially those considering external accreditation. The findings could serve to guide the plans and policies of those programs in being compliant to accreditation-related requirements if they exist. In my role as Accreditation Coordinator, I have been approached by another department for technical knowledge in its preparation for external accreditation. These finding could enrich this collaboration.

Thirdly, the organization's administration is currently formalizing policies/ procedures that require research as a faculty role. I plan to share the findings at one of the weekly on-campus lunchtime seminars which is opened to the university community. I also plan to share copies with the dean of each of the schools on campus. It is my hope the organization would become

more cognizant of the phenomenon and would better plan for and manage accreditation-related accreditation research requirements.

Fourth, I plan to disseminate my research regionally and internationally. I intend to publish my research in selected peer-reviewed journal(s). As such, it could serve to inform and guide other regional HEIs with similar situations. I also plan to present my research at the university's Research Day, a regional activity which takes place on campus, and at least one other professional conference.

6.6 Reflections on my Doctoral Journey

To be honest, undertaking doctoral studies was but a fleeting consideration after I finished my master's degree. I felt I needed break from studies and time to spend with my family, so I took one. However, that break was somewhat short-lived. I transitioned from teaching in a public secondary school to being employed by the private, for-profit HEI in which this research was conducted. I was recruited to be the Accreditation Coordinator, an administrative position, in one of the externally accredited programs at the university. Soon after, I was assigned teaching responsibilities. My entrance into the world of HEIs placed me in an environment that resulted in me seriously considering doctoral studies for personal and professional development. The contemplation stages of this doctoral journey were ones threaded with apprehension, excitement, reflection, and discussions with different individuals. After the constant nudging of my then Department Chair and my own conviction, I gave in.

Personally, this journey was one that, at times pushed me to the ends of my limit. Having to wear the various hats of the responsibilities of my personal life while undertaking doctoral studies is no easy feat. At times, I repeatedly asked myself why I was doing this and if I actually needed to do this. Other times, I did not entertain these internal conversations, I simply felt like giving up. Nevertheless, I persevered, and this journey drew out strength and tenacity I did not believe I had. It concretized the importance of prioritization, balancing personal needs against familial responsibilities, taking breaks and mental health care. It honed my interpersonal communication

skills, my ability to multitask and my time management skills. Doing doctoral studies while employed and with a family is a formidable feat and having to partly do so during a global pandemic brought added layers of challenges. This combination drove me to adapt to the everchanging circumstances.

Professionally, this journey has provided the opportunity to interact with individuals of different backgrounds and perspectives. This further impressed on me the importance of cultural sensitivity, an awareness is a core value of my program. Moreover, my interaction with my supervisor, particularly during some of the most difficult points of this journey helped me to become more empathetic towards my students and colleagues. Furthermore, it has caused me to be more inquiring, to go beyond surface level thoughts into deeper, reflective, and more critical thinking. This was facilitated by my supervisors who constantly challenged my writing. While this was very frustrating, at times, I have come to appreciate the value of this type of thinking and writing. Inevitably, these skills will be useful for my plans to publish the findings of my research and for conducting future research. Additionally, having conducted this study, I feel much more adept in conducting qualitative research. As such, I am better poised to assist my students with their qualitative research projects. As this doctoral journey ends, I look forward to my professional life in the new dispensation with the same degree of apprehension, excitement, and reflection as when I started.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Institutional Approval

St. George's University

Institutional Review Board

9th August 2017

Tessa St. Cyr
Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine
St. George's University
Email address: tstcyr@sgu.edu

Re: Approval of SGU IRB Application 17054-"Exploring Academics' Experiences in Meeting Accreditation-related Research Requirements"

Dear Mrs. St. Cyr,

Subsequent to your application for approval for the use of human participants in the captioned research project by the St. George's University Institutional Review Board (IRB), this is to advise that your revised application is hereby approved.

