How performance management shapes academic staff motivation and satisfaction: Insights from self-determination theory in Jordanian private universities

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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CSEP	Community Services Evaluation Practices
HR	Human Resources
MBO	Management By Objectives
MOHR	Ministry of Higher Education
PM	Performance Management
PMP	Performance Management Practices
PMS	Performance Management System
PP	Performance Prism
REP	Research Evaluation Practices
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SET	Student Evaluation of Teaching
TEP	Teaching Evaluation Practices

Abstract

Performance management (PM) has become a crucial HR function used by higher education institutions (HEIs) to assess academic staff's performance, identify their training needs, and understand their satisfaction and motivation. While many universities use research measurement indicators to assess academic performance due to their influence on global rankings and reputations, other dimensions of academic performance, such as teaching and community services, are still scarce and underdeveloped and thus need further research. Furthermore, the existing literature lacks a strong theoretical perspective identifying the effects of different PM indicators on job motivation, satisfaction and well-being through the lens of self-determination theory (SDT).

Applying SDT, most of the literature identified the psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness and their positive consequences, satisfaction, motivation and well-being. However, the effects of PM indicators on needs frustration and the negative consequences remain limited and need further exploration. Hence, this study examines how PM indicators shape academic staff motivation, satisfaction and well-being via the satisfaction or frustration of autonomy, competence and relatedness.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 30 academic staff members, including lecturers, senior lecturers, readers and professors, from three different private universities in Jordan.

The findings demonstrate that research and teaching evaluation practices undermine both autonomy and competence by pressuring academics to prioritise publication quantity, conform to institutionally preferred research agendas, and restrict freedom in selecting meaningful research topics leading to controlled extrinsic motivation, anxiety, stress and work for contract renewals. By contrast, community engagement evaluation practices such as free lectures and voluntary works for public foster a sense of belonging, contribution and meaning, thereby supporting intrinsic motivation, an insight that expands SDT applications in HEIs. The study further advances SDT theory by revealing that PM in Jordanian private universities is shaped by cultural norms, hierarchical governance, and limited HR capacity, leading to systematic needs frustration.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Performance management (PM), as a core function of human resource management, represents a critical mechanism for evaluating and enhancing both individual and organisational performance (Smeenk *et al.*, 2009). PM has become a central aspect of organisational success across sectors, including higher education, where universities increasingly strive to improve teaching quality, research productivity, and community engagement. Globally, higher education institutions (HEIs) are under growing pressure to demonstrate accountability and performance outcomes due to heightened competition, quality assurance requirements, and global university rankings (Dudarev and Purtov, 2024). As a result, many universities have adopted formal performance management systems (PMS) to evaluate and develop academic staff, ensure institutional effectiveness, and align individual efforts with organisational objectives (Camilleri and Camilleri, 2018). The primary objective of PMS is to provide management with a reliable basis for identifying professional development needs, determining eligibility for incentives and promotions, making informed decisions regarding contract renewals, and supporting broader talent management strategies (Kivistö, Pekkola and Lyytinen, 2017)

The concept of PM in academia extends beyond simple evaluation to encompass continuous processes of goal setting, feedback, and professional development aimed at enhancing academic and institutional outcomes (Tran, Amado and Santos, 2025). Effective PMS frameworks in universities typically integrate teaching, research, and service indicators to provide a holistic assessment of academic contributions (Nazari-Shirkouhi *et al.*, 2020). However, while PMS can theoretically foster improvement and motivation, their effectiveness often depends on how well they are designed, implemented, and perceived by academic staff (Bauwens *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, PMS are designed to align institutional goals with individual academic performance by setting objectives, monitoring outputs, evaluating achievements, and

linking results to rewards and development opportunities (Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021). Globally, these systems are becoming increasingly important as universities face growing demands for accountability, quality assurance, and competitive positioning (Paauwe, 2009).

In the context of developing countries, including Jordan, the implementation of PMS in higher education remains a complex and evolving issue. Many institutions in these regions face challenges, such as limited resources, bureaucratic governance structures, and a lack of strategic alignment between individual and institutional objectives (Mahmoud, Othman and Taher Mahmoud, 2020; Sweis *et al.*, 2020). Consequently, PM practices often become compliance-driven rather than developmental, focusing more on administrative evaluation than on motivating academic excellence (Almohtaseb *et al.*, 2019).

Scholars have also highlighted that PMS in academia are frequently adopted from corporate models without adequate adaptation to the unique values and missions of universities, which prioritise intellectual autonomy and knowledge creation over profit-driven outcomes (Mahmoud, Othman and Taher Mahmoud, 2020). Furthermore, private universities in Jordan have adopted PM practices to varying degrees, often influenced by local governance structures, cultural norms, and market-driven pressures (Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, 2022). However, the design and application of these systems frequently focus on measurable, extrinsic indicators of performance, such as the number of published research papers or student evaluations, while neglecting the more complex, intrinsic dimensions of academic work (Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, 2022).

Academic staff, as the core drivers of teaching, research, and community service, are essential to institutional success. Yet, their motivation and well-being are often undermined by systems that emphasise output over process, quantity over quality, and compliance over creativity (Aladwan, Bhanugopan and Fish, 2014; Al Azzam Salih Jaradat, 2014; Shepherd, 2018; Almohtaseb *et al.*, 2019; Sweis *et al.*, 2020). PM, when narrowly applied, risks reducing academic work to checklists and performance metrics that fail to capture the full spectrum of professional contributions. This can lead to a decline in job satisfaction, reduced institutional commitment, and a culture of performativity rather than genuine engagement (Al-Twal, 2022).

Even though the field of PM and individuals' motivations is advancing gradually, it still lacks a clear, concise scope, mechanism, definition, and conceptual framework, especially in a non-Western country like Jordan. Al-Twal, Rowlans and Cook (2019), Al-Twal and Cook (2021),

Al-Twal (2022) and Cook, Jones and Al-Twal (2022) indicated that there is a lack of comprehensive PM applications in higher education sectors in Jordan. This has led to demotivation and dissatisfaction, causing academic staff to quit the sector and search for job alternatives.

1.2 Performance Management in Academia

In higher education, the link between performance management and academic motivation is particularly complex. Academics are often driven by intrinsic motivations such as intellectual curiosity, professional autonomy, and the desire to contribute to knowledge and society (Chigo, 2024; Tran, Amado and Santos, 2025). However, when PMS are overly focused on quantitative metrics and external control, they may undermine these intrinsic motivations and create tension between institutional goals and individual values (Franco-Santos and Doherty, 2017) . This tension can lead to feelings of pressure, reduced autonomy, and disengagement among faculty members (Franco-Santos and Doherty, 2017; Ryan and Deci, 2020; Kamali, Alavi and Arasti, 2024).

Scholars have increasingly emphasised the importance of designing PMS that foster intrinsic motivation and align with the values of academia (Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2021; Xu *et al.*, 2021; Sormani and Sijde, 2023). Systems that incorporate clear feedback, participatory goal setting, and recognition of diverse academic contributions can enhance commitment and performance. In contrast, systems that rely heavily on external evaluation and punitive mechanisms often result in resistance and decreased morale (Fischer, Malycha and Schafmann, 2019; Mitchell, Schuster and Jin, 2020). Theoretical gaps also remain evident. Most motivation theories such as goal setting, expectancy, and self-efficacy have focused on students rather than academic staff, often within Western contexts (Lunenburg, 2011; Locke and Latham, 2019) . Limited research has applied Self-Determination Theory to examine academic staff motivation in non-Western settings, despite cultural and social differences that may influence how PMS affects autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Al-Twal, 2022; Alshdiefat *et al.*, 2024; Zhang *et al.*, 2025) . Consequently, this study addresses this theoretical gap by applying SDT to a Middle Eastern context, thereby expanding understanding of motivation in higher education performance systems.

1.3 Western Academic Performance Management

Over the past four decades, performance management in Western higher education systems has become a central feature of university governance, largely driven by the rise of managerialism and New Public Management (NPM) reforms that restructured universities according to market-based and corporate principles (Shepherd, 2018). These reforms positioned universities as competitive, performance-driven organisations accountable to governments, funding bodies, students, and international ranking systems (Parent-Rocheleau and Parker, 2022), resulting in the widespread adoption of formalised performance management systems to monitor and evaluate academic staff contributions across research, teaching, and service (Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021). In countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States, academic performance is increasingly assessed through quantifiable indicators including publication outputs, citation impact, grant income, student evaluations of teaching, and institutional service contributions (Franco-Santos and Doherty, 2017; Franco-Santos and Otley, 2018). While proponents argue that such systems enhance transparency, accountability, strategic alignment, and institutional effectiveness, a substantial body of Western scholarship has raised critical concerns regarding their unintended consequences for academic work and professional identity (Davis, Jansen van Rensburg and Venter, 2016; Ajayan and Balasubramanian, 2020).

A central debate within this literature concerns the tension between managerial accountability and traditional academic values of autonomy, collegiality, and intellectual freedom. Critics argue that the adoption of corporate-style performance management mechanisms in universities has shifted the governance of academic labour from collegial and trust-based systems toward managerial control and surveillance, thereby reducing professional discretion and increasing administrative oversight (Kallio *et al.*, 2016; Camilleri and Camilleri, 2018) . This transformation has contributed to what scholars describe as the ‘managerialisation’ or ‘corporatisation’ of higher education, whereby academics are increasingly treated as measurable units of productivity rather than autonomous knowledge professionals (Camilleri, 2021b). Furthermore, Western research has highlighted concerns regarding the overreliance on narrow quantitative metrics, particularly publication counts and student evaluation scores, which may incentivise performative behaviour, prioritise quantity over quality, distort academic priorities, and undermine broader scholarly contributions such as mentoring, innovation, and society participation (Kallio and Kallio, 2014; Kivistö, Pekkola and Lyytinen, 2017; Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021; Joseph Mofokeng, Amoa-Gyarteng and Dhliwayo, 2025)

Another prominent strand of debate focuses on the psychological and motivational consequences of academic performance management. Studies suggest that highly metricised and control-oriented systems can increase work intensification, job insecurity, stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion among academic staff while simultaneously reducing intrinsic motivation and weakening professional commitment (Kallio and Kallio, 2014; Franco-Santos and Otley, 2018). Western universities have become governed by local and international rankings, student satisfaction, and the number of research papers published by the university. There is less emphasis on researchers' effective knowledge contributions to students, which will be reflected in their skills when they transition to the job market. Consequently, performance management in universities has become a control tool that measures more than it motivates individuals to be productive. These outcomes are particularly problematic in academic contexts, where motivation is often driven by intrinsic factors such as intellectual curiosity, autonomy, and scholarly contribution rather than purely extrinsic rewards (Giauque, Anderfuhren-Biget and Varone, 2013; Xu *et al.*, 2021) . Consequently, Western scholars increasingly argue that although performance management may enhance accountability and strategic alignment, its design and implementation often conflict with the professional norms and motivational foundations of academic work (Camilleri and Camilleri, 2018; Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021) .

Despite the maturity of this debate in Western higher education literature, limited research has examined whether these established tensions manifest similarly in non-Western and developing higher education contexts, where institutional structures, governance arrangements, cultural norms, and resource constraints differ substantially.

1.4 Higher Education in Jordan

The higher education sector in Jordan has experienced substantial expansion and transformation since the late twentieth century, becoming one of the most strategically important sectors within the country’s socio-economic development agenda (El-Sheikh *et al.*, 2012; Mah’d, 2014). Historically, Jordan’s higher education system was dominated by public institutions, with the establishment of the country’s earliest universities focused primarily on

meeting domestic educational and professional needs. However, rising demographic demand, increasing secondary school completion rates, and limitations in public-sector capacity prompted the liberalisation and expansion of the private higher education sector from the late 1980s onwards (Mather and Bam, 2025; Zhang, Hanim A. Hamid and Salwana Alias, 2025). The establishment of private universities was intended not only to absorb growing student demand but also to reduce pressure on public universities and contribute to national economic development through employment generation and private investment in education (Mah'd, 2014).

Today, Jordan's higher education sector comprises both public and private universities operating under the supervision of the Jordanian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Higher Education Accreditation Commission (Turgay and Alhawamdeh, 2013). Private universities now represent a significant proportion of the sector and play a critical role in attracting both domestic and international students, particularly from neighbouring countries such as Iraq, Palestine, Syria, and Gulf states(Al Azzam Salih Jaradat, 2014) . This has positioned Jordan as a regional educational hub within the Middle East, with higher education serving not only an educational function but also contributing directly to national economic activity through tuition revenue, international student expenditure, and employment creation (Aladwan, Bhanugopan and Fish, 2014).

Despite this expansion, the Jordanian higher education sector faces persistent structural and institutional challenges. One major issue concerns financial sustainability. Public universities continue to face declining government subsidies and increasing financial deficits, while private universities rely heavily on tuition fees as their principal source of income (Al Bawab *et al.*, 2024). This dependence creates strong market pressures, particularly for private institutions, to maximise student enrolment, maintain student satisfaction, and preserve institutional reputation in an increasingly competitive educational marketplace. For example, many private universities in Jordan compete aggressively on branding, programme offerings, and international partnerships to attract fee-paying students, making reputation and ranking critical strategic priorities (Al-Twal, 2022).

In addition to financial pressures, Jordanian universities operate within a broader environment of economic and political instability. Regional conflicts in neighbouring countries, including Syria, Iraq, and Palestine, have generated substantial refugee inflows and demographic pressures that have increased demand for educational services and strained national

infrastructure (Al-Abbadi *et al.*, 2009). The substantial influx of refugees into Jordan has placed considerable pressure on national infrastructure and public institutions, including the higher education sector. Both public and private universities have been required to accommodate increasing student demand while simultaneously striving to maintain educational quality and improve graduate outcomes in an already constrained labour market (Al Bawab *et al.*, 2024; Alshdiefat *et al.*, 2024). These pressures are compounded by broader structural challenges within the Jordanian economy, including persistently high unemployment, limited employment opportunities, and a widening mismatch between graduate skills and labour market needs (Al-Twal and Cook, 2021). Recent labour market statistics indicate that the national unemployment rate reached approximately 21% in the first quarter of 2025, with around 70% of unemployed individuals falling within the 19–40 age bracket, highlighting the disproportionate impact of unemployment on younger working-age populations who often represent the principal income earners within their households (Al Bawab *et al.*, 2024; Alshdiefat *et al.*, 2024) . In this context, universities face increasing societal and governmental expectations not only to expand access to higher education but also to enhance graduate employability, students' educational outcomes, institutional research and teaching performance, institutional reputation and local and global rankings, and educational effectiveness. Therefore, these pressures have encouraged policymakers and university leaders to adopt more formalised accountability and performance monitoring mechanisms to demonstrate institutional effectiveness and justify resource allocation and design a performance measurement that leads to motivation rather than control (Al-Twal, Rowlans and Cook, 2019; Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, 2022).understanding the management of individual performance in universities and its impact on their incentives of all kinds is a fundamental pillar that helps motivate individuals in universities to achieve strategic and operational goals, enhance universities ranking and reputation thereby improving educational outcomes and reducing the gap between the labour market and the university.

1.5 Jordanian Academic performance management

Performance management within Jordanian higher education is formally presented as a structured and multidimensional process through which universities assess academic staff performance across several core domains, most commonly research productivity, teaching

effectiveness, and community engagement (Almohtaseb *et al.*, 2019). Institutional regulations and academic promotion frameworks indicate that these dimensions collectively form the basis upon which academic staff are evaluated for purposes including annual contract renewal, promotion eligibility, salary progression, and developmental planning (Sweis *et al.*, 2020). In principle, this reflects mainstream performance management theory, which conceptualises performance management as a strategic and developmental process intended to align individual contributions with institutional objectives while simultaneously identifying developmental needs and supporting employee growth (Mahmoud, Othman and Taher Mahmoud, 2020).

At the policy level, research performance is typically measured through publication-based criteria, with academic staff expected to produce a specified number of peer-reviewed outputs within a defined timeframe (Al-Twal and Cook, 2021). In many Jordanian private universities, for example, academics are required to publish one or more research papers annually as a condition of contract renewal, while promotion to higher academic ranks depends upon accumulating publication points according to institutional promotion regulations (Al-Twal, Rowlans and Cook, 2019; Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, 2022). These points may vary based on factors such as journal ranking, publication type, authorship position, and research impact, reflecting an ostensibly objective and standardised approach to measuring scholarly productivity . Teaching performance, meanwhile, is formally evaluated through student evaluations of teaching, classroom observations, or teaching portfolio reviews, with universities claiming that such mechanisms provide insight into pedagogical effectiveness and instructional quality (Almohtaseb *et al.*, 2019) . Community engagement constitutes a third formal performance domain and is commonly assessed through academics' participation in workshops, public lectures, consultancy, voluntary initiatives, and outreach activities intended to demonstrate societal contribution beyond core teaching and research responsibilities (Mahmoud, Othman and Taher Mahmoud, 2020) .

On paper, therefore, Jordanian academic performance management appears to adopt a balanced and holistic framework consistent with international higher education performance management models. However, there is a substantial divergence exists between formal policy design and actual organisational practice in Jordanian universities. While policy documentation portrays performance management as comprehensive and developmental, empirical evidence indicates that implementation is often informal, inconsistent, and disproportionately focused

on selected performance indicators, particularly research output and student evaluations of teaching (Sabri, 2011; El-Sheikh *et al.*, 2012; Almohtaseb *et al.*, 2019; Sweis *et al.*, 2020)

One of the most frequently identified implementation gaps concerns teaching evaluation. Although student evaluations are formally framed as developmental tools intended to improve instructional quality, prior research suggests that in practice they are frequently used by academic leaders as informal proxies for teaching performance when making contract renewal or employment decisions (Al-Twal, 2022). Studies of Jordanian universities report that department heads and deans often place significant emphasis on student complaints and student evaluation scores when assessing academic staff, even where such evaluations are known to be highly subjective and vulnerable to bias (Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, 2022). Academic staff have criticised this practice on the grounds that student evaluations may reflect emotional reactions, grade dissatisfaction, personal relationships, or perceptions of course difficulty rather than actual teaching effectiveness. For instance, academics who enforce rigorous academic standards, assign challenging assessments, or maintain strict grading policies may receive disproportionately negative evaluations compared to more lenient colleagues, regardless of pedagogical competence (Adliana *et al.*, 2023). This raises significant concerns regarding fairness, reliability, and the developmental validity of student-based teaching evaluation within the Jordanian context.

Research evaluation similarly reveals tensions between formal policy objectives and practical consequences. Although publication requirements are formally justified as mechanisms for enhancing research productivity, improving institutional ranking, and fostering scholarly excellence (Al Azzam Salih Jaradat, 2014), existing literature indicates that research performance expectations in Jordanian private universities are often experienced by academics as highly pressurising and control-oriented (Sweis *et al.*, 2020) . In many institutions, publication requirements function less as developmental benchmarks and more as rigid compliance thresholds directly tied to employment continuity and promotion progression. For example, failure to publish the required number of papers within the designated period may jeopardise contract renewal regardless of teaching quality, service contributions, or contextual barriers to research productivity (Aladwan, Bhanugopan and Fish, 2014; Barsoum and Mryyan, 2014; Ababneh and AlShaik, 2021). Such practices may encourage academics to prioritise publication quantity over research quality, pursue lower-risk and institutionally acceptable topics, and strategically target easily publishable outputs rather than innovative or socially

impactful scholarship (Al-Twal, 2022). Scholars have argued that this publication-driven culture can narrow academic freedom, distort research agendas, and reduce intrinsic scholarly motivation by transforming research from an intellectually driven activity into a contractual obligation (El-Sheikh *et al.*, 2012; Aladwan, Bhanugopan and Fish, 2014; Barsoum and Mryyan, 2014)

Community engagement, while formally included within Jordanian performance management frameworks, appears to occupy a comparatively marginal position in actual evaluation processes. Although universities often require academic staff to report workshops, seminars, public lectures, and community-based initiatives as part of annual performance reviews, the literature suggests that such activities typically carry limited weighting in high-stakes decisions such as promotion and contract renewal (Luo *et al.*, 2011; Koekkoek, Ham and Kleinhans, 2021). Consequently, academics may perceive community engagement requirements as symbolic or administrative obligations rather than meaningful components of performance evaluation. This imbalance between formal recognition and practical significance further illustrates the discrepancy between the multidimensional rhetoric of performance management policy and the narrower realities of implementation (Kivipõld, Türk and Kivipõld, 2021).

Another major concern identified in the literature relates to the strategic dimension of performance management. In theory, performance management systems should align individual goals with broader institutional strategic objectives through participatory goal setting, continuous feedback, developmental planning, and transparent performance dialogue (Aguinis, 2013). However, Turgay and Alhawamdeh, (2013) and Al-Twal (2022)evidence from Jordanian higher education suggests that such strategic integration remains weak or absent in practice . Existing studies indicate that academic staff are rarely involved in meaningful performance planning discussions, receive limited developmental feedback beyond annual evaluations, and experience little transparency regarding how institutional strategic priorities are translated into individual performance expectations (Tadros *et al.*, 2013; Almohtaseb *et al.*, 2019; Mahmoud, Othman and Taher Mahmoud, 2020). As a result, performance management often functions primarily as an evaluative and control-oriented administrative mechanism rather than a developmental strategic HRM process.

The literature suggests that academic performance management in Jordanian universities is characterised by a significant policy practice gap. While universities formally promote performance management as a comprehensive system designed to support accountability,

development, and strategic alignment, implementation appears heavily skewed toward quantitative monitoring, compliance, and managerial control. This divergence raises important questions regarding how academic staff experience performance management in practice and how such experiences shape motivation and job satisfaction.

Despite growing recognition of these implementation challenges, important gaps remain within the literature. Existing studies have largely focused on describing the structural features of Jordanian academic performance management or critiquing individual performance indicators such as student evaluations and publication requirements (Al-Twal, Rowlans and Cook, 2019; Al-Twal and Cook, 2021; Al-Twal, 2022; Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, 2022). However, relatively little is known about how academics psychologically interpret and respond to these performance management practices, particularly in relation to their underlying motivational mechanisms. Specifically, the literature has yet to adequately explain how different performance management indicators satisfy or frustrate academics' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, nor how these effects shape broader motivational, behavioural, and satisfaction outcomes (Sułkowski *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, insufficient attention has been paid to understanding why the divergence between formal policy and enacted practice persists, particularly in relation to cultural norms, governance structures, leadership behaviours, and institutional constraints within Jordanian private universities.