If there are no obstacles and no changes to the research protocol as approved, kindly note that we shall require a progress report twelve months following the date of approval. An annual summary report is due no later than **Friday, 10th August 2018**. The form is also posted on the IRB page of the St. George's University's website. Please submit it to the IRB Administrator, Kareem Coomansingh, email kcoomans@sgu.edu, telephone 473 444-4175 x 3221 and fax 473 444-4388. An e-version is preferred.

In the event that any change(s) is anticipated, as the Principal Investigator, you must notify the IRB to seek permission to make such change(s) before you can proceed. Should you have any questions regarding this approval, please contact the IRB Administrator.

Outcomes of research must be provided to the IRB/SGU Office of Research. Any publications or conference presentations arising from the research should be shared with the Office of Research. All conference presentations and publications are listed in the SGU Annual Report. A comprehensive list of past completed research projects can also be found in this report.

Sincerely,

Robert Hage, MD, PhD, DLO, MBA
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Professor, Department of Anatomical Sciences
cc: Calum Macpherson, PhD, DIC, Director of Research, St. George's University

Appendix B: VPREC Approval

Dear Tessa Stcyr	
I am pleased to inform you that the EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC) has approved your application for ethical approval for your study. Details and conditions of the approval can be found below.	
Sub-Committee:	EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC)
Review type:	Expedited
PI:	Tessa Stcyr (supervised by Ming Cheng)
School:	Lifelong Learning
Title:	Exploring Academics' Experiences in Meeting Accreditation-related Research Requirements
First Reviewer:	Dr. Marco Ferreira
Second Reviewer:	Dr. Greg Hickman
Other members of the Committee	Dr. Lucilla Crosta, Alla Korzh, Mariya Yukhymenko; Julie Regan; Kalman Winston.
Date of Approval:	13th October 2017
The application was APPROVED subject to the following conditions:	

Conditions		
1	Mandatory	M: All serious adverse events must be reported to the VPREC within 24 hours of their occurrence, via the EdD Thesis Primary Supervisor.

This approval applies for the duration of the research. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study as specified in the application form, the Sub-Committee should be notified. If it is proposed to make an amendment to the research, you should notify the Sub-Committee by following the Notice of Amendment procedure outlined at http://www.liv.ac.uk/media/livacuk/researchethics/notice%20of%20amendment.doc. Where your research includes elements that are not conducted in the UK, approval to proceed is further conditional upon a thorough risk assessment of the site and local permission to carry out the research, including, where such a body exists, local research ethics committee approval. No documentation of local permission is required (a) if the researcher will simply be asking organizations to distribute research invitations on the researcher's behalf, or (b) if the researcher is using only public means to identify/contact participants. When medical, educational, or business records are analysed or used to identify potential research participants, the site needs to explicitly approve access to data for research purposes (even if the researcher normally has access to that data to perform his or her job).				
Please note that the approval to proceed depends also on research proposal approval.				

Kind regards,

Lead Reviewer: Marco Ferreira

Lucilla Crosta

Chair, EdD. VPREC

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet- doctorate candidates

Research study: Exploring Academic's Experiences in Meeting Accreditation-related Research Requirements

Invitation

You are being invited to participate in the research study identified above. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important that understand why the research is being done, what it will involve and what will be done with the findings. Please read the following information carefully. Feel free to ask me for more information or to clarify anything that you do not understand. Please note that you do NOT have to accept this this invitation. If you decide to participate, please ensure you have the necessary clearance from your academic program head, if applicable.

I am conducting this study not in my professional role of Accreditation Coordinator for the Master of Public Health (MPH) program but in my capacity as a student of the University of Liverpool.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The study intends to explore academics' experiences with meeting accreditation-related research requirements for externally accredited programs within the university. The purpose of this study is to use the experiences shared in the narratives to highlight the catalysts and impediments faculty encounter in relation to meeting accreditation-related research requirements. The goal of the study is to instigate reflection, review and action, at the various organizational levels, so that the process of meeting these requirements can be improved.