1.6 Factors affecting the current policy of PM in Jordanian universities

The design and implementation of academic performance management systems in Jordanian private universities are shaped not only by formal institutional regulations but also by broader governance structures, organisational practices, and cultural norms that influence how performance indicators are interpreted and enacted in practice. Within many institutions, hierarchical governance arrangements and centralised decision-making structures contribute to the top-down design of performance management systems, with limited academic participation in determining performance criteria, evaluation processes, or strategic goal setting (Tadros *et al.*, 2013). As a result, performance expectations are often imposed administratively rather than collaboratively negotiated, reducing academics' sense of ownership over institutional objectives and performance standards (Mah'd, 2014)().

These governance dynamics intersect with local institutional and cultural norms in ways that may distort the intended developmental purpose of performance management mechanisms. For example, although publication requirements are formally introduced to encourage research productivity and knowledge creation, academics may perceive mandatory publication targets primarily as contractual compliance mechanisms necessary for securing contract renewal and promotion rather than as meaningful indicators of scholarly contribution (Sabri, 2011; El-Sheikh *et al.*, 2012). In this sense, research output becomes instrumentalised as a survival requirement rather than an intrinsically motivated academic pursuit, potentially undermining the knowledge-generation mission of universities and shifting academic focus from research quality and innovation toward minimum output compliance (Almohtaseb *et al.*, 2019).

Similarly, while student evaluations of teaching are formally intended to assess instructional effectiveness and support pedagogical development, their practical use is shaped by cultural and relational dynamics that may compromise perceived fairness and validity. Academic staff frequently report that student evaluations are influenced by subjectivity, personal bias, emotional reactions, grade expectations, and interpersonal relationships rather than objective assessments of teaching quality (Al-Abbadi *et al.*, 2009; Boring, Ottoboni and Stark, 2016; Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, 2022; Kayas, Assimakopoulos and Hines, 2022). In contexts where such evaluations inform managerial judgments regarding performance or contract renewal, academics may perceive teaching evaluation processes as unreliable and punitive, thereby reducing motivation and encouraging impression-management behaviours over genuine pedagogical improvement.

Compounding these issues, the human resource management function within many Jordanian universities remains primarily administrative and operational rather than strategic, limiting its role in integrating performance management with broader institutional planning, developmental support, and talent management (Al-Twal, 2022). Consequently, performance management systems may focus disproportionately on retrospective evaluation and compliance monitoring, with limited emphasis on participatory goal alignment, developmental feedback, or strategic capability building (Aladwan, Bhanugopan and Fish, 2014; Aboramadan *et al.*, 2020). This weak strategic HRM integration may contribute to a disconnect between institutional strategic objectives and the day-to-day performance expectations experienced by academics, thereby reducing the perceived meaningfulness and motivational effectiveness of performance management practices (Tadros *et al.*, 2013; Mohammad *et al.*, 2021).

To address these limitations, the present study moves beyond descriptive critiques of performance management structures to examine how academic staff experience performance management practices in Jordanian private universities and how these practices influence motivation, job satisfaction, and wellbeing through the psychological aspect of individuals. In doing so, the study provides a deeper theoretical explanation of the motivational consequences of academic performance management while extending existing performance management and SDT literature into an underexplored non-Western higher education context.

1.7 Self-determination theory as a framework

SDT, developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), provides a valuable lens through which to examine motivation in the context of PM. SDT distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and posits that human motivation and performance are strongly influenced by the fulfilment of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2020). When these needs are supported, individuals experience higher engagement and performance; when thwarted, motivation and well-being decline (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017). However, the SDT literature lacks evidence on how external pressures in the field of academia in a non-Western context, such as Jordan, affects the satisfaction of basic psychological needs (Sheldon and Prentice, 2019; Grenier, Gagné and O'Neill, 2024; Robillard *et al.*, 2025). This study advances SDT by investigating both needs satisfaction and needs frustration, exploring how they influence motivation, job satisfaction, and well-being. Furthermore, SDT rarely considers HR applications in the higher education sector. This study introduces HR practices as a theoretical factor influencing motivation through autonomy support (or control), competence development (or neglect), and relatedness culture (or isolation) (Van Waeyenberg, Peccei and Decramer, 2022; Joseph Mofokeng, Amoa-Gyarteng and Dhliwayo, 2025)

1.8 Research Rationale

The rationale for conducting this study arises from the growing need to understand how PMS in higher education affect the motivation, satisfaction, and well-being of academic staff, particularly within the context of developing countries such as Jordan. While numerous studies have examined PM in corporate settings, limited research has investigated how these systems function in academic environments, where professional autonomy, intellectual creativity, and intrinsic motivation are fundamental to performance and institutional success because

academic staff's performance is driven by motivation, not control. Generally, universities rely on students' teaching quality, research performance measurement and academic innovation to assess their academic performance. However, these indicators have been criticised by the academic community in the field due to the subjectivity of students' teaching evaluation as well as the overreliance on the quantity of papers published annually rather than the quality. This made educational leaders in the field identify the PM indicators for academics' psychological needs of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which have a direct impact on motivations and job outcomes. Otherwise, not knowing the effects of PM on basic psychological needs of satisfaction may result in controlled motivation, which in turn leads to burnout, less productivity, less engagement with research and teaching, and diminished well-being (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Howard, 2024; Robillard *et al.*, 2025).

In Jordanian private universities, PM practices are often characterised by an emphasis on research output and student evaluations of teaching, with limited attention given to other dimensions such as community service, innovation, and professional development (Al-Twal, Rowlans and Cook, 2019; Al-Twal and Cook, 2021; Al-Twal, 2022). This creates a narrow and sometimes demotivating environment for academics, where external pressures to meet quantitative metrics can undermine their intrinsic motivation and sense of competence. Understanding how such practices influence academics' basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness is therefore essential to improving both individual and institutional outcomes.

Theoretically, this study applies Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which provides a robust framework for examining motivation in professional settings. However, there is limited empirical evidence on how PMS in universities affect the satisfaction or frustration of these needs, especially in non-Western cultural contexts (Sheldon and Prentice, 2019; Grenier, Gagné and O'Neill, 2024; Howard, 2024). By applying SDT in the context of Jordanian private universities, this research not only contributes to filling a theoretical gap in the motivation literature but also introduces an HRM dimension to SDT by examining how institutional practices either support or constrain psychological needs.

Practically, the findings of this study are expected to inform policymakers, university administrators, and HR managers about how to design more equitable and autonomy-supportive PMS. By identifying how current practices shape academic motivation,

engagement, and well-being, the study aims to support the creation of HR strategies that promote sustainable academic performance, improve job satisfaction, and strengthen institutional reputation and competitiveness in the Jordanian higher education sector.

1.9 Research Gaps

First, Many studies in the performance management (PM) literature have extensively documented its observable outcomes at the employee level, particularly in higher education contexts. These outcomes are most commonly framed in terms of increased stress, job dissatisfaction, burnout, disengagement, and compliance-oriented behaviour. For example, Al-Twal and Cook, (2021); Hutaibat et al., (2021) and Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, (2022) have shown that appraisal-driven systems in universities often generate pressure among academic staff, particularly when evaluation criteria are heavily tied to publication targets and student evaluations of teaching (SETs), leading to heightened anxiety and reduced motivations (Bauwens, Audenaert and Decramer, 2019; Bauwens *et al.*, 2019; Van Waeyenberg, Peccei and Decramer, 2022).

Similarly, Paais and Pattiruhu, (2020) and Doghan et al., (2022) have reported that performance monitoring mechanisms can foster a compliance culture in which academics focus on meeting minimum requirements rather than engaging in meaningful teaching and research activities. In other words, they work for avoiding punishments or guilt, this means they work for extrinsic motivations not highly engaged from the bottom of their hearts. The scholars provide important descriptive insights into the consequences of PM systems, highlighting their unintended negative effects on academic work experience.

However, a key limitation in this body of research is that while these outcomes are well documented, the underlying motivational processes that explain why and how performance management systems produce such effects remain under-theorised. In other words, existing studies tend to focus on “what happens” (e.g., burnout, disengagement) rather than “what drives these outcomes” at a psychological level. This gap is particularly evident in higher education research, where the dominant emphasis has been on the structural and behavioural consequences of evaluation systems rather than on the internal motivational mechanisms shaping academic responses.

Second, a substantial body of literature has focused on how performance management and audit-based systems influence observable outcomes such as compliance behaviour, publication outputs, performance ratings, and work-related stress (Shore and Wright, 2018). Research on the managerialisation of universities has extensively documented how accountability regimes, ranking systems, and performance indicators reshape academic work practices and organisational behaviour (Festing, Knappert and Kornau, 2015; Davis, Jansen van Rensburg and Venter, 2016; Shepherd, 2018) . However, these studies tend to prioritise the effects of evaluation systems at an organisational or behavioural level, rather than examining the psychological processes through which academics interpret and respond to such systems. As a result, there is limited understanding of how performance management practices influence different types of motivation, such as intrinsic motivation, controlled motivation, or amotivation, despite evidence suggesting that these motivational states are critical in explaining employee behaviour, motivation and satisfaction (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Ryan and Deci, 2020). This limitation is especially important because self-determination theory (SDT) suggests that the impact of workplace systems cannot be fully understood without examining their effects on basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness), which in turn shape motivation quality (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017) .

Third, the performance management (PM) literature has developed substantially within general HRM and business-oriented organisational settings, where work processes are typically characterised by standardisation, clearly defined outputs, and relatively direct supervisory control (Paauwe, 2009) . In these contexts, PM systems are often designed around measurable performance indicators, hierarchical accountability structures, and output-based evaluation mechanisms, which align well with industrial or corporate work environments (Aguinis, 2013; Murphy and DeNisi, 2023). As a result, much of the theoretical development in PM has been shaped by assumptions about controllability of tasks, clarity of performance metrics, and direct links between performance outcomes and organisational rewards. This has enabled the field to generate robust frameworks for improving efficiency, accountability, and performance alignment in traditional organisational settings. However, these assumptions do not translate seamlessly into academic and professional knowledge-work environments, such as universities, where work is inherently less standardised, more autonomous, and multidimensional in nature (Argento, Dobija and Grossi, 2020; Järvinen and Mik-Meyer, 2024). Academic work typically involves a combination of teaching, research, and community

engagement, each of which is complex, difficult to quantify, and influenced by disciplinary norms and intellectual autonomy. Consequently, applying PM models derived from corporate contexts to higher education can create tensions between managerial control mechanisms and the intrinsic nature of academic work (Shore and Wright, 2015, 2018). For instance, performance indicators such as publication counts or student evaluation scores may capture only a narrow dimension of academic contribution, potentially overlooking creativity, long-term research impact, and pedagogical quality.

Finally, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) has been widely applied in educational research, particularly in relation to student motivation, learning engagement, and classroom behaviour. A substantial body of literature demonstrates how autonomy-supportive teaching environments enhance students' intrinsic motivation, psychological well-being, and academic performance, while controlling environments tend to undermine motivation and increase disengagement (Ryan and Deci, 2020). Within this stream of research, SDT has provided a strong explanatory framework for understanding how educational practices influence motivational quality, particularly through the satisfaction or frustration of the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. However, despite its strong presence in student-focused educational research, SDT has been far less frequently applied to academic employees as recipients of institutional performance management (PM) systems. In particular, there is a limited body of research examining how PM practices in higher education such as appraisal systems, publication targets, teaching evaluations, and promotion criteria affect the psychological needs and motivational regulation of academic staff (Hajjawi, 2012; Grenier, Gagné and O'Neill, 2024; Robillard *et al.*, 2025; Tran, Amado and Santos, 2025). Existing studies that do apply SDT in organisational contexts tend to focus on general workplace settings rather than the specific characteristics of academic labour, where professionals operate under dual pressures of autonomy and institutional accountability (Lo-Iacono-Ferreira, Capuz-Rizo and Torregrosa-L Opez, 2017). Therefore, the motivational experiences of academics within formal PM systems remain underexplored, even though these systems directly shape their work conditions and professional identities. This represents an important theoretical gap, as academic employees operate in a distinctive environment where motivation is not only shaped by task design but also by institutional evaluation structures that can either support or undermine psychological needs. For example, performance-driven evaluation systems that emphasise external metrics may foster controlled forms of motivation, while limiting autonomy

and intrinsic engagement in research and teaching activities. Yet, empirical investigations that explicitly examine these mechanisms through an SDT lens in the context of academic PM systems remain scarce. The literature therefore lacks a clear understanding of how institutional performance practices translate into motivational outcomes for academics, and how these processes differ from student-focused educational settings or general organisational environments.

Addressing these gaps, the present study extends the application of SDT by focusing on academic staff in private universities in Jordan, examining how performance management systems influence their motivation through the satisfaction or frustration of basic psychological needs. In doing so, it responds to calls for greater contextualisation of SDT in underexplored professional settings and contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how motivation is shaped within higher education institutions under contemporary performance regimes.

Empirically, the literature on academic performance management (PM) remains limited in both scope and analytical depth, particularly in how it captures the lived experience of academic staff under contemporary evaluation regimes. First, a substantial proportion of existing empirical work has focused on the structural design and formal characteristics of PM systems, rather than on how these systems are enacted, interpreted, and experienced in everyday academic practice. For instance, Mathies, Kivistö and Birnbaum (2020) have documented the growing reliance on publication metrics to assess academic performance by relying on publishing specific number of research annually lead to produce research of poor-quality affecting universities global ranking and reputation. Similarly, (Boring, Ottoboni and Stark (2016); Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, (2022) and Kayas, Assimakopoulos and Hines (2022) ,focused on their studies that student evaluation of teaching demotivate academic staff to produce, work and teach especially that academic believe students evaluate based on emotions which affect also the reputation and studens enrolment ratio in universities. However, while these studies effectively map the increasing managerialisation of higher education, they provide limited insight into how academics engage with these systems in practice, how they reflect on their performance management assessment indicators and their effects on outcomes, satisfaction and motivation. Consequently, there remains a gap in understanding how academics interpret performance expectations, negotiate institutional pressures, and adapt their behaviour in response to evaluation demands at the individual level.

Second, existing empirical studies have predominantly relied on quantitative, survey-based methodologies that prioritise the measurement of attitudes, satisfaction, or perceived stress over in-depth exploration of meaning-making processes (Camilleri and Camilleri, 2018; Kivipõld, Türk and Kivipõld, 2021). For example, large-scale survey studies have been useful in identifying general trends such as declining job satisfaction, increased workload pressure, identifying training needs analysis and perceptions of managerial control among academic staff (Nazari-Shirkouhi *et al.*, 2020; Sułkowski *et al.*, 2020; Kivipõld, Türk and Kivipõld, 2021). However, such approaches often reduce complex academic experiences into standardised variables, which limits their ability to capture the contextual, emotional, and interpretive dimensions of performance management. As a result, the literature provides limited understanding of how academics make sense of appraisal systems, why they respond in particular ways, and how these systems are experienced differently across institutional and disciplinary contexts. This methodological gap highlights the need for qualitative, interpretive approaches and live experiences that can provide richer, more nuanced accounts of academic engagement with PM systems.

Third, there is limited empirical differentiation between distinct components of performance management systems, despite the fact that these components may have qualitatively different effects on academic behaviour and motivation. Much of the existing literature such as (Barsoum and Mryyan, 2014; Al-Twal and Cook, 2021; Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021; Al-Twal, 2022) tends to treat PM as a unified construct, without systematically distinguishing between its various indicators, such as publication requirements, student evaluations of teaching (SETs), promotion and tenure criteria, and community service expectations. For example, while publication metrics may intensify research pressure and encourage strategic publishing behaviour, student evaluations may shape teaching practices by encouraging grade inflation or teaching-to-the-evaluation strategies (Al-Abbadi *et al.*, 2009; Boring, Ottoboni and Stark, 2016; Kayas, Assimakopoulos and Hines, 2022). Similarly, promotion criteria may influence long-term career planning and research direction in ways that differ from short-term evaluation pressures (Nazaruddin, Sofyani and Utami, 2024). However, few empirical studies have examined these components in a differentiated manner, or explored how each contributes uniquely to academic motivation, demotivation, or behavioural adaptation.

Taken together, these empirical limitations indicate that current research provides an incomplete picture of academic performance management, as it focuses primarily on structural

descriptions and aggregated outcomes rather than on differentiated, experience-based, and mechanism-focused explanations. This creates a clear need for qualitative, context-sensitive research that explores how academic staff interpret and respond to specific PM practices in their daily work. The present study addresses this gap by offering an in-depth examination of academic experiences within private universities in Jordan, with particular attention to how different performance indicators shape motivation through the psychological aspects of individuals.

Contextually, the literature on academic performance management (PM) remains significantly constrained by its strong contextual bias toward Western higher education systems, with a substantial proportion of empirical and theoretical work originating from countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States, and Western Europe. These contexts are typically characterised by relatively well-established governance structures, stable funding models, developed HRM systems, and high levels of institutional autonomy, which shape how performance management practices are designed and implemented (Decramer, Smolders and Vanderstraeten, 2013; Camilleri and Camilleri, 2018; Bauwens, Audenaert and Decramer, 2019). As a result, dominant conceptualisations of academic PM are largely grounded in Western institutional logics that assume formalised appraisal systems, structured career progression pathways, and relatively stable employment conditions. While these studies have provided valuable insights into the managerialisation of higher education, they also reflect context-specific assumptions that may not be directly transferable to other institutional environments.

In contrast, there is limited contextual attention to academic performance management within Middle Eastern and developing-country higher education systems including Jordan, where institutional conditions differ considerably from those in Western contexts. In regions such as the Middle East, including Jordan, higher education systems are often characterised by more centralised governance structures, stronger hierarchical relationships, and varying levels of HRM maturity and strategic integration (Sabri, 2011; El-Sheikh *et al.*, 2012; Mah'd, 2014). Additionally, broader socio-economic and political factors such as labour market instability, regional demographic pressures, and in some cases refugee-related enrolment expansion further shape institutional priorities and resource allocation in ways that directly influence performance management practices. These contextual realities suggest that academic PM systems in such environments may operate under different logics of accountability and control

compared to those documented in Western settings. However, these differences remain under-theorised and under-empirically investigated in the existing literature.

Moreover, even within the limited body of research focusing on developing countries, relatively little attention has been given to the specific context of private higher education institutions. This omission is particularly significant given that private universities often operate under distinct organisational and financial conditions compared to public institutions. For example, private universities in many developing contexts, including Jordan, are typically more dependent on tuition-based revenue models, operate in highly competitive student markets, and are subject to stronger market-oriented performance pressures (Sheldon and Prentice, 2019; Grenier, Gagné and O'Neill, 2024; Howard, 2024). In such institutions, academic staff are frequently employed on renewable annual contracts, with performance expectations closely linked to student satisfaction, teaching load, and research publication output . These conditions may create a more intensive and externally driven performance management environment, where job security and career progression are directly tied to measurable outputs.

Despite these distinctive features, empirical research rarely differentiates between public and private higher education sectors when examining performance management systems in developing countries (Barsoum and Mryyan, 2014; Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021). As a result, there is limited understanding of how PM practices are shaped by marketisation pressures, employment insecurity, and institutional dependency on student enrolment in private universities. This lack of contextual differentiation restricts the explanatory power of existing literature and limits its applicability to settings where performance management is embedded in more commercially oriented and resource-constrained institutional frameworks.

These contextual limitations indicate that current academic PM scholarship is heavily shaped by Western institutional assumptions and insufficiently sensitive to the realities of developing-country and private higher education contexts. This creates a clear need for contextually grounded research that examines how performance management systems are experienced and operationalised in non-Western institutional environments. The present study addresses this gap by focusing on private universities in Jordan, providing empirical insight into how contextual factors shape the design, implementation, and motivational consequences of academic performance management systems.

1.10 Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of the research is to explore the influence of PM practices on academic staff motivation, job satisfaction, and well-being in Jordanian private universities through the lens of SDT.

Research Objectives:

1- To explore how PM practices (research, teaching and community engagement) influence the satisfaction or frustration of academics' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness

2- To investigate how the satisfaction or frustration of these psychological needs impacts academic staff's motivation, job satisfaction and engagement.

3- To assess the role of the cultural, institutional, and governance-related factors shaping the design and implementation of PMS in Jordanian private universities.

1.11 Research Questions

The research question is, as follows: How do the current PMS in Jordanian private universities influence academic staff's motivation, job satisfaction, and well-being? The study assesses the following research questions in order to achieve the objectives of the research:

- How do PM practices influence the satisfaction or frustration of academics' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness?

- How does the satisfaction or frustration of these psychological needs impact academic staff's motivation, job satisfaction and engagement ?

- How do the cultural, institutional, and governance-related factors influence the design and implementation of PMS in Jordanian private universities?

1.12 Thesis Outline

This thesis is categorised under six main chapters, which include the introduction chapter. The research itself is divided into two parts: theoretical and practical work. The following demonstrates the research map:

Chapter 1 consists of an introduction and research background, including the research problem and gaps that the researcher has identified and is trying to solve through the research. It also contains a brief background of PM and motivations in the Jordanian higher education system, which are the main field and sector targets of the research. The chapter also presents the research aims, objectives, and questions.

Chapter 2 explains and defines the concept of PM and motivations in organisations and in higher education in particular. The chapter also presents the relevant theories of PM, which are self-determination and goal-setting theories, as well as the literature and theoretical gaps that the research aims to address.

Chapter 3 details the research methodology, describing the research process and the research philosophy problems, and identifying the most appropriate research methods, the research design, data access, ethical issues, and the collection and analysis procedures.

Chapter 4 focuses on presenting the results and findings of the qualitative data that were obtained through semi-structured interviews.

Chapter 5 presents the interpretation and discussion of the findings, considering the alignment between the research gaps or problems with the results and main contributions to both theoretical and empirical frameworks.

Chapter 6, finally, summarises the research conclusions and main contributions to both universities and theory, limitations of the research, and opportunities for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

PM studies date back to the 1920s, but they began to emerge in the 1980s (Tahvanainen, 2000). PM seeks to develop the performance of individual employees, which can positively affect the performance of the organisation (Bader *et al.*, 2021). PM has become one of the most common HR practices for organisations and firms due to its importance in linking individuals' and organisations' goals, which were originally linked with the vision, mission, and strategic goals (Camilleri and Camilleri, 2018). Since the early 1980s, PM and performance appraisal have historically been the crucial areas in both research and practice within the field of human resource management (HRM) due to their importance to the organisation's performance (Schleicher *et al.*, 2018). In this chapter, the researcher demonstrates and discusses the main concepts of the PMS in organisations, and in the higher education sector in particular, taking into account the application of this practice in developed and developing countries, while also identifying the literature gaps. Moreover, the study determines the alignment between PM practices and job satisfaction and motivation using SDT. Finally, the chapter discusses individuals' motivations, considering academic staff's motivations in universities and their influence on job satisfaction, engagement, and well-being.

2.2 Performance Management Systems

2.2.1 The Definition Of PM

Modern PM is typically defined as an ongoing, systematic process for planning, monitoring, and reviewing employee performance in alignment with institutional objectives (Aguinis, 2013). Unlike traditional appraisal systems, which often occur annually, PM is a continuous process conducted by an employee's immediate supervisor. It is grounded in a mutually agreed-upon job description and performance expectations established at the onset of employment. This shared understanding of roles and responsibilities enhances the transparency and fairness of the system, promoting greater accountability on both sides (Zulkifly *et al.*, 2021; Kodi and Kumar, 2025).

The strategic value of PM lies in its ability to link individual performance with broader organisational goals. It serves as a tool for identifying training needs, providing timely feedback, and supporting personnel decisions related to promotions, rewards, or termination (Tang, 2023). As the often-cited adage states, "What gets measured gets managed". Therefore, accurate and fair performance measurement has become a critical foundation for effective organisational management.

Performance evaluation plays a critical role in assessing individual contributions within an organisation over a defined period, whether annually, semi-annually, or quarterly, and has a direct impact on overall organisational effectiveness. Effective performance measurement enables institutions to maintain a competitive advantage, enhance their reputation, and ensure sustainable growth through increased productivity and profitability (Sweis *et al.*, 2020). In this context, PM serves not only as a tool for accountability but also as a mechanism for strategic alignment between individual efforts and institutional goals.

It is important to acknowledge that performance evaluation systems differ significantly across sectors due to the nature of the work performed. For instance, in the sports industry, a football player's performance is typically assessed based on quantifiable outcomes that directly contribute to team success, such as goal scoring or assists. In the commercial sector, a salesperson's performance is frequently measured by the volume of sales generated within a given timeframe. Similarly, in the healthcare sector, a physician's performance may be evaluated based on patient outcomes, the success rate of treatments, and the quality of care provided. Despite these sector-specific variations, the literature suggests that there is a set of cross-cutting principles and success factors that underpin effective performance evaluation across industries. These factors, which include clear key performance indicators (KPI), committed leadership, motivations, feedback mechanisms, and alignment with strategic objectives, are discussed further below (Obeidat, Mitchell and Bray, 2016).

2.2.2 Performance management and performance appraisals

A common misconception among managers and employees is the conflation of PM with performance appraisal, despite the substantial differences between the two (Aguinis, 2013). Performance appraisal typically refers to a formal, periodic evaluation of individual employee performance, conducted once or twice a year. It is often characterised by a bureaucratic, top-

down approach, predominantly administered by the HR department. Appraisals are frequently tied to external incentives, particularly financial rewards, and tend to focus on evaluating past performance against predetermined criteria (Angiola, Bianchi and Damato, 2018)

In contrast, PM represents a more comprehensive and continuous process that extends beyond periodic evaluations. It encompasses not only goal setting and performance reviews but also incorporates ongoing feedback, employee development, and alignment with both individual and organisational objectives (O'Toole and Meier, 2011). The importance of PM is to ensure that individuals' objectives align with institutional goals through fair and proper performance appraisal standards (Kodi and Kumar, 2025).

A key distinction lies in the fact that PM is typically conducted by line managers rather than centralised HR personnel, thus reflecting a more decentralised and participatory model of organisational oversight. This decentralisation allows managers greater flexibility in tailoring developmental strategies to individual employee needs, thereby fostering skill enhancement and contributing to improved productivity at both the individual and organisational levels (Giacomelli *et al.*, 2019).

Two different expressions, 'ex ante' and 'ex post', are used for PM and performance measurement, respectively. The first one describes what employees are going to achieve by the end of the year. It describes more about the upcoming objectives, predictions, and future plans to achieve annually, whereas the second phrase is more about measuring the performance through the objectives that were settled between managers and employees by the beginning of the year; this is the reason behind 'ex-post', which means a process of evaluation after getting the goals settled (Bader *et al.*, 2021). Both represent realistic stages in relation to organisational performance, but one is done by individuals at the beginning of the year, and the other is done at a corporate level through internal and external examiners at the end of the year (Modipane, Botha and Blom, 2019).

2.2.3 Best practices and strategic integration

PMS are typically structured around a series of interrelated activities, including the setting of performance objectives, continuous monitoring and feedback, employee evaluation, and training and development initiatives. These activities are intended to not only support individual performance but also strengthen the link between personal development, institutional goals, and reward structures (Awan et al., 2020). In sum, while performance

appraisal is often episodic, reactive, and administratively driven, PM is strategic, developmental, and integrated into the daily practices of organisational leadership. Fryer, Antony and Ogden (2009) argued that the success of a PMS crystallises around different steps, summarised as 1) individual performance linked with organisational performance; 2) committed leadership; 3) instilling a PM culture in the organisation, a culture that is focused on pulling poor performers up instead of pushing them out; this indicates the important role of motivation; 4) active involvement from stakeholders; and 5) continuous feedback for improvement in the future.

Numerous studies demonstrate the application of PM practices in companies and firms in different fields. Marie and Khumalo (2024) conducted a study in the Australian health sector that investigated the relationship between PMS and employee incentives, and found no significant positive link between the two. The ineffectiveness of the PMS was largely attributed to the lack of credibility in the evaluation process, which was often undermined by the inadequate training of line managers and the use of nepotism during assessments. As a result, performance evaluations were viewed as unreliable, leading many health institutions to disregard them altogether, thereby weakening their role in determining both financial and non-financial incentives. The authors advocate for the implementation of a fair and transparent PMS that promotes equity and justice, which in turn can enhance employee motivation and job satisfaction.

The study by Bauwens, Audenaert and Decramer (2019) explored how PM can positively influence employee outcomes in public organisations, especially in higher education. The authors found that when PM processes such as goal setting and feedback are consistent and supported by strong leadership, employees experience greater job satisfaction and feel their work has more societal impact. The study also highlights that leadership and PM can work together to enhance employee well-being, particularly when staff believe their work contributes to the public good.

Al-Jedaia and Mehrez (2020) argued that the practice of PM in firms and organisations, including higher education, goes beyond administrative issues such as promotions, identifying training needs, financial rewards, and contract renewals for decision makers. All of these are affected by the practice of PM.

2.2.4 Factors affecting performance management success

The practice of PM is affected by a variety of factors that influence its application success in firms and enterprises. i.e., performance criteria or KPIs, as well as leadership style. Marie and Khumalo (2024) indicated the importance of setting performance criteria to track individuals' performance during the year and ensure that individuals meet their objectives that are aligned with organisational objectives. Moreover, Ahenkan, Tenakwah and Bawole (2018) stated that the KPIs have to be clear, realistic, achievable, and measurable, such as individual traits, competencies, behaviours and attitudes, knowledge and skills, development potential, and goal achievement.

Finding the right leadership style is a key to excellence and success, which motivates individuals to go beyond their expectations and meet their goals. As a result, job performance enhances organisational performance, which then leads to maximising profits and revenues. The leadership style reflects how leaders and managers deal with control resources and how respectful and confidential they are when dealing with employees. Chen, Lill and Vance (2020) studied the importance of leadership style on affecting individuals' satisfaction and performance and thereby affecting motivation. For instance, the democratic style, which is called transformational leadership, may enhance staff performance and motivation more than other styles, such as transactional leadership. Additionally, Al-Jedaia and Mehrez (2020) examined the relationship between leadership styles and factors, such as interpersonal communication, productivity, motivation, and performance, in the government sector in Qatar; they stated that there are positive impacts between leadership styles and the above factors, and recommended the decision-makers choose the best leadership styles that have positive impacts on the factors, which achieves positive consequences.

2.2.5 The effects of performance management on individuals and organisations

The impact of PM has been widely debated in the academic literature across various organisational sectors. Scholars consistently argue for the necessity of distinguishing between the effects of PM on individual employees and its broader implications for organisational outcomes (Aguinis, 2013). The section focuses on the effects of PM on both individuals and organisational levels.

Several studies have highlighted the positive influence of PMS when implemented fairly and transparently. Specifically, the presence of clearly defined criteria, objective measurement tools, and non-biased application has been shown to enhance employee motivation and engagement (Ahenkan, Tenakwah and Bawole, 2018; Janjua *et al.*, 2019; Schleicher *et al.*, 2019). The first major impact of performance management on individuals is its influence on employee motivation and job satisfaction. This key aspect plays a crucial role in enhancing job satisfaction and fostering intrinsic motivation. When employees experience intrinsic motivation, they engage in their work with genuine purpose, enthusiasm, and a desire for self-actualisation (Giauque, Anderfuhren-Biget, and Varone, 2013; Fischer, Malycha and Schafmann, 2019), This type of motivation, i.e., driven by personal interest rather than external rewards, is often viewed as the most sustainable and effective in that it leads individuals to perform at high levels because they truly enjoy and value what they do. However, other scholars have pointed out that in many sectors, particularly within service-oriented industries, performance evaluation processes are frequently linked to financial incentives, such as bonuses or performance-based pay (Kivistö, Pekkola and Lyytinen, 2017; Mathies, Kivistö and Birnbaum, 2020; Fenech, Kanji and Vargha, 2022). While such extrinsic rewards may offer short-term motivation, they can also lead to unintended consequences, such as employee dissatisfaction, reduced intrinsic motivation, and burnout, especially when employees perceive the system as unfair or excessively target-driven (Fischer, Malycha and Schafmann, 2019; Ryan and Deci, 2020).

The second key impact of performance management on individuals concerns career development and professional recognition. Research has also demonstrated that PMS have a considerable influence on another aspect of PM's effects on individuals, namely employees' career development and recognition (Gribling and Duberley, 2020; Mantai and Marrone, 2023). A well-structured performance evaluation process characterised by constructive, relevant, and transparent criteria not only facilitates the identification of employees' training and development needs but also serves as a basis for making decisions related to annual salary increments and promotional opportunities (Obeidat, Mitchell and Bray, 2016). Moreover, previous studies (Camilleri and Camilleri, 2018; Joseph Mofokeng, Amoa-Gyarteng and Dhliwayo, 2025) have clearly articulated that performance expectations enable employees to understand their objectives and performance targets, thereby offering a structured roadmap for

achievement and progression throughout the year. This clarity enhances role understanding, reduces ambiguity, and fosters a sense of purpose and direction within the organisation.

The third impact of PM on individuals relates to stress and work-related pressure. Research has confirmed that the implementation of PM processes can lead to increased stress and work-related pressure among employees, particularly in sectors where performance is measured using rigid quantitative standards (Decramer, Smolders and Vanderstraeten, 2013; Bauwens, Audenaert and Decramer, 2019; Van Waeyenberg, Peccei and Decramer, 2022). In such contexts, failure to meet predefined targets, such as sales quotas, within a specific timeframe may result in disciplinary actions or even termination. A parallel can be drawn with the higher education sector, where performance is often evaluated based on research output. For instance, Al-Twal,Rowlans and Cook (2019) and Al-Twal and Cook (2021) both observed that in higher education settings, academic staff are required to meet strict research publication targets as a condition for continued employment. In some cases, failure to publish in high-ranking journals within the academic year may result in the non-renewal of employment contracts. This environment of constant pressure fosters a culture driven by extrinsic motivation, in which employees are compelled to meet targets out of fear of job insecurity rather than professional or intellectual fulfilment. As a result, academics may feel a loss of autonomy and experience their roles as mechanical or transactional, detached from intrinsic purpose and creativity.

The second dimension concerns the influences of PM on the organisational level. The first major organisational impact of performance management is enhanced performance monitoring and institutional accountability. Scholars have emphasised that PM plays a critical role in enhancing performance monitoring and institutional accountability (Aguinis, 2013). However, these functions are often subsumed under broader frameworks, such as quality control, clients' feedback, profits and revenues as these lead to organisational monitoring. These institutional measurements identify organisations performance, which in turn leads to the organisation's success or failure (Sutoro, 2021) Meanwhile, PMS enable managers and decision-makers to systematically track the attainment of both strategic and operational objectives, providing comprehensive insights into organisational performance and facilitating informed planning for subsequent phases of development (Al-Jedaia and Mehrez, 2020; Chen, Lill and Vance, 2020). Consequently, PM serves as an integrative mechanism that evaluates institutional effectiveness across technical, financial, and administrative domains.

A variety of performance measurement frameworks have been developed to support these goals. Among the most prominent are the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), which links performance indicators to strategic goals; the Performance Prism (PP), which incorporates stakeholder perspectives; the European Foundation for Quality Management Excellence Model (EFQM), which focuses on continuous improvement and excellence; and the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) model, which benchmarks organisational performance across sectors (Taylor and Baines, 2012; Rompho, 2020; Camilleri, 2021b). These tools offer multidimensional approaches for assessing and improving organisational outcomes, reinforcing the importance of PM as a diagnostic and strategic tool in contemporary management practice.

The second key organisational impact of performance management is improved organisational efficiency and productivity. Lo-Iacono-Ferreira, Capuz-Rizo and Torregrosa-López (2017) and Janjua et al. (2019) argued that PMS affects the efficiency and productivity of organisations. They asserted that well-structured PMS play a vital role in enhancing organisational efficiency and productivity. By systematically identifying performance gaps and operational inefficiencies, PMS enable managers to implement timely interventions that streamline workflows and optimise resource use (Camilleri and Camilleri, 2018). Moreover, when linked to structured rewards and consistent feedback, PM can significantly increase employee motivation, resulting in improved individual and collective outcomes (De and Pritchard, 2006; Giauque, Anderfuhren-Biget and Varone, 2013; Zlate and Cucui, 2015; Tortia *et al.*, 2022). This dual focus on developmental support and performance accountability positions PMS as a strategic tool for sustaining long-term organisational effectiveness.

The final organisational impact of performance management improved data-driven decision-making. This was discussed and explained by Rabovsky (2014) and Beerkens (2022), who argued that PMS and KPI metrics help managers and leaders make informed decisions regarding individuals' salary increments, hierarchy restructuring, investments in training and development, job cutting, promotions, and technology. This type of data can improve the organisation's performance and put it back on the right track. Table 2.1 below briefly illustrates the key aspects that emerge from the effects of PM on both individuals and organisations.

PMS effects on individuals	PMS effects on organisations
Motivation and Engagement	Performance Monitoring and Accountability
Career Development and Recognition	organisational efficiency and productivity
Stress and Workload Pressure	Data-driven Decision-Making

Table 2-1: The key aspects emerging from the effects of PM on individuals and organisations

2.2.6 Performance management systems in higher education

PM in academia started in the developed world. For example, in the UK, the Jarratt Committee established the idea of assessing academic organisation performance as well as individual performance in 1980 (Franco-Santos and Doherty, 2017; Gribling and Duberley, 2020; Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021). Australia followed with an influential policy paper on higher education assessment, which provided a comprehensive way of assessing academic individuals' and organisational performance. Subsequently, Australians used performance assessments for remuneration decisions such as pay awards and salary increments (Australian Department of Employment, 1987; Khosa et al., 2024).

In higher education settings since the 1980s, universities have tended to foster managerialism, i.e., running universities like firms and organisations, with a focus on accountability, quality control, performance control, and competition (Shepherd, 2018).Murphy and Murrmann (2009) and Smeenk et al. (2009) contended that managerialism supports global competitiveness, quality education and learning outcomes, achieves high financial returns and profits for universities, and improves accountability. However, Ajayan and Balasubramanian (2020) argued that managerialism erodes academic autonomy and collegiality and increases administrative oversight as academic staff are seen as employees with annual KPIs to achieve. Furthermore, educational leaders use a lot of high assessment metrics to measure academic and organisational performance, such as student evaluations and annual number of research publications (Kivipõld, Türk and Kivipõld, 2021). The approach of prioritising revenues, profits, rankings, reputations, and external image over education and research quality has led to increased academic staff stress, prompting demotivation and dissatisfaction (Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, 2022). Hence, this study offers a great opportunity to explore the effects of PM

practices on the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which enhance both motivation and satisfaction.

Academic staff in higher education institutions globally are commonly evaluated based on a range of performance indicators, including research output, teaching effectiveness, and administrative contributions, all of which collectively influence institutional rankings and reputation (Camilleri and Camilleri, 2018; Almohtaseb *et al.*, 2019; Camilleri, 2021b). Among these, research output is often regarded as the most critical standard used by academic leadership to assess faculty performance over the academic year (Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021; Al-Twal, 2022). Globally, universities typically require academic staff to publish one or two research articles annually, particularly as a condition for contract renewal. Moreover, institutions increasingly expect publications to appear in high-impact journals such as those ranked in the Associations of Business Schools (ABS 3 or ABS 4), which correspond to Scopus Q1 and Q2 journals (Sułkowski *et al.*, 2020). Preference is often given to scholars with a strong research profile and a demonstrated impact on scientific or qualitative domains, regardless of their teaching performance. Consequ(Buyukdagli and Yeralan, 2020)ently, research output has become the dominant benchmark by which academic quality is judged, often receiving a disproportionately high weighting of up to 60% in performance assessments compared to teaching and administrative responsibilities (Taylor and Baines, 2012).

Teaching performance assessment constitutes a secondary yet essential dimension of academic evaluation in HEI. It is weighted up to 30% in different universities around the globe (Buyukdagli and Yeralan, 2020). Many universities utilise student feedback as a mechanism for assessing teaching quality, typically gathered through end-of-term or end-of-year evaluations (Camilleri, 2021a). These evaluations often include sub-criteria determined by departmental heads and educational leaders, such as the teaching methods employed, i.e., whether traditional, interactive, or critical-pedagogical approaches, as pedagogical style has been shown to influence student engagement, learning outcomes, and intrinsic motivation to study (Kayas, Assimakopoulos and Hines, 2022). Traditionally, lecture-based teaching methods have increasingly come under scrutiny for their passive nature, which tends to limit opportunities for student interaction, critical thinking, and active knowledge construction (Igbojekwe, Ugo-Okoro and Chigozie P, 2015; Cadez, Dimovski and Zaman Groff, 2017; Lohman, 2021). Measuring the document portfolio is another way of assessing academic staff in universities, based on Hutaibat et al (2021). This form of assessment is conducted by

departmental leaders, who require academic staff to submit their teaching materials at the beginning of each semester. These materials typically include assessment instruments, such as monthly and final examinations, project guidelines, essay requirements, and other relevant documents intended for use in teaching and student evaluation throughout the academic term.

Scholars across different contexts have debated the reliability and validity of student evaluation of teaching (SET) systems (Camilleri, 2021a). For instance, studies conducted in Italy and Finland have revealed that student assessments are often influenced by subjective factors unrelated to teaching quality, such as previous exam performance or personal relationships with instructors (Kivistö, Pekkola and Lyytinen, 2017; Pilonato and Monfardini, 2020; Sheikh *et al.*, 2022). In cases where students perform poorly on assessments, they are more likely to evaluate their instructors negatively, regardless of the actual instructional quality. Similarly, positive personal relationships between students and academic staff, sometimes involving the exchange of gifts, may compromise the integrity of evaluations (Bauwens, Audenaert and Decramer, 2019). Furthermore, in the context of developing countries, research has shown that students often lack awareness of the implications of their evaluations and how such feedback is used in institutional decision-making processes, including contract renewals, promotions, and training interventions (Al-Twal, Rowlans and Cook, 2019; Al-Twal and Cook, 2021; Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021; Al-Twal, 2022; Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, 2022). Consequently, while many universities in the Middle East region continue to collect student evaluations as a form of external validation, they are frequently excluded from the weighted calculation of academic performance scores. In contrast, research output remains the dominant metric used by academic leadership, as it is viewed as a more objective and internationally recognised indicator of institutional reputation and scientific contribution (Camilleri and Camilleri, 2018)

A further dimension in the assessment of academic performance pertains to what are commonly referred to as administrative standards. This aspect of performance evaluation is subject to considerable debate among scholars, particularly in terms of its weight and significance within broader PMS. In many developed countries, including the United Kingdom, Germany, and the United States, administrative responsibilities are formally recognised as integral components of academic roles, contributing positively to institutional functioning and outcomes (Franco-Santos and Doherty, 2017; Gribling and Duberley, 2020). These responsibilities may include providing administrative and academic support to students, engaging in pastoral care, and participating in departmental or institutional committees. In addition, academics often

contribute through community engagement initiatives such as delivering seminars, facilitating training workshops, and organising scholarly events aimed at knowledge exchange both within and beyond their institutions (Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021).

Moreover, faculty members may also engage in service-oriented activities aimed at benefiting the broader community. These may include volunteer work in local humanitarian projects, participation in cultural or intellectual forums, and collaboration with civic organisations to enhance public knowledge and social cohesion (Taylor and Baines, 2012). In many western universities, such efforts are categorised under terms such as "community service" or "public engagement", and although differently labelled, they serve the same function, which is evaluating academic staff contributions beyond teaching and research (Koekkoek, Ham and Kleinhans, 2021). Despite their recognised value, these administrative and community-oriented activities often receive limited weighting in formal performance evaluations, typically accounting for no more than 10% of the overall assessment criteria (Pilonato and Monfardini, 2020). As a result, their influence on key institutional decisions, such as contract renewals, salary increments, or promotions, is generally minimal. They are rarely grounds for disciplinary actions or rewards, thereby reducing their motivational impact and perceived significance among academic staff (Ter Bogt, Scapens and Bogt, 2012).