Why have I been invited to take part?

The study looks at the experiences of academics in meeting the research requirements that are required by the agency which accredits the academic program(s)in which you are employed. This study aims to use the narratives of current full-time faculty who have been employed with SGU for at least 4 years, who work for an externally (region or international) accredited program and who have experienced an accreditation cycle for their program. You have been identified as someone who fits this profile and as such, who can potentially provide valuable insights into faculty's experiences and can be important for future planning as it relates to meeting accreditation requirements.

Do I have to take part?

No, you are not obligated to participate in this study. You can choose not to participate. And, if you choose to participate, you can withdraw your participation at any time without explanation and without repercussion. You can also ask that any data that has been provided so far will not to be included in the study.

What will happen if I take part?

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be interviewed by me, as a researcher, as part of thesis research project. The interview will be a semi-structured one. Therefore, I will ask you questions in an informal way and you will be invited to respond. Based on your responses, you may be asked additional questions to ensure a clear understanding of your perspectives. You can choose not to answer a question, if you are uncomfortable doing so. The questions will focus on your experiences, as an academic, in

meeting research-related accreditation requirements. Neither the questions nor your responses will in no way be used assess you or the program where you are employed. The aim is to use the experiences that you share to highlight the catalysts and impediments faculty encounter in relation to meeting accreditation-related research requirements. It is anticipated that an aggregated report of the findings of this study will lead to reflection, review and action to better meet accreditation-related research requirements. As the researcher, I will not hold you responsible for any action as it relates to possible improvements that can be made.

The interview should last approximately 45 minutes to an hour. The interview conducted face-to-face. It will take place at a mutually convenient time for you and me and will be conducted at a private and comfortable location on the SGU campus that is most suitable for you. You may choose to have the interview conducted via Skype. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to ensure your responses are fully and correctly captured. However, I may also take brief notes during the interview. After your interview is transcribed, you will be asked to review the transcript to allow you the opportunity to review and make modifications to your responses, if necessary. If you wish, at that time, you can also give additional comments.

The recording of the interview, transcripts, the notes taken and the research findings will be kept for five years. Notes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet which is accessible only by me. The recording of the interview, its digital transcription and findings will be stored in a password protected folder on my personal password-protected laptop and cloud location which are only accessible to me. However, since this study is my doctoral thesis research, upon request, the data would be shared with my thesis supervisors. The data collected from this study will be used to write my thesis for the Doctor of Education in Higher Education. My thesis will contain direct quotes and, as such, I will assign pseudonyms to both yourself and the academic program where you are employed; no identifying information will be used.

Expenses and / or payments

Participatory in this study is voluntary. You will not incur any expenses because of your participation in this study. There will be no compensation, whether in forms of gifts, monetary reimbursements or any other rewards and considerations.

Are there any risks in taking part?

There are no adverse risks for taking part in this study. You may experience some discomfort. If you do experience any discomfort during the interview, you should inform me as soon as it happens. In such a situation, the interview can be paused, rescheduled or terminated, if you wish. You are free to withdraw your participation and any time with any negative consequences. You can also refuse to answer questions with which you are uncomfortable. You can make modifications to your responses, if necessary, when you review the transcript of your interview.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

There are no immediate, direct benefits to you for participating in this study. However, the purpose of this study is to use the experiences participants share to highlight the catalysts and impediments faculty encounter in relation to meeting accreditation-related research requirements. Therefore, anticipated outcomes of this study include reflection, review and action aimed at improving the process of meeting these requirements. As such, there are indirect benefits to be derived from your participation in this study.

What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?