The literature on PM highlights the numerous challenges associated with its implementation in HEIs at the institutional level, which result in challenges at the individual level. Scholars have argued that HEIs in the United States face growing pressure to enhance their performance and quality by increasing research citations, publications, and graduation rates, largely due to the substantial number of international students they attract each year (Kallio and Kallio, 2014; Kivistö, Pekkola and Lyytinen, 2017). These students contribute significantly to the host country's social and economic development, thereby intensifying the pressure on universities to improve their academic and administrative services (Joseph Mofokeng, Amoa-Gyarteng and Dhliwayo, 2025). Similarly, in the United Kingdom, HEIs encounter persistent challenges related to limited research funding, which significantly affects their ability to strengthen institutional reputation and achieve higher positions in global rankings (Taylor and Baines, 2012; Gribling and Duberley, 2020; Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021).

Consequently, examining the impact of academic performance indicators on job motivation and satisfaction is essential, as such factors directly influence institutional performance, reputation, and international standing. Accordingly, this research responds to these challenges

by exploring how PM indicators, specifically research, teaching, and community service, affect the satisfaction or frustration of basic psychological needs, which in turn shape academic staff's motivation, engagement, and institutional reputation.

2.2.7 The higher education private sector in Jordan

The growing population in the region, coupled with the rising demand for university enrolment, necessitated the establishment of a structured higher education sector operating under the umbrella of the Jordanian Higher Education Institution, and the regulations, decisions, and laws were derived from this (Mah'd, 2014). The private university sector was established in 1989, aiming to support science and education and raise the efficiency and level of Jordanian youth to meet the requirements of the times and the labour market (Turgay and Alhawamdeh, 2013). According to the latest statistics, the number of students in Jordanian private universities in 2017 was approximately 70,000. In addition, the number of private universities until late 2023 was 18 universities with more than 10,000 staff, from administrators to academics. Private universities strive to hire academics with the highest degrees from the best international universities. Thus, private universities have an adequate reputation in the country and contribute to creating jobs for the country's unemployed population, as well as helping the government teach a large segment of the country (Turgay and Alhawamdeh, 2013). Furthermore, the private higher education sector also plays a pivotal role in supporting national development, as it attracts international students from neighbouring countries and thereby generates substantial annual revenues. These revenues contribute to economic growth, facilitate job creation, and help reduce the pressure on the public higher education system (Al-Twal and Cook, 2021). Policies, regulations, and performance evaluation indicators differ significantly between public and private universities in Jordan. One of the primary distinctions arises from the funding models and financial expectations placed on students. Students enrolled in private universities typically pay substantial tuition fees, whereas students in public institutions often benefit from government subsidies, loans, or scholarships (Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021). This economic differentiation shapes institutional priorities and employment structures (Sabri, 2011). Notably, academic contracts in private universities are often renewed on an annual basis, in contrast to the more stable and long-term appointments commonly found in public universities (Al-Twal, Rowlans and Cook, 2019). As a result, academic staff in private

institutions may experience greater job insecurity and performance pressure, making the implementation of fair, transparent, and motivationally aligned PMS all the more critical.

Such systems must not only support institutional goals but also foster academic engagement, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being. Well-designed PMS can contribute to reducing faculty turnover in private universities, thereby promoting stability, continuity, and institutional growth (Al Azzam Salih Jaradat, 2014). Furthermore, recognising and accommodating individual differences, such as age, gender, academic rank, and educational qualifications, can enhance the relevance and fairness of PM practices. These individual characteristics influence the fulfilment of basic psychological needs outlined in SDT: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017). Addressing these variations can offer university leaders and policymakers deeper insights into how diverse staff experiences shape motivation and satisfaction.

Ultimately, fostering academic motivation and satisfaction is essential for not only enhancing individual performance but also achieving long-term academic sustainability in the private sector in Jordan. Motivated and satisfied academic staff are more likely to engage meaningfully with students, contribute to research and community service, and promote institutional excellence. In turn, this contributes to improved student recruitment, enhanced institutional reputation, and higher rankings – objectives that are especially critical for private universities competing in a market-driven educational environment (Kivistö, Pekkola and Lyytinen, 2017).

2.2.8 Performance management systems in Jordanian higher education

The performance evaluation process in the Jordanian higher education sector broadly reflects practices found in universities regionally and internationally. However, important distinctions exist between public and private universities, particularly in relation to employment arrangements, as academic and administrative staff contracts in many private universities are renewed annually. Consequently, performance evaluation plays a particularly significant role in employment continuity, making job satisfaction and perceptions of fairness especially important within the private sector.

Although faculty evaluation criteria vary across Jordanian universities, the literature indicates that academic performance assessment generally relies on two principal dimensions: research output and teaching effectiveness. However, the relative emphasis placed on each dimension

differs across institutions, and inconsistencies often exist between formal policy and practical implementation.

Research output is widely regarded as the dominant formal criterion in academic performance evaluation, particularly in private universities where contract renewal is closely tied to publication requirements. Academics are commonly required to provide evidence of the number of research papers published during the academic year, regardless of journal type or authorship position (Mahmoud, Othman and Taher Mahmoud, 2020). Based on this output, decisions are often made regarding annual contract renewal. This approach has been criticised by Al-Twal and Cook (2021) and Cook, Jones and Al-Twal (2022) , who argued that the emphasis on publication quantity over research quality or impact creates a narrow and potentially distorted assessment framework. They further contend that universities prioritise research production because publication output contributes positively to institutional rankings, which in turn enhances institutional reputation and student recruitment.

Teaching effectiveness constitutes the second major dimension of academic performance evaluation and is commonly assessed through student evaluation surveys. In this approach, students evaluate their instructors electronically at the end of the academic term, usually before final grades are released. These surveys assess various teaching-related criteria, including instructional methods, assessment diversity, and perceived student understanding of course content (Almohtaseb *et al.*, 2019; Sweis *et al.*, 2020)

Despite the formal inclusion of both research and teaching criteria, several scholars argue that the practical application of these measures is inconsistent across institutions. For example, Al-Twal, Rowlans and Cook (2019) found that in some universities student evaluations function as the primary or most consistently applied evaluation mechanism, while other performance dimensions, including research assessment, are either weakly implemented or inconsistently monitored. This suggests that although institutional policies may prescribe multi-dimensional evaluation systems, actual practice often diverges from formal frameworks.

Student evaluations themselves have also been heavily criticised in the Jordanian context. Al-Twal, Rowlands and Cook (2019); Al-Twal and Cook (2021); Al-Twal (2022); and Cook, Jones and Al-Twal (2022), argued that such evaluations often lack objectivity and transparency, as ratings may reflect interpersonal relationships rather than pedagogical effectiveness. Academics who reduce course difficulty, assign higher grades, or provide extensive support

may receive more favourable evaluations, whereas those who maintain rigorous standards may be penalised irrespective of teaching quality.

Furthermore, cultural factors may limit the validity of student evaluations within the Middle Eastern context. In societies where academics are viewed as highly respected authority figures, students may be reluctant to provide critical feedback or may lack the perceived legitimacy to evaluate teaching quality. Consequently, the reliability of student evaluations as a measure of academic performance remains contested (Al-Abbadi *et al.*, 2009; Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021)

Beyond concerns regarding evaluation criteria themselves, scholars have also criticised the weak linkage between performance evaluation outcomes and HR decisions in Jordanian universities. Existing systems often fail to translate performance results into meaningful consequences such as salary increments, promotions, professional development, or enhanced motivation (Aladwan, Bhanugopan and Fish, 2014; Al Azzam Salih Jaradat, 2014; Ababneh and AlShaik, 2021). As a result, performance evaluation is frequently perceived as a procedural exercise rather than a developmental or strategic management tool.

In response to these limitations, researchers have called for more holistic and context-sensitive academic performance evaluation frameworks that integrate both quantitative and qualitative indicators while promoting fairness, autonomy, and intrinsic motivation among academic staff. The present study seeks to address these concerns by examining how PM practices influence academic staff motivation and satisfaction through the lens of Self-Determination Theory.

The focus on the private higher education sector in Jordan is driven by the unique institutional dynamics that differentiate it from the public sector. In public universities, PM policies are often rigid, centrally governed, and resistant to reform or contextual adaptation. Consequently, any proposed changes to performance evaluation mechanisms are unlikely to influence decision-making processes or lead to meaningful structural improvements (Mah'd, 2014). In contrast, private universities operate within a more competitive and market-driven environment, where students are viewed as primary stakeholders or "customers". As such, student satisfaction is prioritised, and PM policies are more likely to shape administrative decisions related to faculty contracts, promotions, and teaching quality (Tadros *et al.*, 2013).

Despite the fact that HRM practices in Jordanian public universities have been the subject of numerous studies, limited research has been conducted on their application in the private sector. This presents an important empirical gap and a valuable opportunity to explore PM from a

more flexible and adaptive institutional context. Investigating this area may yield insights that contribute to both academic literature and practical policy development within Jordan's expanding private higher education system (Al-Twal, 2022; Budhwar *et al.*, 2022).

2.3 Academic Motivation in Higher Education

Motivation is commonly defined as an internal or external force that drives individuals to engage in goal-directed behaviour (Zhang *et al.*, 2025). Incentives, whether tangible or intangible, play a critical role in sustaining an individual's passion, energy, and commitment toward achieving their professional objectives (Awan *et al.*, 2020). Psychological research has long demonstrated that human beings possess innate psychological needs for appreciation, a sense of achievement, and personal pride in their work (Alach, 2017). However, individuals vary significantly in their motivational orientations. While some are primarily driven by external rewards such as salary or job security, others are motivated by intrinsic factors such as personal growth, fulfilment, and a genuine passion for their work, regardless of the occupational field (Nazaruddin, Sofyani and Utami, 2024). These motivational orientations are often categorised as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which will be elaborated on in the following section. Numerous theoretical frameworks have explored the role of motivation in shaping well-being, job satisfaction, and employee performance. Among these, SDT and Maslow's hierarchy of needs are particularly influential. SDT focuses on the conditions that foster or hinder intrinsic motivation by emphasising the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2020)

2.3.1 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations

Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in activities driven by internal satisfaction, such as interest, enjoyment, or personal values, rather than by external rewards or obligations (Ryan and Deci, 2020). It is widely recognised for its positive impact on self-motivation, psychological well-being, and sustained performance across various sectors. In education, for instance, teachers often rely on intrinsic motivation to inspire students to achieve academic success, fostering a deeper engagement with learning (Paais and Pattiruhu, 2020). Similarly, in the healthcare sector, intrinsic motivation is linked to professional dedication, where practitioners are driven by a sense of humanitarian purpose and a commitment to patient care (Sułkowski *et al.*, 2020).

Within the higher education sector, intrinsic motivation is regarded as a key factor influencing academic staff's performance and psychological well-being. It enhances engagement in teaching, research, and community service by promoting autonomy, self-direction, and professional satisfaction (De and Pritchard, 2006; Paais and Pattiruhu, 2020). Academics often value the freedom to select research topics aligned with their interests, which can increase the motivation to publish, pursue professional development, and strive for promotion. The ability to independently design and deliver course content is also seen as a vital aspect of academic autonomy, reinforcing intrinsic motivation and improving teaching quality (Mitchell, Schuster and Jin, 2020). Moreover, academics' involvement in community outreach, such as organising public seminars or social initiatives, further supports their intrinsic desire to contribute to societal development (Fischer, Malycha and Schafmann, 2019; Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2021). These practices collectively foster a sense of purpose and fulfilment, reinforcing the role of intrinsic motivation in driving meaningful academic engagement.

Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, refers to behaviours driven by external rewards or the avoidance of negative consequences, such as financial compensation, recognition, fear of punishment, or social pressures like shame or failure (Ryan and Deci, 2020). This form of motivation has been widely acknowledged in the organisational literature, particularly in fields where performance is closely tied to tangible outcomes. For instance, empirical studies have shown that in sectors such as finance and business, employees are often highly responsive to monetary incentives, viewing them as essential for meeting daily living costs, achieving personal goals, and securing a sense of satisfaction (Fischer, Malycha and Schafmann, 2019; Li *et al.*, 2020; Mitchell, Schuster and Jin, 2020).

In the context of higher education, extrinsic incentives are also commonly used to influence academic staff's performance. These may include salary increases, performance-based bonuses, funding for conference participation, and institutional support for publishing in high-impact journals (Li *et al.*, 2020; Singh *et al.*, 2020). However, extrinsic incentives alone are insufficient to sustain long-term motivation and well-being in academia (Bauwens, Audenaert and Decramer, 2019). It has been emphasised by Al-Mansoori and Koç (2019) and Fischer, Malycha and Schafmann (2019) that frequent publication in prestigious journals often leads to career advancement and higher academic ranks, which in turn bring increased privileges and financial rewards. Nevertheless, achieving high academic satisfaction is beyond extrinsic motivations as well as beyond financial rewards, requiring instead a more comfortable

environment. Tran, Amado and Santos (2025) supported the importance of working in a supportive, collegial environment, where mutual respect and developmental support contribute positively to psychological health and job satisfaction. Such environments not only improve individual academic performance but also enhance student outcomes and the overall institutional performance.

2.3.2 Factors influencing academic staff's motivations

The motivation of academic staff in the higher education sector is influenced by interrelated factors, which can be broadly categorised into institutional, individual, and socio-cultural dimensions (Fawehinmi *et al.*, 2020; Zhang *et al.*, 2025). Institutional factors include the design of PMS, leadership practices, and universities' policies regarding promotion, motivation and professional development (Grenier, Gagné and O'Neill, 2024). Factors at the individual level include age and gender differences, personal values, career aspirations, intrinsic or extrinsic motivational orientations, and perceived self-efficacy (Ryan and Deci, 2020; Howard, 2024). In addition, cultural and social dynamics, such as university culture and environments, collegial relationships, and societal perceptions of academic roles, play a significant role in shaping the motivational climate within universities (Masinde and Coetzee, 2023). Each of these indicators is discussed further below.

2.3.2.1 Institutional-level factors

Performance evaluation appraisal indicators in HEIs are widely regarded as critical mechanisms that influence academic staff motivation, engagement, and satisfaction. Al-Twal (2022), Al-Twal et al. (2019), Al-Twal and Cook (2021) and Cook et al. (2022) indicated the importance of having fair PM indicators that motivate academic staff to achieve their motivation and satisfaction. They assert that universities lack clear and fair indicators, and this absence of clarity, fairness, or consistency can undermine key psychological needs, particularly autonomy, which is central to intrinsic motivation as conceptualised SDT (Ryan and Deci, 2020). Furthermore, the absence of transparent criteria for assessing research, teaching, and community services contributes to perceptions of inequity, reduces trust in institutional processes, and ultimately diminishes motivation and job satisfaction (Vansteenkiste and Ryan, 2013; Ryan, Soenens and Vansteenkiste, 2019; Ryan and Deci, 2020). Therefore, establishing

clear, equitable, and comprehensive performance appraisal indicators is essential for effectively evaluating academic staff in higher education institutions. Emphasis should be placed on a balanced assessment framework that equally considers research, teaching, and community engagement, rather than prioritising the quantity of research publications alone. The overemphasis on quantitative measures to assess academic performance and neglecting others represents a critical factor that needs more investigation in the literature.

In addition to the above, PM in higher education has become a central mechanism for assessing academic performance and determining professional advancement. However, existing research indicates that current PMS primarily focus on quantifiable research outputs and student evaluations of teaching, with limited consideration for the broader dimensions of academic work such as community engagement, innovation, and long-term scholarly contribution (Sheldon and Prentice, 2019; Grenier, Gagné and O'Neill, 2024; Howard, 2024). This narrow focus on measurable indicators has resulted in a performance culture that prioritises productivity and compliance over professional growth and intrinsic motivation. Therefore, exploring the effects of research and teaching practices on the psychological needs of the satisfaction or frustration of individuals' needs, leading to enhanced job motivation and institutional performance, is both crucial and paramount (Sheldon and Prentice, 2019; Grenier, Gagné and O'Neill, 2024). Investigating this aspect will not just fill a gap in the PM literature but will also provide HR policy-makers and universities department heads with clear knowledge regarding the design of PM practices for academic staff in higher education settings.

The marginalisation of the community service practice in academic performance evaluations has become an area requiring further development (Koekkoek, Ham and Kleinhans, 2021). As previously noted, universities often prioritise quantitative indicators, such as publication counts and citation metrics, to enhance institutional reputation and global ranking, thereby attracting more students and contributing to the national economy (Cadez, Dimovski and Zaman Groff, 2017; Masinde and Coetzee, 2023). However, the community service dimension is essential for strengthening staff well-being, which can positively influence academic performance and encourage meaningful engagement with students, colleagues, and the wider community. Consequently, examining this practice and its relationship to the relatedness psychological need of SDT is not explored properly in the literature, highlighting a notable gap to address. Enhancing this aspect of PM has the potential to elevate staff morale, which thereby affects their well-being and, ultimately, improves overall institutional performance.

Promotion and advancement policies further intersect with motivation, especially in systems where academic rank is closely tied to institutional recognition and financial benefits. Well-defined and timely promotion frameworks serve as extrinsic motivators that can reinforce academic effort and goal achievement. Conversely, unclear or prolonged promotion timelines can lead to frustration, reduced commitment, and even attrition (Sanz-Menéndez and Cruz-Castro, 2019). For example, Koekkoek, Ham and Kleinhans (2021) demonstrated a case in which an academic staff member transferred from one university to another due to shorter promotion requirements, illustrating how disparities in institutional policies can significantly influence motivational outcomes and career decisions. The three factors, performance appraisal indicators, leadership strategy, and promotion policies, highlight the factors that affect the motivation process from the institution's perspective.

2.3.2.2 Individual-level factors

The second crucial theme influencing academic motivation is the presence of individual differences among academic staff, including variations in age, career stage, and personal goals (Stupnisky *et al.*, 2018). Motivation is not uniform across all academics; rather, it evolves over time in response to changing personal and professional aspirations. Early-career academics often exhibit a strong preference for intrinsic motivators, such as the desire to establish a scholarly reputation, produce high-quality research, and achieve career advancement through successive academic ranks (Howard, 2024). For these individuals, intrinsic motivation is closely tied to intellectual recognition, self-fulfilment, and the pursuit of long-term academic goals, which in turn contribute to job satisfaction and psychological well-being (Bamforth *et al.*, 2024).

In contrast, more senior academics, while still intrinsically motivated by research and intellectual engagement, may place greater emphasis on contributing to institutional leadership or community impact. Their motivation often shifts toward obtaining senior administrative roles that allow them to share accumulated knowledge and experience, influence institutional policies, and mentor the next generation of scholars and students. This transition reflects a broadened sense of purpose, where motivation is driven not only by personal academic achievement but also by a desire to leave a lasting impact on the academic and local community.

Another key aspect of individual differences that affects academic motivation is personal desire or a preference for specific types of incentives. Empirical studies on organisational behaviour have shown that employees' motivational responses often depend on what they value most. While some individuals are driven primarily by financial rewards, even if received infrequently, others prioritise non-financial aspects of work, such as autonomy, recognition, and a supportive environment (Giauque, Anderfuhren-Biget and Varone, 2013; Fischer, Malycha and Schafmann, 2019). In contexts where financial incentives are insufficient or irregular, the presence of a psychologically safe, collegial, and development-oriented work environment has been found to significantly contribute to job satisfaction and individual performance, which ultimately enhances organisational outcomes (Edgley-Pyshorn and Huisman, 2011; Mohammad *et al.*, 2021).

Gender also represents an important dimension of individual difference in academic motivation. Research has indicated that male and female academics may be influenced by distinct motivational drivers, often shaped by social roles and expectations (Fenech, Kanji and Vargha, 2022). In the case of female academics, particularly in countries such as Jordan, university teaching positions are often seen as compatible with family responsibilities, such as childcare and household management. As a result, many women are motivated by the flexibility, intellectual engagement, and social value associated with academic work, rather than other jobs, due to the flexibility it offers (Festing, Knappert and Kornau, 2015; Järvinen and Mik-Meyer, 2024). Academic staff's passion for teaching and contributing to higher education institutions often fosters a high level of intrinsic motivation, which in turn supports job satisfaction and sustained engagement. Understanding such gender-based differences is crucial for developing inclusive motivational strategies in academic institutions. Age, personal preference of motivations, and gender are the main individual differences that can play a crucial role in affecting individuals' motivations.

2.3.2.3 Culture and environment

The final factor influencing academic staff motivation is the broader organisational environment and institutional culture in which they work. A growing body of research highlights that the cultural and environmental conditions of the workplace play a critical role in shaping individual attitudes, well-being, and performance (Paais and Pattiruhu, 2020).

Specifically, a toxic work environment characterised by excessive workload, constant pressure, unrealistic demands, and poor interpersonal dynamics has been found to significantly undermine employee satisfaction and intrinsic motivation (Doghan *et al.*, 2022). In academic settings, where intellectual and emotional labour are deeply intertwined, prolonged exposure to such environments can lead to stress, burnout, disengagement, and ultimately a decline in performance and institutional commitment (Decramer, Smolders and Vanderstraeten, 2013).

Conversely, a supportive organisational culture marked by collegiality, fairness, recognition, and developmental support can enhance motivation by satisfying academics' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, as outlined in SDT (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Ryan and Deci, 2020). Institutions that prioritise academic freedom, promote mutual respect, and invest in faculty well-being are more likely to foster a positive motivational climate that contributes to both individual and organisational success (Bamforth *et al.*, 2024).

2.3.3 Academic motivation in the Jordanian context

Motivating academic staff is essential for promoting long-term retention and reducing turnover in higher education institutions. In the Jordanian higher education sector, similar to many regional and international contexts, academic motivation is shaped by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic incentives that influence both job satisfaction and commitment (Al Bawab *et al.*, 2024). Several contextual factors affect academic motivation in Jordanian universities, notably gender and age.

Gender plays a significant role in shaping motivational drivers. In Jordan and other Arab societies, women are often drawn to the education sector due to its perceived job security, flexible working hours, and proximity to home – factors that align with their domestic responsibilities (Ababneh and AlShaik, 2021; Al Bawab *et al.*, 2024; Alshdiefat *et al.*, 2024). Culturally, women are regarded as central figures in maintaining household stability and nurturing children, which reinforces their preference for professions that offer psychological comfort, a safe environment, and a balance between professional and personal commitments (Millmore, Biggs and Morse, 2007). Consequently, the education sector is often viewed by women as a means of achieving long-term psychological, financial, and moral stability (Zhang *et al.*, 2025). While it is sometimes assumed that women contribute less to scientific research,

evidence suggests otherwise. A significant ratio of women, estimated at around 30%, are employed full-time in academia and actively publish in high-impact journals across various disciplines, whether married or single (Al Bawab *et al.*, 2024). Despite the challenges associated with balancing research responsibilities and domestic roles, many women demonstrate considerable scholarly productivity when institutional support and opportunities are accessible.

Conversely, for male academics, financial incentives tend to be a primary motivational factor, particularly those associated with research productivity (Festing, Knappert and Kornau, 2015). Jordanian universities often provide financial rewards for published research, with the value of these rewards varying according to the journal's ranking and classification (Al-Abbadi *et al.*, 2009; Sormani and Sijde, 2023). Such incentives not only enhance the institution's academic reputation but also help male academics address the rising cost of living, motivating them to publish regularly and compete for recognition in prestigious journals (Barsoum and Mryyan, 2014). However, it is important to critique the assumption that scientific publishing is predominantly a male domain, as female academics also make significant contributions despite systemic and societal constraints.

Age is another determinant of academic motivation. Younger academics and early-career researchers, regardless of gender, tend to be highly motivated by opportunities for professional growth, networking, and international collaboration (Budhwar *et al.*, 2022). They actively engage in research, attend conferences, contribute to community initiatives, and support student development, often valuing these experiences more than financial rewards (Barsoum and Mryyan, 2014; Ababneh and AlShaik, 2021; Al Bawab *et al.*, 2024; Alshdiefat *et al.*, 2024). In contrast, senior academics, particularly those in advanced academic or administrative positions, exhibit different motivational patterns. The study by Tadros et al (2013) suggested that motivating senior staff poses unique challenges, as their priorities often shift toward institutional leadership, legacy, or scholarly impact rather than tangible incentives. Another study by Al-Twal and Cook (2021) and Cook, Jones and Al-Twal (2022) indicated that professors and individuals in high-ranking academic positions are primarily motivated by the scholarly impact they make, particularly in terms of journal impact factors and contributions to the academic community, rather than by financial rewards.

Moreover, senior academics tend to derive motivation from the quantity and quality of their scholarly output, including the number of books and peer-reviewed articles published annually and the broader influence of their work on both academic discourse and societal development.

Limited research has explored the differential effects of PM practices across academic ranks and demographics. Senior academics often benefit from established research networks and lighter teaching loads, while early-career academics face heavier teaching responsibilities and greater pressure to publish, creating structural inequities within PMS (Kivistö, Pekkola and Lyytinen, 2017; Ahenkan, Tenakwah and Bawole, 2018). These disparities can influence perceptions of fairness, motivation, and professional development opportunities, potentially affecting retention and career progression in the academic workforce (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Ryan and Deci, 2020). Hence, it is crucial to demonstrate the qualification factors' effects on psychological needs of satisfaction, which impacts academics' motivations, which in turn helps policymakers shape the design of PM for academic staff in the future

Furthermore, while gender differences in academic motivation are acknowledged, there is limited understanding of how individuals, institutional and cultural norms influence the satisfaction or frustration of psychological needs, which in turn impact on the motivational drivers of male and female academics, affecting job satisfaction and well-being in Jordan (Festing, Knappert and Kornau, 2015; Fenech, Kanji and Vargha, 2022; Järvinen and Mik-Meyer, 2024). Evidence suggests that women often sustain considerable research productivity despite societal constraints, yet the mechanisms enabling or hindering their performance remain underexplored (Edgar, Blaker and Everett, 2021). This gap highlights the need for a more nuanced, context-specific understanding of gendered motivational experiences.

Finally, existing studies on PM emphasise the importance of performance-based financial incentives, particularly for male academics, but they do not sufficiently analyse how these incentives shape broader patterns of job satisfaction, engagement, or research quality (Barsoum and Mryyan, 2014; Chi *et al.*, 2019; Qader *et al.*, 2024). Moreover, the interactions between financial rewards and intrinsic drivers such as autonomy and competence – central to SDT – have not been adequately examined (Ryan and Deci, 2020). Hence, this study addresses the need to explore how incentive structures influence academic motivation within resource-limited universities.

2.4 Human Resource Management in the Education Sector

2.4.1 Human resource management and motivation

HRM plays a critical role in shaping academic staff's motivation by influencing policies and practices, as well as the institutional climate within which academics work. When strategically implemented, HRM can serve as a catalyst for enhancing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation through fair performance appraisals, transparent promotion pathways, access to professional development opportunities, and the recognition of academic contributions (Paauwe, 2009; Deo, 2014; Budhwar *et al.*, 2022). HRM practices that support autonomy, competence, and relatedness, i.e., the core elements of SDT, are more likely to result in sustainable motivation, job satisfaction, and the retention of faculty members (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017). Conversely, when HRM is perceived as bureaucratic, inconsistent, or disconnected from academic values, it may contribute to dissatisfaction, disengagement, and decreased organisational commitment (Vansteenkiste and Ryan, 2013). In academic settings, the effectiveness of HRM is often measured by its ability to foster a supportive and inclusive environment where academic staff feel valued, empowered, and encouraged to pursue excellence in teaching, research, and community services. Therefore, HRM is not merely a technical or administrative function but a strategic tool that directly impacts faculty motivation and institutional performance (Aboramadan *et al.*, 2020).

2.4.2 Strategic vs operational HRM

A distinction must be made between strategic and operational HRM, particularly in the higher education sector, where motivation and performance are closely tied to institutional culture and policies. Strategic HRM involves the alignment of human capital policies with long-term institutional objectives, focusing on professional growth, capacity building, and employee well-being (Doellgast and Marsden, 2019; Mphahlele and Dachapalli, 2022). In the strategic model, HRM becomes a proactive partner in enhancing institutional effectiveness by fostering a supportive work environment, encouraging leadership development, and facilitating faculty engagement (Tadros *et al.*, 2013; Allui and Sahni, 2016). Conversely, operational HRM tends to be reactive and procedural, concerned primarily with transactional functions such as contracts, leave approval, and compliance documentation (Al-Kasasbeh, 2016; Singh *et al.*, 2020). In institutions where HRM remains at an operational level, the potential of HR to positively influence motivation and performance is largely unrealised. Academic staff in such

environments often report feelings of neglect, bureaucratic frustration, and limited opportunities for development, all of which can undermine their intrinsic motivation and commitment to the institution (Brown *et al.*, 2019; Bader *et al.*, 2021).

2.4.3 HRM practices in higher education in Jordan

HRM comprises a set of activities related to selecting and attracting suitable employees, ensuring that those staff have the competencies to do the job, i.e., dealing with and designing payment systems, designing and monitoring performance, handling employee grievances and complaints fairly, and providing support for employees who fail to meet the standards or goals (Al-Twal and Cook, 2021) According to Hutaibat et al. (2021), HRM emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in the United States as an attempt to address major challenges such as high turnover, weak regulations, a lack of legitimacy, and low morale issues. According to Taylor's views, HRM is a set of functions that lead to achieving the organisation's objectives; it can also be considered a system or policy that affects employees' attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Al-Twal, 2022). They assert that hiring the best candidates, providing proper induction and training, and developing a fair performance appraisal system that includes both reward and compensation is very influential and beneficial for firms and institutions. In higher education, the emphasis is on instilling knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities in employees and academics; this has a positive impact on the outputs of institutions, such as their reputation, number of annual registrations, dropout rates, employment rate, research output, and, most importantly, revenues and profits (Almohtaseb *et al.*, 2019)

Numerous studies have been conducted on HRM in higher education. Some supported it, while others opposed it. According to Edgley-Pyshorn and Huisman (2011), HRM in universities can support the creation of knowledge in an intensive institution, one that is able to meet the difficulties and challenges of life. HRM directs and monitors the work of academics in HEIs to ensure that education standards are met in terms of knowledge and skill delivery, which positively impacts the institution's performance (Waring, 2013). According to Guest and Clinton (2007), a suitable leadership style enables universities to be competitive and consistently ranked at the top of the table. HRM can positively affect knowledge creation and delivery, acquired skills, and leadership styles, all of which have a substantial impact on a university's performance. Managing HRM in HEIs has a significant impact on research performance as well. According to Nguyen (2016), recruiting suitable academics, developing

them regularly, and promoting and motivating them continuously will result in a significant research impact, which will directly improve the research performance of the university. However, this research was also criticised by scholars and researchers. Mccormack, Propper and Smith (2014), for instance, described the expression "managing herding cats" for academics' management because of the common characteristics of academics, such as being self-motivated and ready to influence others, namely students. They also added that normative management tools can work for normal organisations but not for higher institutions, highlighting the need for conventional and special HRM for academics.

Research on HRM in HEIs in developing countries, including Jordan, is scarce and underdeveloped, unlike in Western countries. Cook, Jones and Al-Twal (2022) summarised the literature on HRM regarding higher education in Jordan and found only 18 articles published within the first 20 years of this century. Additionally, the studies were allocated to academic staff (7), administrative staff (4), a combination of both (4), students (1), and HR managers (2). More focus is needed for academic staff development and motivation due to the importance of academic jobs in universities as well as their influence on universities' ranks and reputations, students, and societies in general (Almohtaseb *et al.*, 2019; Sweis *et al.*, 2020)

Al Azzam Salih Jaradat (2014) conducted a study regarding the effectiveness of recruitment and selection at public universities. They found that there is an adequate influence on the universities' effectiveness. However, they also indicated the importance of diversifying recruitment, especially external recruitment, and expanding the circle of job applicants to achieve fairness and justice for all applicants and recruit qualified people. Al-Kasasbeh (2016) conducted research on employee retention and satisfaction in a Jordanian private university. The research, based on tenure or job security, showed that staff in public universities serve for longer, as they are secured by the government; this is in contrast to private universities, where tenure is unexpected. Therefore, Sabri (2011) argued that more studies are needed for staff and academic performance, as well as their educational and work outcomes. Allui and Sahni (2016) explored student evaluation techniques and their influence on academic staff evaluation. Instead of focusing on the staff evaluation from the managerial perspective, they examined students' ability to evaluate tutors in universities and the decisions taken after evaluation, such as reward, tenure, and job advancement. However, more thought should be given to implementing managerial perspectives evaluation on academic staff and HEI outcomes.

As evidenced by Aladwan, Bhanugopan and Fish's (2014) study, there is a lack of evaluation methods used for assessing academics in Jordanian universities, such as peer reviews, evaluation by objectives, and 360-degree evaluation. According to Al-Twal (2022), the only method of academic staff evaluation within HEIs in Jordan is the student evaluation of teaching (SET), and even this is not taken seriously as a management tool. Furthermore, Barsoum and Mryyan (2014) indicated that there are no serious assessments of academic programmes, academic content, service quality, educational outcomes, or research and teaching output. Hence, they called for creating a fair system that could help in assessing both academic and organisational performance, under the name "performance management system" (PMS), which would directly influence academics' motivations and satisfaction. Al-Twal and Cook (2021) supported the idea of measuring academic evaluation, as the human element is imperative. If HRM in HEIs in the Arab world is effective, then academics satisfaction will be positively affected; therefore, students' educational outcomes and results will be adequate, which will in turn positively reflect on universities' abilities to face globalisation's challenges, the customer- and market-oriented economy, and technology difficulties. Finally,Tadros et al. (2013) found that the role of reward and promotion is often neglected for academic staff, arguing that academics need more motivation to apply their knowledge, skills, and expertise. Career advancement is essential because they have rules regarding teaching, research, and management, as opposed to regular staff, who have direct objectives to focus on.

The research on the role of HRM functions in higher education, such as staff selection, performance evaluation, and reward and compensation, is scarce. Nonetheless, by applying HRM functions, particularly PM and its alignment with motivation, academics will be helped to understand their expectations and needs, which will enhance their ability to meet students' educational outcomes and challenges.

2.4.4 Limitations of HRM support in Jordanian private universities

In the context of Jordanian private universities, HRM practices face several limitations that hinder their ability to motivate and support academic staff. Research indicates that HR departments in many private universities operate primarily at an administrative level, with minimal strategic engagement in faculty development or motivation (Al-Twal, 2022). Although research output is measured by the annual number of research publications, Jordanian private

universities consider the student evaluation of teaching (SET) as the main way of assessing academics' performance, which undermines both their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and negatively affects their well-being and satisfaction (Al-Twal and Cook, 2021; Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, 2022). Furthermore, limited access to structured training, mentorship programmes, and leadership development opportunities has left many academics, particularly early-career faculty, without adequate institutional support (El-Sheikh *et al.*, 2012). Promotion policies may also lack transparency and consistency, contributing to frustration and uncertainty about career progression (Ababneh and AlShaik, 2021). Additionally, HR specialists in some institutions may lack the specialised knowledge necessary to understand the unique pressures of academic work, resulting in policies that do not align with the actual needs of faculty members. These limitations highlight the need for a more strategic, inclusive, and development-orientated approach to HRM in Jordanian private universities, one that considers not only performance outcomes but also the motivational and psychological well-being of academic staff; this will also reflect on academics' satisfaction, performance, and engagement, which will in turn significantly influence universities' ranking and reputation (Tadros *et al.*, 2013; Al-Twal, Rowlans and Cook, 2019; Sweis *et al.*, 2020).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

2.5.1 Self-determination theory (SDT)

SDT, developed by Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000), is a broad framework for the study of human motivation and personality (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017). It posits that optimal motivation and psychological well-being are achieved when three basic psychological needs are met: autonomy (the need to feel volitional and self-endorsing of one's actions), competence (the need to feel effective and capable of achieving desired outcomes), and relatedness (the need to feel connected and significant to others) (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Ryan and Deci, 2020). These needs are considered universal and essential for fostering intrinsic motivation and internalising extrinsic motivation (Vansteenkiste and Ryan, 2013). SDT posits that both employee performance and well-being are significantly influenced by the nature of their motivation toward work-related tasks. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence employee motivation is essential, as they have a direct impact on individuals' well-being, engagement, and ultimately the long-term success of the organisation.

Motivation is conceptualised along a continuum, ranging from amotivation to various forms of extrinsic motivation (external, introjected, identified, integrated) and ultimately to intrinsic motivation, where actions are driven by inherent interest and enjoyment (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Ryan and Deci, 2020). Figure 2-1 illustrates the taxonomy of motivation for SDT (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Ryan and Deci, 2020). It shows the continuum from the lack of motivation stage to the most autonomous type of motivation, which is intrinsic motivation. The range of motivation starts with a motivation where no actions are taken, through the motions where individuals do not value the activity and do not feel competent and thereby do not expect the outcomes to be desirable (Ryan, Soenens and Vansteenkiste, 2019).

In extrinsic motivation, individuals are motivated externally to avoid guilt, shame, or harm. Four major regulations are categorised under this type of motivation. First, external regulation, where motivation is to satisfy an external demand, such as students when they do their homework for the sake of avoiding parental confrontation (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Grenier, Gagné and O'Neill, 2024). Introjected regulation, which is somewhat external, means taking motivation in regulation but not accepting it as one's own just to avoid anxiety or guilt. In academic contexts, introjected regulation often manifests as ego-involvement, where individuals tie their self-worth to performance outcomes, leading to a form of regulation that is internally imposed rather than truly autonomous (Howard, 2024). Both external and introjected regulations are considered controlled motivation, where individuals are motivated for the sake of demand, not for the sake of themselves (Tran, Amado and Santos, 2025). The other two regulations of extrinsic motivation are identified and integrated and represent autonomous extrinsic motivation. In identified regulation, the individual consciously acknowledges and accepts the value of an activity, resulting in a relatively strong sense of volition and a willingness to engage in the behaviour (Zhang *et al.*, 2025). For example, in an academic setting, a student may choose to enrol in a statistics course because they personally value gaining deeper knowledge in the field, reflecting identified regulation. The most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation is integrated regulation, wherein the individual not only acknowledges and accepts the value of an activity but also perceives it as fully aligned with their core values and sense of value. Autonomous extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation share the same characteristics but differ primarily in that intrinsic motivation is based on enjoyment and working from the heart, whereas people in autonomous extrinsic motivation represent the sense of value and view the actions and activities as worthwhile (Ryan

and Deci, 2020). Understanding and knowing the continuum of motivation in this study is important, as it guides the researcher to know how PM practices influence the satisfaction or frustration of psychological needs, which in turn affect motivations and positive or negative outcomes.

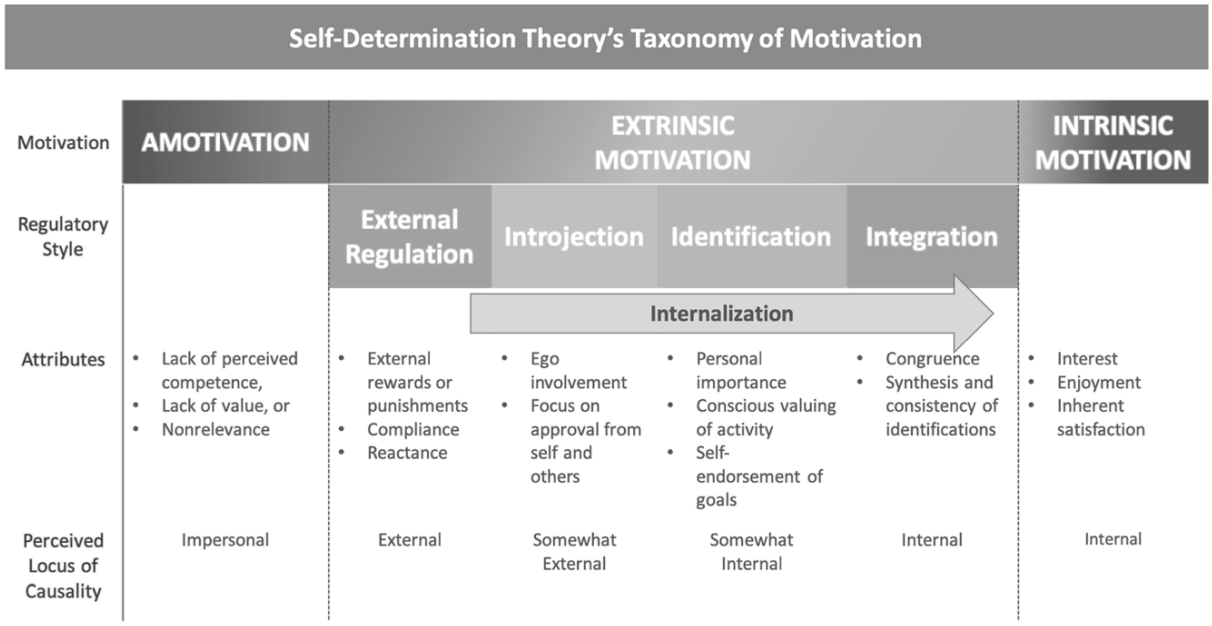


Figure 2-1*:Self-determination theory, taxonomy of Motivation*
Source: *(Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017)*

The following paragraph demonstrates the current research studies that demonstrated the application of SDT in both the workplace and the education sector.

2.5.1.1 SDT in the workplace context

SDT has been extensively applied in both educational and workplace contexts to understand how motivation is shaped and sustained. The research studies conducted in the context of SDT in the workplace focused on two crucial aspects, namely autonomous and/or controlled

motivations, followed by the satisfaction/frustration of needs (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Ryan and Deci, 2020; Bamforth *et al.*, 2024). Several studies have underscored the critical role of autonomy-supportive supervision in fostering autonomous motivation and enhancing employee well-being across various professional contexts. For example, Alamer and Lee (2019) found that police officers who perceived their supervisors as autonomy-supportive reported greater autonomous motivation, stronger intentions to remain in their jobs, fewer daily work-related hassles, and fewer physical symptoms. Similarly, Ng et al. (2012) demonstrated that health professionals who received autonomy support from supervisors experienced higher job satisfaction and improved psychological well-being, with additional benefits reported when support also came from colleagues. Cross-cultural research supports these findings: studies of teachers in China and The Gambia by Alhija (2015) revealed that when supervisors supported basic psychological needs, teachers reported higher levels of autonomous motivation and greater job and life satisfaction. In contrast, Van Waeyenberg, Peccei and Decramer (2022) found that Canadian teachers who experienced controlled supervision exhibited lower autonomous motivation and increased symptoms of burnout.

Ochumbo and Matimbwa (2019), in a study involving over 500 college employees, found that autonomous motivation was associated with lower levels of burnout. Similarly, Bauwens et al. (2019) reported that employees with higher levels of autonomous motivation experienced greater job satisfaction and reduced emotional exhaustion. Notably, job satisfaction was linked to lower turnover intentions, while emotional exhaustion predicted higher turnover intentions, factors that ultimately influence actual employee departures. In summary, a growing body of research consistently has demonstrated that autonomous motivation is associated with lower levels of burnout, work exhaustion, and turnover, alongside higher levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and performance. In contrast, controlled motivation has generally been linked to adverse outcomes, including increased stress, reduced engagement, and diminished well-being.