If you should be unhappy with the interview procedures, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let me know by contacting me at following email address: tessa.stcyr@online.liverpool.ac.uk or 439-2000 (ext 3526) and I will assist you. If you still have concerns which you feel I cannot address, please contact my primary thesis supervisor Dr Ming Cheng at ming.cheng@online.liverpool.ac.uk and she will try to help

as best as she can. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with, then you should contact the Research Governance Officer at ethics@liv.ac.uk or the Research Participant Advocate at liverpoolethics@ohecampus.com or call the USA number 001-612-312-1210. You can also contact the SGU IRB Administrator, Mr Kareem Coomansingh at kcommans@sgu.edu or 444-4175 (ext 3221). When contacting the Research Governance Officer, the Research Participant Advocate or the SGU IRB Administrator, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

Will my participation be kept confidential?

Yes, your participation will be kept confidential. The data I collect will be used to complete my EdD thesis and for subsequent publications. I will not disclose to anyone that you have agreed to participate in this study. You will remain anonymous throughout my thesis and in any other publications. Recorded interviews and transcripts will be stored in my personal laptop computer that remains password secured until the thesis will be successfully completed and up to five years. I will assign pseudonyms to you and the academic program for which you work. My thesis supervisor from the University of Liverpool and I will be the only persons who will have access to the collected data and your interview, or parts of it. At the end of five years, all data related to this study will destroyed/deleted.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The data from the interviews will be analyzed and used to produce my thesis for the fulfilment of the Doctor of Education in Higher Education (EdD) program at the University of Liverpool. The results, in aggregate form, will also be shared with participants (if requested) and with university administrators. Additionally, as mandated by the Office of Research at SGU, I will submit an annual report of this study, inclusive of the findings. The results of this study will also be used in publications and professional presentations. Neither you nor the academic program for which you work will be identifiable in any out these outputs. An electronic copy of the thesis will be provided to participants, if requested.

What will happen if I want to stop taking part?

You can withdraw from this research project at any time and without explanations or consequences. Data up to the period of withdrawal will be used, if you agree to it. If you do not wish for the data to be used, you may request they be destroyed, and no use will be made of them.

Who can I contact if I have further questions?

Should you require further communication, please feel free to contact me using the following details:

Tessa St. Cyr, EdD candidte & Principal investigator

439-2000 Ext 3526/ 417-6141, tessa.stcyr@online.liverpool.ac.uk OR tstcyr@sgu.edu

THANK YOU

Appendix D: Generic Email Invitation to Participate

Dear Faculty

My name is Tessa St. Cyr. I am the Accreditation Coordinator for the Master of Public Health (MPH) program at St. George's University. I am also a doctoral candidate in the Doctor of Education (EdD) in Higher Education program at the University of Liverpool. I am conducting my thesis research on **Academics' Experiences in Meeting Accreditation-related Research Requirements**. My thesis supervisors are Dr Ming Cheng (ming.cheng@online.liverpool.ac.uk) and Dr Julie Regan (J.regan@liverpool.ac.uk).

I am seeking to answer the following research questions:

1. How do academics understand their role as researchers in externally accredited programs?
2. How do accreditation-related research requirements affect academics' work?
3. How do academics strategically maintain research outputs to meet accreditation-related research requirements?

This research has inclusion criteria which I think you might meet. The inclusion criteria are as follows:

1. Current full-time faculty at the university
2. Faculty who been working with the university for at least 4 years
3. Experienced an accreditation cycle for your program
4. Faculty who currently work within an externally (regional/international) accredited program.

I will be using pseudonyms to ensure your identity will be anonymized and all data collected will be kept as confidential. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes to an hour.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, using the following contact information: tstcyr@sgu.edu or tessa.stcyr@online.liverpool.ac.uk or call 439-2000ext3526 / 417-6141. If you are willing to participate, please complete the attached informed consent form and return it to me via email.

Anticipatory thanks for your time.