Beyond autonomous and controlled forms of motivation, the most frequently examined predictors of work-related outcomes within SDT are the satisfaction and frustration of the three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Deci, Olafsen and Ryan (2017) examined both the satisfaction and frustration of basic psychological needs among organisational employees, finding that need satisfaction was positively associated with both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, while need frustration was linked to lower levels of each

aspect. Similarly, a large-scale study of Flemish employees by Van den Broeck et al. (2016) demonstrated that the frustration of the basic psychological needs significantly predicted poorer work-related well-being, as indicated by higher levels of exhaustion. In workplace settings more broadly, Grenier, Gagné and O'Neill (2024) demonstrated that organisations that support autonomy, provide meaningful feedback, and foster relatedness create more engaged, satisfied, and high-performing employees. Likewise, Ryan and Deci (2020) emphasise that environments that allow for needs satisfaction lead to higher quality work performance, while needs frustration is associated with burnout and disengagement. Given the consistent evidence that both autonomous motivation and basic psychological need satisfaction reliably predict positive work-related outcomes, it has become increasingly important to investigate the factors shaping these motivational experiences in order to better understand how to foster employee well-being and high-quality performance within organisations.

2.5.1.2 SDT in the higher education context

The higher education sector is widely recognised as one of the most complex and multifaceted domains within the contemporary work environment, owing to the dynamic interactions among students, parents, administrative bodies, academic staff, and non-academic staff (Mah'd, 2014; Ajayan and Balasubramanian, 2020). Consequently, the application of SDT within this context presents a significant challenge, given its potential implications for employee performance and motivation. These motivational dynamics are, in turn, reflected in institutional outcomes such as overall performance, reputation, and university rankings, all of which influence student enrolment rates in universities, which in turn affects both the social and economic perspectives (Seppala and Smith, 2020).

While various motivational theories have been examined in relation to higher education and their effects on individual performance, a sense of connectedness, and psychological well-being, limited scholarly attention has been directed towards the application of SDT in higher education settings. For instance, Chen, Lill and Vance (2020) explored the role of autonomy and freedom among high school students and reported a strong positive correlation with academic satisfaction and achievement factors that subsequently inform students' selection of university majors. Similarly, Decramer, Smolders and Vanderstraeten (2013); Turgay and Alhawamdeh (2013) investigated the influence of interpersonal relationships on the psychological well-being of university students, highlighting that students who felt heard,

supported, and valued by their educational environment reported higher levels of reassurance, happiness, satisfaction, and connectedness. Jang (2019) studied the effects of teachers' autonomous and controlled motivations on students motivations and engagement in classrooms; they found that the more autonomous motivation is applied for teachers, the more positive the consequences for student performance, such as grading, engagement, well-being and have sense of belonging to the schools environment. The authors also showed that the presence of more controlling requirements on teachers influences their motivation, which significantly affects students' motivations and performance, which in turn impacts parent satisfaction. These emotional and psychological states were found to significantly impact academic's engagement and performance at the end of the academic year (Zhang *et al.*, 2025).

In the context of higher education, numerous studies have examined PM indicators for academic staff and their implications for employee satisfaction and motivation (Guest and Clinton, 2007; Kallio *et al.*, 2016; Lo-Iacono-Ferreira, Capuz-Rizo and Torregrosa-L Opez, 2017; Sharaf-Addin and Fazel, 2021). Despite this growing body of research, theoretical investigations into how PM indicators and practices contribute to job dissatisfaction through the satisfaction or frustration of the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness remain limited. Specifically, as noted by Bamforth et al. (2024), Ryan and Deci (2020a) and Zhang et al. (2025), insufficient scholarly attention has been devoted to identifying which PM practices frustrate psychological needs, foster controlled forms of motivation, and generate adverse employee outcomes. Examining needs frustration is particularly important in higher education, where academic work is inherently knowledge-intensive and traditionally characterised by professional autonomy, intellectual freedom, and intrinsically motivated engagement in teaching and research (Ryan and Deci, 2020; Grenier, Gagné and O'Neill, 2024). In such contexts, performance management practices that undermine academics' perceptions of autonomy, competence, or relatedness may not only diminish job satisfaction and motivation, but may also constrain creativity, reduce scholarly engagement, and weaken the quality of teaching and research outputs (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Franco-Santos and Doherty, 2017; Franco-Santos and Otley, 2018). Addressing this gap would therefore provide valuable theoretical and practical insights for higher education policymakers by identifying PM practices that support psychological need satisfaction and promote positive motivational outcomes, as well as those that frustrate such needs and contribute to negative individual and organisational consequences.

Furthermore, university performance appraisal policies typically rely on quantitative indicators, most notably research publication counts and student evaluations of teaching, to assess academic staff's performance (Taylor and Baines, 2012; Gribling and Duberley, 2020; Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021). These quantitative outcomes often inform key administrative decisions, including academic promotions, salary increments, and, in some cases, contract renewals (Kallio and Kallio, 2014; Franco-Santos and Otley, 2018). However, this approach has been widely criticised in the literature for its limited capacity to capture the quality of teaching and research. Scholars argue that such narrow metrics risk undermining the broader objectives of knowledge advancement and may negatively influence students' learning experiences and outcomes (Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021; Budhwar *et al.*, 2022; Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, 2022).

In addition, most of the literature on PM in universities has relied on research and teaching evaluation practices, thereby neglecting the important role of community service practices in assessing academics' performance. These may have a great influence on the psychological need of relatedness, which affects academic motivation and job outcomes such as engagement, satisfaction and well-being (Townley, 1997; De and Pritchard, 2006; Sudin, 2011; Camilleri and Camilleri, 2018). Hence, there is a need to explore how community service practices influence academic staff's job motivation and satisfaction via exploring the influences on the psychological need satisfaction or frustration, which affects job motivation and outcomes such as engagement and well-being.

2.5.1.3 The use of SDT in Middle Eastern or developing contexts

Despite its Western origins, SDT has been increasingly applied in non-Western and developing country contexts, including parts of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. These studies have highlighted both the adaptability and limitations of the theory in collectivist and hierarchical cultures. JAMA (2022) found that the core psychological needs outlined in SDT are experienced across cultures, but the way autonomy is expressed may differ. For instance, in collectivist societies, autonomy might be more relational, manifesting in ways that prioritise group harmony over individual expression (Abu *et al.*, 2010)

In Middle Eastern contexts, few studies have directly applied SDT to academic staff, though research on students and employees has shown that needs satisfaction remains relevant. For example, Alamer and Lee (2019) validated the Basic Psychological Needs Scale in Saudi

Arabian educational settings, suggesting SDT's cross-cultural utility. Similarly, Hajjawi (2012) and Alhija (2015) examined teacher burnout in Israeli Arab schools and found strong associations between need frustration and emotional exhaustion. These findings suggest that SDT offers valuable insights into how institutional and cultural environments affect motivation in the region.

In developing countries, including Jordan, the topics of PM and SDT are still underdeveloped, especially in university settings. Research evaluation practices are the only way to assess academics' performance for the purpose of contract renewals; thus, if academics publish regularly, their contract is renewed regardless of their teaching performance or community contribution, this results in unfairness and inequality in PM practices, which lead to dissatisfaction with performance evaluation criteria and their impact on motivation and satisfaction (Al-Twal and Cook, 2021; Al-Twal, 2022; Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, 2022). Mansour, Heath and Brannan (2015) also added that universities prioritise academic research because it significantly impacts the university's reputation and ranking, which may increase students' enrolment ratio, especially for private sectors where external rewards are the main ones. Consequently, university policies focus on these research evaluation indicators and neglect other standards. Therefore, it is paramount to explore how comprehensive PM practices, represented by research, teaching and community service indicators, influence academics' satisfaction and motivation via the psychological needs satisfaction or frustration, which inform job outcomes such as engagement and well-being.

Furthermore, Almohtaseb et al. (2019), Mahmoud et al. (2020) and Sweis et al. (2020) highlighted that only a limited number of studies have examined how contextual and individual factors influence the design and implementation of PMS in higher education, particularly within Middle Eastern contexts. For example, academic qualifications should be considered when developing PM practices, as some faculty members hold only a master's degree. Expecting these individuals to meet the same research publication requirements as doctoral degree holders may be inequitable, potentially leading to burnout and disengagement (Joseph Mofokeng, Amoa-Gyarteng and Dhliwayo, 2025). Gender also represents an important demographic factor; male academics may have more flexibility to engage in research and community activities than their female counterparts, which can subsequently enhance their levels of motivation and job satisfaction (Fenech, Kanji and Vargha, 2022). Age is another relevant dimension. Younger academics may be more willing and motivated to engage in a

broader range of institutional responsibilities, including teaching, research, and community service, and may therefore be more accepting of being evaluated across multiple indicators. In contrast, senior academics or professors often prioritise research and knowledge contribution, which may shape their perceptions of PM expectations and criteria (Brown *et al.*, 2019)

Despite the relevance of these contextual and demographic factors, research integrating such elements with SDT remains scarce and underdeveloped. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining how demographic, individual, and cultural perspectives inform the design of PMS in Jordanian universities, and how these factors influence the satisfaction or frustration of psychological needs. Understanding these dynamics is essential, as needs satisfaction shapes both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which subsequently affect individual performance, well-being, and engagement.

Figure 2-2 below presents the conceptual framework developed for this study, which integrates insights from three interrelated strands of literature: performance management systems in higher education, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and contextual research on governance and human resource management in higher education institutions, particularly within developing country settings. The framework was constructed through an iterative and integrative review process aimed at synthesising these literatures into a coherent model explaining how performance management practices influence academic staff motivation and job satisfaction through the lens of SDT.

The first component of the framework, performance management practices (PMP), is grounded in the higher education performance management literature, which identifies research, teaching, and community service as the principal dimensions through which academic staff performance is assessed (Taylor and Baines, 2012; Camilleri and Camilleri, 2018; Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021). These dimensions reflect the dominant evaluation criteria used in universities globally and are particularly evident in Jordanian higher education institutions, where research productivity is often prioritised over teaching and service contributions. Accordingly, PMP in this study are conceptualised as a multidimensional construct encompassing research evaluation practices, teaching evaluation practices, and community engagement evaluation practices.

The second component of the framework, psychological need satisfaction and frustration, is derived from Self-Determination Theory (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Ryan and Deci, 2020)

. SDT posits that individuals have three fundamental psychological needs, autonomy, competence, and relatedness which are essential for optimal motivation, engagement, and satisfaction. When these needs are supported, individuals experience enhanced intrinsic motivation and psychological functioning; conversely, when these needs are undermined or thwarted, individuals experience need frustration, which is associated with controlled motivation, stress, and diminished well-being (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Ryan and Deci, 2020) . In this study, psychological needs are positioned as a mediating mechanism through which performance management practices influence academic outcomes.

The hypothesised relationships between performance management practices and psychological need satisfaction/frustration are informed by SDT-based organisational research, which demonstrates that workplace systems, evaluation practices, and managerial controls significantly influence employees' experience of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2021; Van Waeyenberg, Peccei and Decramer, 2022). In particular, performance systems characterised by high levels of control, surveillance, and output-driven evaluation have been shown to undermine autonomy and competence, whereas more supportive systems enhance psychological need satisfaction and intrinsic motivation.

The third component of the framework includes the outcome variables: academic staff motivation, job satisfaction, engagement, and well-being. These constructs are grounded in SDT literature, which consistently demonstrates that psychological need satisfaction is positively associated with autonomous motivation, higher job satisfaction, greater engagement, and enhanced well-being, whereas need frustration is associated with burnout, disengagement, and controlled forms of motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2020; Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2021; Howard, 2024) . Accordingly, this study positions psychological need satisfaction/frustration as a central explanatory mechanism linking performance management practices to motivational and well-being outcomes among academic staff.

In addition, the framework incorporates contextual factors, namely cultural, institutional, and governance-related influences, which are drawn from higher education literature in developing and Middle Eastern contexts. This inclusion is informed by research indicating that performance management systems do not operate in isolation but are shaped by broader institutional structures, cultural norms, and governance arrangements (Almohtaseb *et al.*, 2019; Al-Twal, Rowlans and Cook, 2019; Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, 2022) . In the context of Jordanian private universities, hierarchical governance structures, limited HRM strategic

capacity, and strong emphasis on compliance and accountability have been shown to significantly influence how performance management systems are designed and implemented.

The conceptual framework provides a theoretically grounded model that extends existing SDT applications by incorporating performance management practices and contextual governance factors. It also addresses a key gap in the literature by explaining how different dimensions of academic performance evaluation influence both the satisfaction and frustration of psychological needs, thereby shaping motivation and satisfaction in a non-Western higher education context.

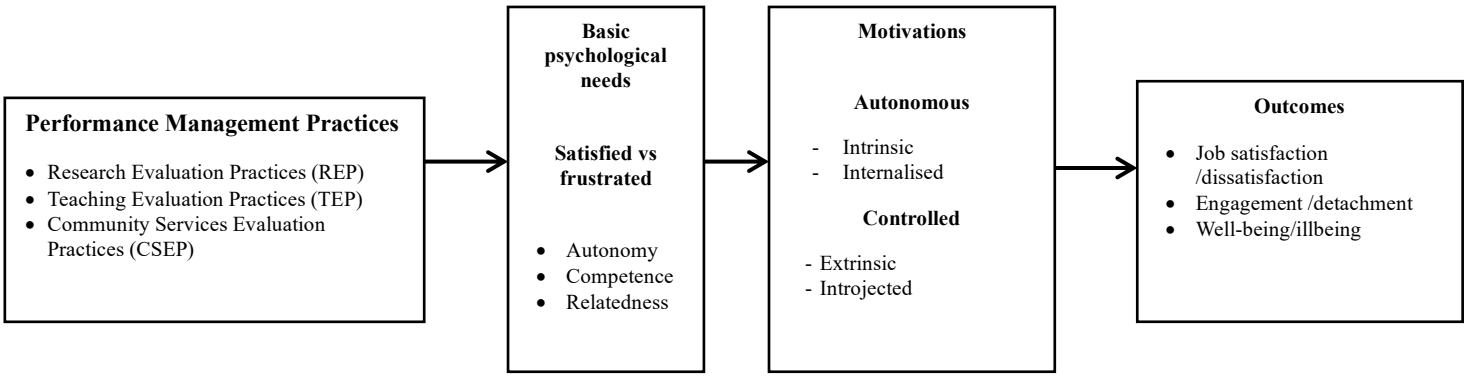


Figure 2-2: Conceptual framework for PM effects on needs satisfaction and motivation

2.5.1.4 Limitations and critiques of SDT

While SDT is widely respected and empirically supported, it is not without limitations. One common critique concerns its heavy emphasis on autonomy, which may not translate neatly across all cultural contexts. For example, Howard (2024) argues that in collectivist societies, decision-making is often influenced by familial or institutional expectations, and individuals may not value personal autonomy in the same way as in individualistic cultures. Similarly, others have noted that the theory assumes all three psychological needs are equally important in all contexts, which may not hold true universally (Robillard *et al.*, 2025).

Another critique involves the complexity of measuring motivational types, especially when distinguishing between the different forms of extrinsic motivation (e.g., identified vs. integrated regulation). Researchers like Sheldon and Prentice (2019) have questioned whether these distinctions are always meaningful in practice, particularly in qualitative studies. Additionally, SDT has been critiqued for underestimating the structural and organisational barriers, such as limited funding, job insecurity, or rigid bureaucracies, that impact motivation beyond psychological needs (Ryan, Soenens and Vansteenkiste, 2019).

Despite these critiques, SDT remains a robust and adaptable framework, especially when used flexibly and critically. By situating SDT within the specific cultural and institutional context of Jordanian private universities, this study acknowledges its limitations while leveraging its strengths to explore academic staff motivation in a performance-managed environment.

2.5.1.5 Justifications for using SDT in this study

Plenty of studies have identified psychological needs satisfaction and its positive consequences on individuals and the workplace (Hajjawi, 2012; Sheldon and Prentice, 2019; Grenier, Gagné and O'Neill, 2024; Robillard *et al.*, 2025). However, the effects on psychological needs frustration are still scarce and underdeveloped, highlighting a knowledge gap in terms of providing clear instructions for policymakers on how PM can support or frustrate needs satisfaction to support academic's motivation and well-being. Additionally, several studies on PM in the Jordanian context examined the PM indicators and their effects on organisational performance, such as evaluation indicators, employee motivation, job performance, organisational performance and factors affecting employee's satisfaction, though without

performing a theoretical integration (Barsoum and Mryyan, 2014; Almohtaseb *et al.*, 2019; Al-Twal, Rowlans and Cook, 2019; Mahmoud, Othman and Taher Mahmoud, 2020; Sweis *et al.*, 2020). Thus, the application of theory remains limited and applying a theoretical perspective such as SDT will add a meaningful contribution to the existing knowledge by aligning the PM practices that are used to assess academics' performance evaluation in universities with job performance and satisfaction via identifying the psychological needs satisfaction of autonomy, competence and relatedness.

SDT is applied as the theoretical framework in this study because it provides a robust and empirically grounded explanation of how PM practices influence academic staff motivation, satisfaction and well-being. There are traditional theories of motivations that offer valuable insights into external rewards, job characteristics or goal clarity, such as Expectancy Theory, Goal Setting Theory, Herzberg's Two Factor Theory and Self Efficacy Theory. Importantly, however, they do not discuss the internal psychological needs of individuals through which PM practices shape the quality of motivations.

Goal Setting Theory (GST), developed by Locke and Latham (1990), explains how individuals' performance is strongly influenced by setting goals that are specific, challenging, commitment, feedback and task complexity lead to higher performance than vague or easy goals (Locke and Latham, 2019). Although GST is a well-established motivational theory, it is not the most suitable framework to use in this study. Although it clarifies how goals with special characteristics influence performance behaviour (Lunenburg, 2011), it does not explain PM practices' effects on psychological needs satisfaction or frustration, which is one of the goals of this research. Furthermore, GST does not consider the quality of work environments, while this research explores how PM indicators, such as research, teaching and community service, support or frustrate autonomy, competence and relatedness and affect motivation and satisfaction. With its focus solely on goal clarity, rather than on the workplace climate, GST is inadequate for explaining negative consequences. Finally, while GST considers the negative consequences of not achieving the characteristics of goals (Locke and Latham, 2019), the theory does not explicitly consider need frustration, controlled motivation and the, negative consequences, nor does it consider job outcomes such as satisfaction and well-being.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory is not adopted in this study either. While it provides a foundational distinction between hygiene factors and motivators, it does not sufficiently explain the psychological mechanisms through which PM practices influence academic staff

motivation (Alshmemri, Shahwan-Akl and Maude, 2017). The theory lacks the ability to differentiate between autonomous and controlled forms of motivation, and it does not address the satisfaction or frustration of basic psychological needs, which are central to understanding how academics respond to institutional performance indicators. Given that academic work relies heavily on autonomy, competence, and collegial relationships, Herzberg's framework is too limited to capture the complexities of motivation within higher education settings, particularly in developing countries such as Jordan (Hur, 2018). Furthermore, the theory does not account for negative psychological outcomes, such as burnout, disengagement, or dissatisfaction, that may arise from rigid or inequitable performance practices (Rehman Ghazi, Shahzada and Khan, 2013). In contrast, SDT offers a more comprehensive and theoretically robust foundation for examining how PM practices shape academic motivation and well-being

Expectancy theory argues that motivation is considered through three main factors: expectancy, which means the belief that effort leads to performance; instrumentality, which demonstrates that performance leads to outcomes; and valence, which reflects the value placed on those outcomes (Lokman *et al.*, 2022). Although it provides a cognitive explanation of how individuals evaluate the likelihood of achieving valued outcomes, it does not offer sufficient insight into the psychological mechanisms that underpin academic motivation (Fang, 2023). The theory assumes that motivation results from rational assessments of effort, performance, and rewards; however, it does not account for the satisfaction or frustration of basic psychological needs, which are central to understanding how PM practices influence academics in higher education (Ryan and Deci, 2020; Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2021). In the context of Jordanian universities, where performance indicators may be ambiguous, externally imposed, or inequitably applied, motivation cannot be fully explained by expectancy, instrumentality and valence calculations alone. Moreover, Expectancy Theory does not distinguish between autonomous and controlled forms of motivation, nor does it address the negative outcomes, such as burnout, dissatisfaction, or disengagement, that may result from rigid or unrealistic performance demands, especially in higher education settings (Adliana *et al.*, 2023). Consequently, SDT provides a more comprehensive and contextually appropriate framework for examining how PMS affect academic motivation and well-being via the satisfaction or frustration of psychological needs.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has critically reviewed the theoretical and empirical literature on academic motivation and PMS in higher education, providing the conceptual foundation for the present study. The review began by outlining the evolution of PM practices within workplace settings, followed by the university context, noting the global shift toward more formalised and accountability-driven evaluation systems. While PMS frameworks are increasingly emphasised in HEIs worldwide, much of the existing research is situated in Western contexts, with limited attention paid to their application and consequences in developing countries, including Jordan.

PM is a continuous process of defining, identifying, and measuring academics' performance to align with institutional performance. Research on PM in universities has focused on considering organisational performance, with limited room for individuals' performance. PM in universities use three main factors to assess academics' performance, namely research, teaching and community services evaluation. However, the reliance on research evaluation practices that used by universities goes further than teaching and community evaluation practices. Hence, it is a great opportunity to look at how other factors such as teaching and community services evaluation practices affect academics' motivation and satisfaction. This chapter examined the significance of academic motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, in influencing faculty engagement, job satisfaction, and performance. Drawing on SDT, the literature review underscored that the satisfaction of three fundamental psychological needs, namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness, is central to fostering autonomous motivation and psychological well-being. This framework was used to critically assess how institutional practices, including research assessment, teaching evaluations, and community engagement requirements, can either support or frustrate these needs. Furthermore, the study explored the role of individual differences, such as age, gender, and personal values, and how these factors shape motivational orientations and career goals. For example, early-career academics may be motivated by intrinsic aspirations for recognition and research impact, while senior academics may focus more on legacy-building and administrative roles.

The study also discussed the cultural and organisational environment in which motivation is situated. In the context of Jordanian higher education, particularly within private universities,

faculty members often operate under hierarchical, bureaucratic, and output-oriented systems that may limit autonomy and reduce psychological satisfaction. A critical discussion of HRM practices revealed that in many Jordanian institutions, HRM functions remain largely operational, focusing on administrative compliance rather than strategic faculty development. The absence of comprehensive career development plans, limited support for research and teaching innovation, and a lack of transparent promotion systems were identified as key challenges that undermine motivation and institutional loyalty.