Best Regards

Tessa W. Alexander-St. Cyr, B.Ed, MSc
Accreditation Coordinator/ Instructor
Department of Public Health & Preventive Medicine
School of Medicine
St. George's University
True Blue
St. George's
Grenada
439-2000 ext 3526

Candidate
Doctor of Education in Higher Education
University of Liverpool (Online Programs)

Appendix E: Written Consent Form

WRITTEN CONSENT FORM

1. **Research topic**: *Exploring Academics' Experiences in Meeting Accreditation-related Research Requirements*

2. **Goal:** *The central purpose of this research is to explore academics' experiences in meeting accreditation-related research requirements for externally accredited programs within the university.*

3. **Your role:** *As a participant in this study you will be asked to individually participate in a semi-structured interview which will take approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour to complete. The interview will be conducted at a location on campus that you agree. The interview will be scheduled for a date and time that is mutually convenient to you and the researcher. The questions on the interview schedule will be centered on academics' experiences in meeting accreditation-related research requirements. Once all interviews are completed and they are transcribed, a transcription of your interview will be emailed to you. This is to allow you the opportunity to review the transcripts to ensure your responses are accurately documented and to allow you to make modifications, if you wish. After this no further actions will be required of you.*

4. **What we will do with the information you give us:** *Professional secretarial personnel external to SGU will be used to transcribe the interviews to ensure your anonymity. These personnel will also be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. Your name would be neither transcribed, nor documented and reported. The researcher will assign a pseudonym/ alias to you and to your program. This consent form will not be linked to you in any way. Only the principal investigator (and her thesis supervisors) will have access to the interview recordings and notes. Recordings and digital transcripts will be secured in a password-protected cloud location and deleted from the recording device. Paper notes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the principal researcher's office. Data will be anonymous and presented in aggregated formats. The principal investigator will be the main custodian of the data; only the principal investigator (and he thesis supervisors) will have access to the anonymous, non-identifiable data during the research process. Analysis and reporting of the results will be in aggregate form and will not include any personally identifiable information.*

   Findings would be used to make recommendations to the university to improve the practice and strategies of securing external accreditation. These findings could serve to guide the plans and policies of those programs in being compliant to accreditation-related requirements. The researcher will deliver an on-campus lunchtime seminar and will publish peer-reviewed journal articles based on the research results. Additionally, the researcher plans to present her findings at national and international conferences.

5. **Why you might want to do this**: *The study will provide an avenue through which the externally-accredited programs (and those preparing for external accreditation) can reflect on accreditation-related research requirements, how these affect the work faculty do and develop/review strategies for meeting these requirements. Moreover, the findings of this study could serve to guide the plans and policies of those programs in being compliant to accreditation-related requirements and to guide university and academic program administrators in better providing and managing research capacity building infrastructure. As such, personal and professional benefits may be derived from this study at a later point in time.*

6. **Why you might *not* want to do this:** *There is low risk associated with participating in this study and it presents no injury or harm to you. You may mild discomfort when sharing your experiences.*

7. **You can say no:** *Your participation in this study is voluntary; you will not receive any compensation for participating. You can choose not to participate. If you choose to participate and at any time you experience discomfort, you can refuse to answer, to request a pause or to withdraw your participation from the study.*

8. **Who to call:** *If you have any concerns about the way the research is being conducted or if you have a problem due to doing this, please contact:*

Kareem Coomansingh
SGU IRB Administrator
St. George's University
True Blue Campus
Phone: (473) 444-4175 Ext 3221
kcoomans@sgu.edu

The Research Participant Advocate
University of Liverpool
612-312-1210 (USA number)
liverpoolethics@ohecampus.com

9. *Who to call any questions later, please contact:*

Tessa St. Cyr
Accreditation Coordinator
St. George's University
True Blue Campus
Phone: (473) 439-2000 Ext 3526
tstcyr@sgu.edu

- or -

Kareem Coomansingh
SGU IRB Administrator
St. George's University
True Blue Campus
Phone: (473) 444-4175 Ext. 3221
kcoomans@sgu.edu

Sign here if you will participate. Date: _____

I talked with ***Tessa St. Cyr*** about participating in this research study. My questions were answered to my satisfaction. I Understand that I can call the persons above if I want to change my mind or talk more about it later. I will participate in this research study. I agree to have the interview be voice recorded.