Several theoretical gaps have emerged from this review. First, several studies have investigated the effect of PM on job satisfaction. However, theoretical investigations into how PM indicators and practices contribute to job dissatisfaction through the frustration of the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness remain limited and warrant further scholarly attention. Understanding which PM indicators or practices elicit controlled forms of motivation and lead to adverse outcomes thus represents a significant gap in the existing literature. Second, most of the literature on PM in universities has relied on research and teaching evaluation practices, neglecting the important role of community service practices in assessing academics' performance; this aspect may have a significant influence on the psychological need of relatedness, which affects academic motivation and job outcomes, such as engagement, satisfaction and well-being. Therefore, this represents a valuable opportunity to examine how community service evaluation practices influence academics' job satisfaction and well-being through the satisfaction or frustration of their psychological needs. Third, most of the literature on PM and SDT has been conducted in a Western context. Therefore, it is essential to consider contextual and individual factors in this research because PM practices are not experienced uniformly by all academic staff; rather, their effects are shaped by the institutional context and personal characteristics. Differences in organisational culture, resources, and evaluation criteria, particularly within developing countries such as Jordan, significantly influence how academics perceive and respond to performance indicators. In a similar vein, individual attributes such as qualification level, academic rank, age, and gender affect the extent to which staff experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their roles. Despite this, existing research on PM and motivation in higher education frequently treats academics as a homogeneous group and pays limited attention to contextual and demographic variations. Studies integrating SDT with these factors remain scarce, particularly in Middle Eastern settings, as most studies of PM and SDT focus on the Western context. This represents an

important gap in the literature, as the motivational impact of PMS cannot be fully understood without examining how contextual and individual differences shape psychological needs satisfaction or frustration.

By addressing these gaps, the present study aims to contribute new insights into how PMS practices impact the satisfaction or frustration if psychological needs, which in turn affects academic staff's motivation in Jordanian private universities. Using SDT as the theoretical foundation, the study also explores the roles of individual characteristics and institutional culture. The findings are expected to inform both theory and practice, offering evidence-based recommendations for creating more supportive and motivation-enhancing performance systems in higher education. The following chapter outlines the methodological framework adopted to conduct this investigation, including the research design, sampling strategy, data collection, and analysis techniques.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology used to address the research questions and objectives. The chapter begins with an overview of the research questions, aim, and objectives. This is followed by the research paradigm, which contains the research philosophy, approach, strategy, and design. Then it discusses why I chose this paradigm, how I conducted the data collection process, why I selected these methods, how I chose my sample, and how I analysed the data. The chapter also addresses the ethical concerns and trustworthiness.

The research aim is to explore the influence of PM practices on academic staff's motivation, job satisfaction, and well-being in Jordanian private universities through the lens of SDT. The research objectives are:

- To explore how PM practices (research, teaching and community services) influence the satisfaction or frustration of academics' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

- To investigate how the satisfaction or frustration of these psychological needs impacts academic staff's motivation, job satisfaction, engagement, and overall well-being.

- To assess the role of the cultural, institutional, and governance-related factors shaping the design and implementation of PM systems in Jordanian private universities.

The following questions guided my research:

- How do PM practices (research, teaching and community services) influence the satisfaction or frustration of academics' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness?

- How does the satisfaction or frustration of psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness impact academic staff's motivation, job satisfaction, engagement, and overall well-being?

- How are the role of the cultural, institutional, and governance-related factors shaping the design and implementation of PMS in Jordanian private universities?

3.2 Research Paradigm

3.2.1 The constructionist ontology

Ontology is defined as the nature of reality, or, in simple words, how researchers see the world, providing insights into universal facts and truths (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019). Ontology assumptions in research shape researchers' perceptions of the existence of reality or truth, delineating the roles of humans and social actors as independent and external entities (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019). The main perspective behind ontology is to comprehend reality from diverse perspectives or ontological positions, guiding researchers in their investigative pursuits. According to Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019), two prevalent ontological positions offer assumptions guiding researchers in understanding the nature of truth and reality: objectivism and constructionism.

Objectivism posits that humans and social actors exist independently of social phenomena and their meanings; organisations possess an external reality distinct from researchers studying them or individuals inhabiting them (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). It contends that organisations act as constraining forces, impacting their members through the dissemination and application of mission, policies, regulations, and instructions, limiting the freedom of expression and experience sharing. In contrast, constructivism asserts that organisations are products of human creation, and social phenomena and their meanings evolve through the actions of social actors (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019). Individuals in this paradigm gain consciousness and understanding through personal engagement within their living environment (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Creswell (2020) maintains that constructionism is evident when individuals seek to comprehend their living and working environments, producing subjective meanings conducive to specific goals. Participants, through their

discoveries and conclusions, contribute to the generation of new knowledge beneficial to academia and authors. Therefore, a detailed examination of the situation, considering sociocultural, geographical, and historical contexts, is crucial to understanding how realities are perceived. Researchers in this paradigm embrace various narratives, perspectives, and anecdotes that profoundly influence numerous social realities. Social constructionist research aligns with nominalist perspectives, asserting that facts and truths are human-generated, contrasting with the notion that "a single fact or truth exists" (Hammersley, 2006).

As a problem-solving researcher and the one who posits that the world's dynamics are contingent on contextual, cultural, and geographical factors, constructionism emerges as the most pertinent ontological position for my research. This orientation facilitates an in-depth comprehension of academic employees' opinions and lived experiences concerning the effectiveness and impact of PMS in private universities in Jordan by examining how PM practices influence the satisfaction or frustration of the psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness, which turn impacts job motivation, engagement and well-being. My assumption commences with the premise that academic staff's motivations lack a singular truth or fact, relying instead on the knowledge generated and uncovered by individuals and humans. In this perspective, reality is construed socially rather than being objectively and universally true. Therefore, my assumption asserts that there are multiple realities that people construct through their social science interactions.

The advantage of adopting a constructionist position in my research lies in its ability to grant academic employees the right to express, elucidate, and provide a clear perspective on how PM practices in higher educational settings influence job motivation, engagement and well-being through the satisfaction or frustration of autonomy, competence and relatedness. As mentioned before, plenty of studies have identified the influence of practices on job satisfaction. However, discovering the influence of PM on job dissatisfaction is still needed and paramount. Therefore, meeting individuals in the field to explore this phenomenon will not only help to fill this knowledge gap, but it will also inform policymakers on PM policies in higher education settings, which have a significant impact on job motivation, engagement and well-being. This is just one of the advantages.

The second one is that the absence of a pre-existing relationship between the researcher and the participants enhances the realism and effectiveness of the research (Bell, Bryman and Harley 2019). The lack of a prior relationship between the researcher and the participants was

suitable for obtaining the best possible answers, which contributed to the achievement of the research objectives. Meeting participants from a variety of positions from three different private universities are considered the third advantage of using constructionism ontological position. Participants represented diverse positions across three distinct private universities, encompassing roles such as professor, reader, senior lecturer, and lecturer. This diversity contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the issue and facilitates the formulation of valuable solutions, ultimately contributing to knowledge generation grounded in this specific context (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Finally, conducting the research by myself, from formulating the interview questions to presenting the results, is considered another advantage of the constructionist position. This approach enabled me to actively listen, engage in discussions, learn, and reflect on participants' perspectives, thereby significantly influencing the data collection and knowledge generation processes (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019)

An objectivist ontological position is deemed inappropriate in this context due to its assertion that facts are external and universally existent, independent of social factors (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2017). This stance contradicts the researcher's beliefs in this research, as exploring the factors that contribute to academic employee performance, satisfaction, and motivation should be explored through the experiences and opinions of individuals who are in the context and the location.

3.2.2 The interpretivist epistemology

While ontology delves into the pursuit of truth or fact, epistemology explores how the knowledge of that truth or fact can be generated. In other words, epistemology attempts to understand what it means to know (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). The primary role of epistemology is to cultivate effective understanding of truth or reality, making it a pivotal component in guiding and shaping business research endeavours (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) delineate two fundamental epistemological positions crucial for conducting social science research: positivism and interpretivism.

Positivism is an epistemological stance that seeks to apply principles from the natural sciences to the study of reality. This perspective posits that reality is singular and external, emphasising the belief that causal explanations and predictions contribute meaningfully. Researchers, or scientists, as they prefer to be addressed, within this paradigm concentrate on measuring and

observing existing theories to formulate hypotheses, aiming to demonstrate the authenticity of natural phenomena (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Furthermore, positivists advocate for researchers to maintain distance from the research process to mitigate data bias, aligning with the law of generalisation, ultimately yielding objective rather than subjective value (Creswell, 2020). In this paradigm, researchers adopt a wholly detached stance, refraining from active involvement during the research process (Creswell, 2020). On the other hand, interpretivists look at and explore one subject in depth, as their main purpose is to participate and interact in the actual research. Additionally, interpretivists must be consistent with the research since they are mainly responsible for designing the research, gathering and analysing data, and handling all the processes of completing their own research. There is no role for generalisation here, as the outcomes and findings will only be used for their subjective value (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

Regarding my research, the most fitting epistemological position is interpretivism. My assumption originates from the premise that data collected from participants in private universities in Jordan will not only contribute to the generation of new knowledge but will also serve as the foundation for constructing theory. In addition, I assume that knowledge is created by people and humans instead of existing in an external world. For example, examining academic staff in Jordan provides an opportunity to generate new knowledge regarding the impact of PM indicators on the satisfaction or frustration of basic psychological needs, namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This, in turn, contributes to a deeper theoretical understanding of how the fulfilment of these needs influences motivation within the context of private Jordanian universities. Therefore, considering interpretivism in this case is paramount.

The transformation, from collecting data from specific individuals in a particular field to knowledge development, aligns with the interpretivist epistemological assumption, which aligns with my philosophy and perspective. The crux here lies in comprehending the participants' social world, given the subjective nature of my research, and considering another aspect, which is the active role played by the researcher in participating and interacting throughout the design, data collection, analysis, and presentation of the results.

The epistemological position of positivism would not be suitable in this context. Positivists contend that facts are singular and only one, i.e., this is a fact regardless of the context and the culture. This is the opposite of my opinion, where facts exist everywhere and can be different

from one place to another. Moreover, knowledge generation in positivist research relies on hypotheses that can be tested between at least two variables, a methodology challenging to implement in research settings that necessitates capturing individuals' opinions and experiences regarding the factors that contribute to academic employees' performance, satisfaction, and motivation (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019). Therefore, there is a need to explore current PM practices' effects on psychological needs of satisfaction or frustration, which in turn has an impact on the motivations, engagement and well-being of academic employees in private universities in Jordan. Additionally, there is a need to explore the cultural, institutional and demographic factors that shape the design of PM and its effects on the satisfaction or frustration of autonomy, competence and relatedness, which impact job motivation, engagement and well-being in higher education settings. Exploring academic staff's motivations will also result in impacting individual performance, which will also be paramount to enhance the higher education reputation and the educational outcomes. Hence, meeting people from the field from different positions, such as professors, readers, senior lecturers, and lecturers, is the best way to generate that new knowledge and make contributions to the factors that contribute to academic employee performance, satisfaction, and motivation.

3.2.3 Inductive approach

Hyde defined the inductive approach as "a theory-building process, starting with observations of specific instances and seeking to establish generalisations about the phenomenon under investigation" (2000:83). As a result of data analysis, a theory, often expressed as a conceptual framework, will emerge and be developed, and this is the critical point behind the inductive approach (Creswell, 2020). The inductive approach enables the researcher to investigate every single angle within the area of PMS and motivations in higher education in Jordan. The advantages of using this approach include providing a clear understanding of the context. Research literature supports this view, indicating that if researchers want to use the inductive approach in their research, they should have excellent knowledge about the subject and the context (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023). Another advantage of this approach is its alignment with the qualitative strategy tool, as opinions from different people with diverse perspectives contribute to adding new knowledge (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019). This also aligns with my philosophy guiding this research, as mentioned before.

Deduction is more commonly used in scientific research, where a gap in the literature is identified, and hypotheses are formulated based on existing theories (Creswell, 2020). These testable theories lead to observations or results that address the knowledge gap or contribute to theoretical understanding. In my research, deduction is not suitable because knowledge will be generated from human experiences, and theory will be built from the collected data on the factors that contribute to academic employees' performance, satisfaction, and motivation. In other words, we start with a broader perspective and move to specific details. In deduction, the theory must be measured initially, as hypotheses emerge. Therefore, at least two variables should be measured to examine the effect of one on the other (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023). This perspective contradicts the research philosophy and approach used in this research, making the inductive method the most appropriate for exploring the effectiveness and impact of PM practices on the psychological needs of satisfaction or frustration, which impact motivation, engagement and well-being in Jordanian private universities. Figure 3-1 below demonstrates a summary of the differences between inductive and deductive approaches.

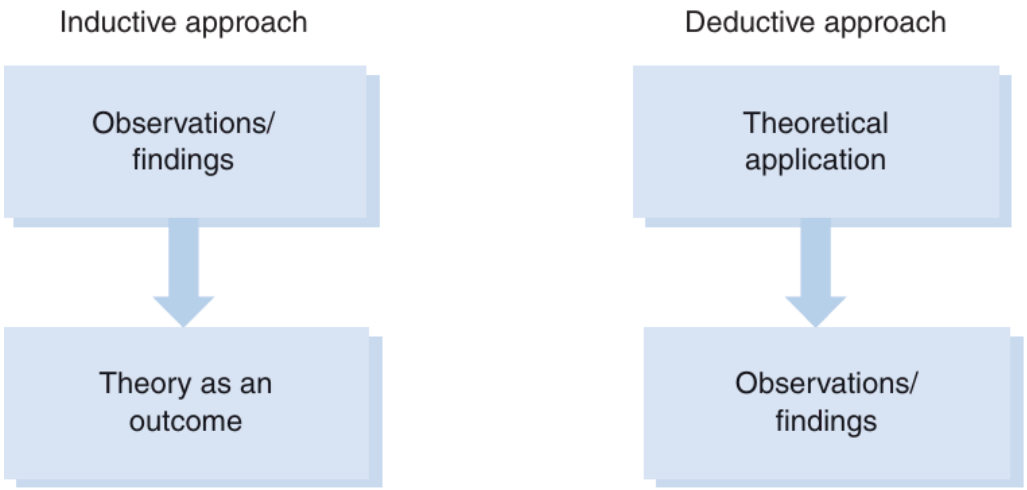


Figure 3-1:Differences between inductive and deductive research

Source: (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019)

3.2.4 Qualitative strategy

A researcher's ontological and epistemological perspectives affect the choice of methodology, which influences the data collection methods chosen in this research (Collis and Hussey, 2021). I chose to conduct a qualitative case study. Qualitative methodology enables a deep understanding and interpretation of individual differences, emotions, and perspectives, and it is appropriate for showing in detail why and how things happen. Simply put, qualitative research means explaining "why it happened" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). The importance of qualitative research lies in obtaining an accurate understanding of people's experiences, perceptions, and behaviours, and the meanings they attach to them (Hammersley and Traianou, 2014). Qualitative research provides rich and detailed information and insights because the researcher can connect with individuals in the context (Creswell, 2020). Qualitative strategy helps me exploring how PM practices used in universities influence academics' job motivation, engagement and well-being through the satisfaction or frustration of autonomy, competence and relatedness in Jordanian private universities. I thus interviewed academic employees from three different Jordanian private universities, exploring the effect of research, teaching, and community service evaluation practices on academics' psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness as well as their motivations. The qualitative strategy also helped me meet individuals to listen to their lived experiences about the effect of community services on relatedness, which is important for affecting job motivation, engagement and well-being (Aspers and Corte, 2019). The individuals in the study were from different levels in the universities, i.e. professors, readers, senior lecturers, and lecturers from three different private universities (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023). Qualitative research allows the researcher to be an active participant in all research processes, from preparing questions to finding appropriate participants, collecting data, and finally analysing and presenting the data. Finally, this method is used to solve practical problems that occur in public and private institutions at a specific and precise level. Hence, qualitative research looks more deeply at why and how people interact and reflect as they do (Creswell, 2020).

It is important to note that qualitative research typically involves a smaller and more detailed population than quantitative studies, limiting data generalisation (Bryman, 2012). The focus in qualitative data is not on generalising the findings but on obtaining detailed and specific information relevant to the effective assessment of academic performance, motivation, and the impact of self-determination. Qualitative researchers should be skilled at analysing and

presenting results using words, pictures, and graphics rather than relying solely on numbers and statistics (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

On the other hand, quantitative or explanatory research is based on assumptions about human behaviour, or what are known as social facts (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019); researchers in this field believe that the truth of a given fact is the same regardless of location, time, culture, and background (Crotty, 1998). Data here are collected by using numerous quantitative approaches, such as questionnaires, structured interviews, structured observations, experiments, quasi-experiments, existing statistical records (secondary data) and standardised tests or scales. There is a generalisation here in the quantitative data wherein the data are not restricted to a particular group of individuals (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2017). Moreover, it is vital here that researchers have arithmetic skills and are able to work with numbers, as data analysis is conducted through statistics, tables, figures, and graphs. This strategy also supports the necessity of generalising to all segments and not settling for a small sample size in order to obtain the greatest number of opinions possible.

Conducting quantitative research offers numerous benefits. First, the researcher is objective and removed from the subjects. This aspect favourably affects the second advantage, which is validity and reliability, as researchers note that the standard of trustworthiness is quite high, and thus the study results positively impact the research objectives (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Thirdly, flexibility in data processing is also regarded as a strength, particularly when examining comparative and statistical analyses as well as data repetition (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019). Finally, scholars and researchers who are more interested in theoretical than in practical research use this approach to fill a knowledge gap rather than solve an empirical problem (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019) Nevertheless, there are many points that need to be considered when using this method. Not getting enough answers is one of the challenges, as many respondents do not take the questionnaire seriously, and they fill in their answers randomly. This negatively affects the data reliability when results are presented (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019). Furthermore, Crotty (1998) criticised this method, as responses here are not deep data and comprehensive insights; finally, the measurement of behaviour, cognition, and effect can also be a challenge, as these aspects do not promote relevant interpretations by humans.

Regarding my research, the results of "what" are incomplete to achieve my research aim, which is to explore how PM practices (research, teaching and community) influence job motivation, engagement and well-being through the satisfaction or frustration of autonomy, competence and relatedness needs in private universities in Jordan. This means that knowing in-depth insights and people's interpretations to answer the "how" and "why" by exploring, analysing, and listening to different opinions and emotions regarding academic employees' satisfaction and motivation is paramount to meet the research's objectives. Qualitative research allows flexibility and an in-depth exploration via probing questions, queries for more clarification, the emergence of unexpected themes, and adaptation based on participants' responses (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019). Another reason for choosing qualitative research is that it is relevant to the theory-building process and knowledge development. Quantitative methods measure an existing theory, whereby new knowledge is added to the existing theory; this cannot happen here, as I am aiming to generate a new knowledge or a framework as a result of the participants' findings in regard to the factors that contribute to academic employee performance, satisfaction, and motivation in the Jordanian higher education sector (Collis and Hussey, 2021).

My study examines how PM practices influence academics' job motivation, engagement and well-being through determining the satisfaction or frustration of their autonomy, competence and relatedness needs. Qualitative data hereby helped me to extend the theory of SDT. Most of the research surrounding this theory concerns job satisfaction. Qualitative data helped me to explore the effects of job dissatisfaction and its consequences. Moreover, it also helped me understand how community service evaluation practice, which is an unexplored area in the field, supports or undermines needs satisfaction in a collectivist culture such as Jordan. Another major reason for choosing qualitative research is to know the process, not just the outcomes, which is essential for understanding the effects of PM on needs satisfaction or frustration, which impacts motivation, engagement and well-being.

Furthermore, I am studying a context where PM is not well developed, and there are very few studies exploring how PM practices influence job dissatisfaction, which may have negative consequences. When research is unexplored or poorly understood, a qualitative method is recommended because it can enable discovery, exploration and theory building (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, 2023). Another key justification for adopting a qualitative approach

is its suitability for exploring power dynamics, emotions, and sensitive issues within organisational settings. In the context of Jordanian higher education, academic staff often experience dissatisfaction with existing evaluation practices and face considerable pressure related to research and teaching indicators (Creswell, 2014). These conditions can create reluctance or fear among participants to express their views openly through surveys or structured interviews, where responses are constrained, and anonymity may feel uncertain. Qualitative semi-structured interviews, by contrast, offer a safe and confidential environment in which participants can articulate their experiences, concerns, and emotional responses more freely. This openness is essential for generating rich, authentic insights that align with the study's objectives and enable a deeper understanding of how PM practices influence the satisfaction or frustration of psychological needs.

Secondary data or numerical statistics are insufficient for examining how PM practices influence job motivation and well-being through the satisfaction or frustration of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs. This is due to several substantive reasons. First, quantitative data cannot adequately capture the lived experiences of academic staff, as these experiences involve emotions, subjective interpretations, internal motivational processes, and personal meanings. Such psychological mechanisms require depth and contextual sensitivity that numerical measures alone cannot provide. Second, the influence of demographic, institutional, individual, and cultural factors and elements that are particularly salient in the under-researched context of Jordanian private universities cannot be fully explored through quantitative methods. These contextual nuances are essential for addressing existing gaps in the literature. Moreover, the study seeks to extend knowledge on PM in higher education and contribute to the theoretical development of SDT. Quantitative methods are primarily deductive, relying on established theories and predefined variables to test relationships. In contrast, this research requires an exploratory and interpretive approach to generate new insights, making qualitative methodology a more suitable choice. Figure 3-2 provides a summary of the research process adopted in this study, outlining the process I followed as a researcher from reading the literature review through to the final stage in discussion and

conclusion.