Print name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F: Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule Protocol/ Guide

Introduction to the interview

Thank you for taking part in my interview today. My name is Tessa St Cyr. I am the Accreditation Coordinator in the Department of Public Health & Preventive Medicine. I am also a student in the Doctor of Education in Higher Education at the University of Liverpool. This study is my thesis research project. It aims to explore academics' experiences with meeting accreditation-related research requirements for externally accredited programs within the university.

This interview will be completely voluntary. Please feel free to stop me at any time if something is unclear, if you have a question, if you are uncomfortable with a question or if you wish to withdraw your participation.

The interview will be voice recorded. I may take notes as we go along. Are there any questions/ clarifications you need before we begin? (Pause).

When you are ready to begin, please let me know.

Demographics & Background questions

1. How many years have you been a faculty member of this institution?
2. Did you work somewhere else before this institution?
3. What is your current position?
4. How long have you been at this role?
5. With which external (regional/ international) accreditation agency is your program associated?

RQ1: How do academics understand their role as researchers in externally accredited programs?

1. Given that academic roles are often categorized as teaching, research and service, as a faculty member, which of these roles do you currently play within your program?
   Follow-up: To which do you dedicate the most time? And effort? Why?
2. Please compare your immediate superior's expectations of your contributions to research with your actual contributions?
   Follow-up: How do you feel about those expectations?
   Follow-up: How you satisfied with your contribution to the research outputs? Why do you say so?
3. Specifically, how do you feel about collaborative research projects?
   ***Probe**: How do you feel specifically about collaborating on research with faculty within your program?*

***Probe**: And with faculty in other programs in SGU?*
***Probe**: And with students?*
***Probe**: And with external collaborators?*

4. How would you describe your role as a researcher within an externally accredited program?
   Follow-up: How do you feel about that role?

RQ2: How do accreditation-related research requirements affect academics' work?

1. Please highlight the research requirements expected by the agency accreditation that accredits your program?
   Follow-up: How often are these requirements discussed as a program? What are the overall perceptions of these requirements within your program?
2. To what extent would you say your current research activities reflect the accreditation-related research requirements?
   Follow-up: Why do you think so?
   ***Probe**:* Please describe your research activities.
3. How do these research requirements affect the work you as a faculty member?
   Probe: How do these requirements affect your teaching responsibilities?
   Probe: How do they affect your overall research activities?
   Probe: How do they affect your service activities?
   Follow-up: How do they affect your service within the university? And, outside the university?
4. Apart from teaching, research and service, how do the accreditation-related research requirements affect the other intra or extra-mural work do you do?

RQ 3: How do academics strategically maintain research outputs to meet accreditation-related research requirements?

1. How does your program ensure accreditation-related research requirements are met?
   ***Probe**:* What specific strategies does your program have for maintaining/sustaining research outputs?
   Probe: What process *was used to arrive at these strategies?*
2. From your perspective, how effective are these strategies in meeting accreditation-related research requirements?
   Follow-up: Why do you think so?
   Follow-up: What would you be done in relation to the strategies used?
3. How has accreditation affected your view of the importance of research?
   Probe: How important is research to you as an academic?
   Follow-up: Why do you feel this way?
4. How do you feel about your efforts to meet accreditation-related research requirements?

   Follow-up: What do you do to address these challenges?
   Follow-up: How effective would you say this/ these strategy/strategies?

Concluding the interview

Once again, thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. It is much appreciated. Should there be anything you would like to add and or modify, please feel free to contact me. Using the details provided on the consent forms. Once I have completed transcribing this interview, I will make a copy of the transcript available to you. This is to allow you the opportunity to verify whether I have accurately represented your experiences, thoughts and ideas.

Thanks again. Have a great day.