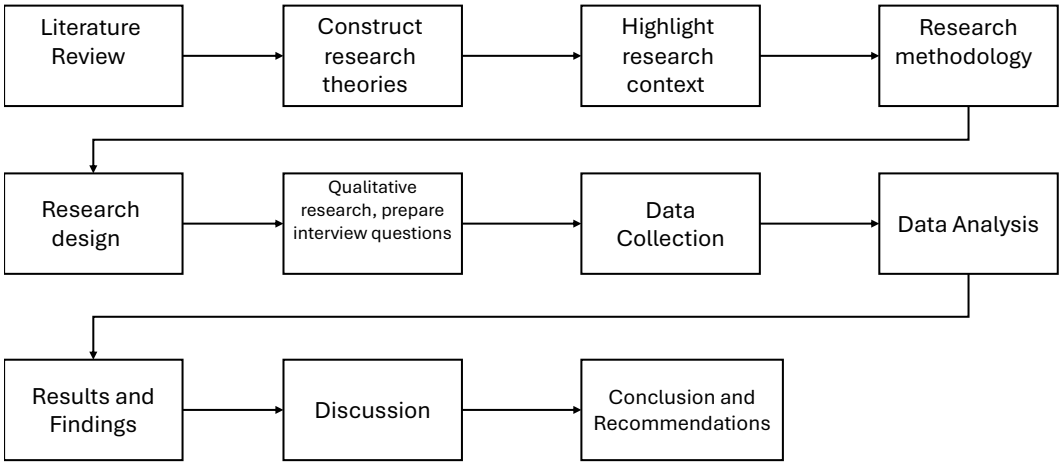


Figure 3-2: The research process

3.3 Population and Sampling

3.3.1 The population

I conducted my research in the private university sector in Jordan, choosing three universities: X, Y and Z. These are kept anonymised for confidentiality reasons. The justifications for choosing the private sector and those private universities are discussed further here.

The private university sector was selected for this study for several key reasons. First, private universities in Jordan operate under distinctive PM structures shaped by competitive market pressures. These institutions are required to maintain strong global rankings, enhance their reputations, and attract higher levels of student enrolment to secure financial sustainability (Turgay and Alhawamdeh, 2013; Mah'd, 2014). Such conditions create an environment in which PM practices are more rigorously implemented and closely monitored than in the public sector. Furthermore, the reliance on contract-based employment arrangements in private universities intensifies the role of PM. Academic staff are frequently required to meet specific

research output targets – often a predetermined number of publications annually – as a condition for contract renewal (Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, 2022). This places considerable pressure on academics to maintain high levels of performance across both teaching and research domains.

These structural conditions render PM practices more central, visible, and consequential in private universities compared to public institutions, where promotion, appraisal, and incentive systems tend to be more bureaucratic and stable (Sułkowski *et al.*, 2020; Sharaf-Addin and Fazel, 2021). In the public sector, academic staff enjoy greater job security and cannot be easily dismissed under Ministry of Higher Education regulations, regardless of their performance (Almohtaseb *et al.*, 2019). As a result, the performance-driven nature of private universities provides a more suitable and dynamic context for examining the influence of PM practices on academic staff motivation, satisfaction, and well-being.

The second reason for focusing on the private university sector is that this research addresses a significantly under-researched context. The existing literature indicates a scarcity of studies examining PM practices within private universities in Jordan, despite the sector's growing importance to the country's economic and social development (Al-Ashqar, 2017; Zulkifly *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, the broader literature on PM in higher education, both globally and within Jordan, has predominantly concentrated on the relationship between PM, academic staff motivation, and job satisfaction. In contrast, the alignment between PM practices and the frustration or satisfaction of basic psychological needs, as conceptualised by SDT, remains underdeveloped and requires further investigation, as mentioned before in the research gaps section. Additionally, qualitative research exploring academic staff's lived experiences, emotions, and perceptions of PM in Jordanian private universities remains limited. Notably, scholars such as Al-Twal et al. (2019) and Ryan and Deci (2020a) have highlighted the need for deeper qualitative insights into how comprehensive PM systems influence the satisfaction or frustration of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and how these dynamics subsequently affect motivation, engagement, and well-being. This gap further reinforces the importance of adopting this context as the focus of the present study.

The third major reason for selecting the private higher education sector is the diversity of institutional practices found within private universities in Jordan. These institutions vary considerably in their organisational cultures, performance evaluation mechanisms, quality assurance processes, and reward and promotion systems (Melo and Figueiredo, 2020). Such

diversity provides an opportunity to generate richer and more comprehensive data, as it allows for the comparison of experiences across different institutional settings and facilitates the identification of both common patterns and distinctive differences (Hashemi Toroghi, Denney and Simpson, 2024). This variability strengthens the analytical depth of the study and enhances its potential to produce meaningful insights. Taken together, these considerations constitute the three principal reasons for focusing on the private university sector rather than the public one.

3.3.1.1 Selection of participating universities

The selection of participating universities followed a structured and purposeful process aligned with the research objectives. Following ethical approval from Brunel University London, formal permission was obtained from the Jordanian Ministry of Higher Education to access academic staff in private universities. Upon approval, the Ministry circulated the research invitation to all 18 private universities in Jordan. Out of these institutions, six universities expressed willingness to participate and granted access for data collection.

As the study only required three universities, a set of selection criteria was developed to identify the most appropriate institutions for the research. Four main indicators guided the selection process.

The first indicator was institutional ranking and reputation. Universities with strong local and international rankings were prioritised because they were more likely to employ academic staff actively engaged in research and teaching excellence. Selecting highly ranked universities was considered important for exploring performance management practices within institutions recognised for their academic standards and competitiveness.

The second indicator was the educational background of academic staff, particularly the country from which they obtained their qualifications. Universities employing academics who graduated from both Western and Arab institutions were considered appropriate because these participants were expected to possess broader knowledge and comparative experiences of performance management practices in different cultural and educational contexts. Additionally, academics graduated from the west have the ability to speak both languages as the interviews conducted in both Arabic and English. This was particularly valuable for examining performance management practices in a non-Western environment such as Jordan.

The third indicator was institutional size. The study targeted large private universities with diverse academic programmes and high student enrolment numbers. These universities generally offered a wider range of disciplines and more developed organisational structures relevant to the study. The selected universities each had approximately 10,000 enrolled students , representing a significant proportion of the approximately 70,000 students currently enrolled in private universities in Jordan (Alshdiefat *et al.*, 2024)

The final indicator was accessibility and feasibility. Existing professional and social connections within some universities facilitated communication, access, and the organisation of interviews with academic staff and administrators. This practical consideration supported the smooth implementation of the data collection process and improved participant accessibility.

These standards ensured that the selected universities were appropriate, information-rich cases capable of providing relevant insights into performance management practices, academic motivation, and job satisfaction in Jordanian private universities.

3.3.2 The sample

After official approvals were obtained from various parties, the next step was to select the participant sample representing the broader community, known as the sample. Data were collected from three different private universities in Jordan.

Interviewing every individual in these three private universities was impractical for addressing the research question. Therefore, a small sample was selected to represent the larger population. Sampling is crucial because researchers often lack the time and resources to analyse the entire population, and a small sample is sufficient (Collis and Hussey, 2021). Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to identify academic staff who were most likely to provide valuable information for addressing the research questions. Purposive sampling selects participants based on their qualities, life experiences, and knowledge. In other words, the researcher makes contact for a specific purpose. Snowball sampling is a non-probability technique used when reaching out to people suggested by interviewees (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019). The next paragraph discusses how these two sampling methods were used to select participants.

After obtaining ethical approval from my university, the three targeted private universities advised me to secure preliminary approval from the Ministry of Higher Education. This requirement follows the official protocol in Jordanian universities for collecting data from employees. Once the permission was granted, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) issued an official electronic communication to private universities in Jordan. This communication confirmed the Ministry's support for the research and facilitated access to academic staff and administrative units, thereby ensuring a smooth data collection process.

The designated person who gave me the preliminary research at each university facilitated access by emailing doctors and professors with extensive knowledge, experience, and publication records from different institutions. In these communications, I was introduced as a doctoral researcher at a UK university seeking insights into PM and its influence on job satisfaction and motivation. The invited professors, representing different colleges, expressed their willingness to participate, and interview dates were arranged via Microsoft Teams. In total, eight participants were purposively recruited, based on recommendations from the administrative representatives of the targeted universities. It is noteworthy that I verified the academics' profiles prior to arranging interview dates and times to ensure the accuracy of the information provided.

The eight participants who were chosen purposively and interviewed in the first stage served as my initial contacts, and they introduced me to other volunteer participants with substantial ability and valuable knowledge by sending emails to colleagues within and outside their departments. Following the completion of each interview, participants were asked to nominate colleagues or acquaintances who might also be suitable for the study. This process of referral was used to identify subsequent participants, consistent with the snowball sampling technique, which is commonly employed in qualitative research to access participants within specific social or professional networks.

Fifteen staff from those three private universities contacted me and expressed interest in participating, and based on that, dates and times were arranged to start handling the interviews online via MS Teams, which is discussed later in more detail in the section covering the online interviews. This process was repeated until saturation was reached. The target number of interviews was set between 30 and 40, an appropriate range for case study research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2017). Ultimately, 35 participants were interviewed, including those involved in the pilot studies. This was enough for data saturation, wherein no additional

insights, themes, concepts and ideas could be added to my analysis. In other words, when the patterns started to repeat, I realised that 35 interviews, including the pilot, was enough. This is how the rest of the participants were chosen based on the snowball sampling technique.

Snowball sampling offered several advantages in my research. First, it helped me find respondents and volunteers. Second, the lack of a pre-existing relationship between the researcher and the participants created an absence of power, allowing for the natural and comfortable expression of emotions and life experiences during the interviews (Hammersley and Traianou, 2014). The flexibility of conducting online interviews encouraged participants to share their opinions and perspectives with me comfortably, as they were not constrained by time. On the other hand, establishing initial contact was challenging, as it required reaching out to the individuals and discussing the research's underlying idea and the importance of their participation. Interpretivists must ensure access to the "pyramid head", positively impacting subsequent procedures (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). This means that knowing the main point of contact, i.e. the one who will expand the snowball sample, is paramount to the researcher. And, in my case, it took significant time to reach them, but the later procedures were easier to conduct and handle. Another challenge with snowball sampling was the time required to reach all participants, especially during the summer when many staff and academics were on holiday, which delayed the expected completion time for data collection (Creswell, 2020). Table 3-1 summarises the sampling techniques used for this research.

Sampling Techniques		
Non-Probability	Purposive Sampling (Eight participants)	Snowball Sampling (Twenty-two participants)
Categories of participants	Academics and staff from the researcher's previous contacts and networking.	Volunteers based on participants' recommendations

Table 3-1: Sampling Techniques

3.3.3 The pilot study

The pilot study helped me to identify the potential problems before starting the data collection process, allowing me to adjust the wording of some of the questions for better understanding (Hammersley and Traianou, 2014). It also helped me to test the time required for the interviews, ensuring that the number of questions was appropriate for the scheduled time. I conducted pilot interviews with five colleagues and academic staff in the UK both face to face and online via Ms. Teams in June 2023. Despite reading books and articles about conducting interviews, the practical experience was quite different, and I learned many valuable lessons. After the pilot, I realised I had repeated some questions in different ways. I also found that the planned interview time was too long, so I had to combine or eliminate questions to ensure that the participants finished on time. Additionally, I discovered that some of my questions were not clear to the interviewees, so I rephrased them in a simpler way. For example, one of the questions was "How is your performance evaluated in the university?" and the participants in the pilot kept asking for clarification. This led me to change the question to "Can you describe the process of performance evaluation in your university?" Overall, I aimed to avoid these mistakes to ensure clarity throughout the interviews.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

In this section, I present and discuss the tools used to collect my data. I will start with the procedures that I made to gain the ethical approvals from my university and the concerned universities. Followed by the details of the semi-structured interview process from the beginning to the end.

3.4.1 Research ethics approval process

I applied to the Brunel Research Ethics Online (BREO), which is required for researchers using primary data collection methods. The application included supporting documents, such as the participant information sheet (PIS) and consent form (CF). These forms provided the participants with a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives, the data retention process, and the assurance of complete confidentiality for all collected information. All

participants signed the consent form before the interview to ensure their awareness of the necessary details.

After obtaining BREO approval in July 2023, additional approvals were required from the Jordanian university administrations. I then contacted the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHR) to request a formal approval that would facilitate my data collection process in the universities. Upon approval in July 2023, MOHR informed me that private universities would be in contact with me shortly. I then set standards to choose the best possible private universities, and X, Y and Z we selected based on the standards mentioned above. I then started my initial communication with initial contacts at these universities to request permission for interviews. The university administrations then granted formal approval, as evidenced by the appended official correspondence. Subsequently, I scheduled interview sessions via Microsoft Teams by sending invitations to participate. Following that, I contacted the eight people who were selected purposively to start conducting the interviews with them so, dates and times were arranged via Ms teams and upon finishing the interview, they nominated their colleagues and staff by giving me their names and contact details. So, dates and times were arranged with the nominated people, and the interviews were conducted smoothly. I followed the same strategy until I reached saturation.

3.4.2 Interviews process

According to Braun and Clarke (2013), interviews are formal discussions in which participants can share their experiences and ideas regarding a certain subject. Respondents can share their own ideas, live experiences, attitudes, values, and practical experiments through dialogue and open conversation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2017). I conducted the interviews with each participant individually to obtain open views of their perspectives and experiences. In my research, the semi-structured interview format allowed the participants to share their thoughts and experiences about the influence of their universities' PM practices, such as research evaluation, teaching evaluation, and community service evaluations, on their psychological needs of satisfaction as well as their motivations. It also helped me to explore the ways of motivating them during their job and, finally, to investigate how self-determination affects academic performance, which may positively affect their well-being.

I began my interviews by asking closed-ended demographic questions to classify participants, specifying their positions, years of experience, the university they are working at, and their age

and gender. The second part focused on the current PMS in private universities in Jordan, including the design, implementation, main issues, and ways of improvement. The third part was more relevant to the effects of autonomy, competence, and relatedness on academics' motivation and performance, while the fourth part discussed the influence of teaching and research goals on academics' motivation and performance. The subsequent part focused on the ways of motivating academic staff, and finally, the last part focused on the role of HRM on academics' motivation and satisfaction (see Appendix 6). Figure 3-3 below demonstrates the interview procedures that I followed before conducting the interviews.

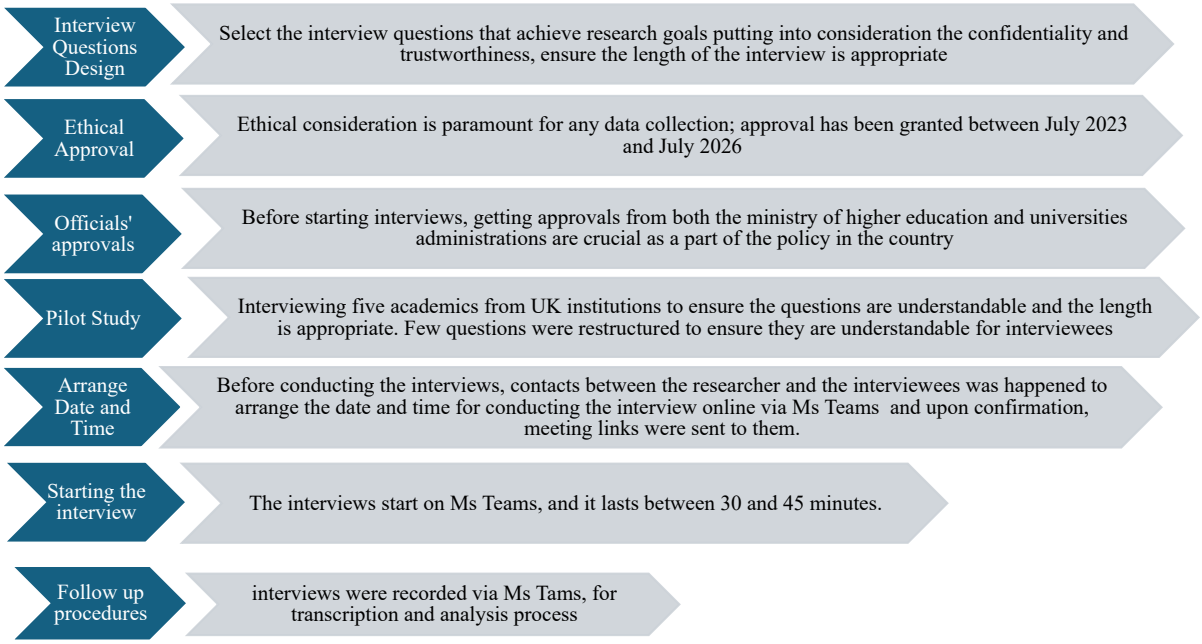


Figure 3-3: Interview process

3.4.3 Online semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interview approach allowed me to adapt and develop questions based on participants' responses. For instance, in the first couple of interviews, I asked the participants about the performance evaluation system in their universities. They did not mention any role for the HR department in the evaluation process; this information interested me, and I was able to modify the questions and ask the remaining participants about the role of HR in the

evaluation process and how HR deals with academics' development, as the PM function is considered one of the main HR functions.

The semi-structured interviews can be held either face-to-face or online. In my case, all 30 interviews were conducted online using Microsoft Teams. I contacted all the participants via email to arrange the dates and times. The participants were deans, academics, and leaders from three different private universities in Jordan, namely X, Y, and Z universities. The interviews were conducted between July and October 2023. The shortest interview lasted 30 minutes, the longest was 90 minutes, and the average was 60 minutes.

Academic leaders and deans were included in the study because of their central role in the design, implementation, and monitoring of performance management practices within universities. Deans and academic leaders are directly involved in institutional decision-making processes related to performance evaluation, research expectations, teaching quality, promotions, contract renewals, and workload allocation according to the researcher's previous knowledge about the PM poicy in universities in Jordan. Consequently, their perspectives were considered essential for developing a comprehensive understanding of how performance management systems are structured and applied within Jordanian private universities.

Furthermore, interviewing leaders and deans enabled the study to capture both managerial and employee perspectives, thereby strengthening the depth and credibility of the findings through data triangulation. While academic staff provided insights into how performance management practices influence their motivation, satisfaction, and well-being, leaders and deans offered institutional and strategic perspectives regarding the objectives, challenges, and implementation processes associated with these practices. Their inclusion therefore contributed to a more holistic understanding of the relationship between performance management systems and academic staff experiences within the higher education context.

The interviews were conducted in both Arabic and English Interchangeably as this was more comfortable for them to express their feelings and share their experiences (Khatib, 2014). During the interviews, notes were taken using pens and paper in addition to the original audio and video recording in Microsoft Teams; all of these records were taken to enhance the data's accuracy and to obtain plenty of data (Creswell, 2020). All the participants viewed the participant information sheets and signed the consent forms. All the interviews were recorded

and transcribed in Arabic, then translated into English using Trint software, and then transcribed into English to ensure the data were ready for analysis. Moreover, I saved all the data on my personal computer and backed it up in the university's OneDrive, and it will be deleted upon graduation.

Although all the interviews were conducted online, all of them were interactive, engaged, and rich in information and practical cases about the effects of PM practices on the psychological needs of satisfaction and motivation in Jordanian private universities. The reasons behind conducting the interviews online are, one, the distance between the researcher and the participants; it was challenging to travel back to Jordan and conduct face-to-face interviews, especially during the summer when many academics were away or on holiday. Secondly, the ease of connecting from any location encouraged participants to participate in my interviews even during their holidays, as they only needed a device and internet (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023). Finally, the ability to record and transcribe data benefited me, especially in the transcription process, where I listened to each interview more than once to better understand the data analysis process for extracting the themes, codes, and ideas (Creswell, 2014).

While online semi-structured interviews were the most appropriate method for data collection in my research, I faced some drawbacks. One was the lack of one answer for the same question, as participants from the same university identified the PMS differently, creating some doubts for me as the researcher (Collis and Hussey, 2021). So, I had to reformulate the question in another way to ensure that they understood it clearly and answered it properly. Another drawback was the time-consuming nature; as some participants gave more time and weight to some questions over others, they felt more comfortable expressing their feelings for some sections over other parts, so sometimes, I had to stop them in a polite way to move on to the next point to ensure that the interview finished on time (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019).

To protect the anonymity of the participants, pseudonyms were assigned to all, and any specific information that could identify them was replaced with hashtags in the transcripts. Table 3-2 below demonstrates the pseudonyms of all the participants from the three different universities, supported with some demographic information (Creswell, 2014). Appendix 9 below illustrates a full example of anonymous interview transcripts for one of the participants.

3.4.4 Disciplinary and Demographic Considerations

The selection of participants' academic specialisations was not predetermined as a formal sampling criterion. Instead, I relied primarily on purposive and snowball sampling techniques facilitated through my existing professional contacts within the selected universities. The eight participants I initially contacted were affiliated with three main academic colleges: Business, Information Technology, and Design and Arts. Following each interview, participants recommended colleagues from their respective colleges and departments who met the study criteria and were willing to participate in the research. As a result, the sample expanded organically across different departments within these academic areas through the snowball sampling process.

I intentionally focused on humanities and technology-related disciplines rather than applied medical and health sciences colleges. This decision was made because performance evaluation systems within disciplines such as Medicine, Pharmacy, and Health Sciences are often heavily influenced by clinical outcomes, laboratory-based assessments, and professional practice standards, which differ substantially from the evaluation practices applied within humanities and technology disciplines. Excluding these applied disciplines helped me maintain greater contextual consistency when examining performance management practices related to teaching, research productivity, and institutional evaluation processes.

However, one participant was affiliated with the College of Pharmacy. I considered the inclusion of this participant appropriate because her role was situated within the university's Quality Management and Evaluation Department, where she was directly involved in institutional decision-making processes concerning performance evaluation policies and quality assurance practices. Therefore, her contribution provided valuable institutional and managerial insights relevant to the objectives of this study.

Similarly, demographic characteristics such as gender and age were not used as predetermined selection criteria during the sampling process. Nevertheless, the final sample reflected a relatively balanced gender distribution, with approximately 55% male and 45% female participants. I considered this balance beneficial, as it contributed to the diversity of perspectives captured during the interviews and reduced the likelihood of substantial gender bias within the findings. Furthermore, participants represented different age groups and

academic experiences, which enhanced the richness, transparency, and depth of the qualitative data collected.

Pseudonyms for the participants	**Age**	**Gender**	**Position**	**Qualification**	**Country of Qualification**	**University**
Ahmed	35-44	Male	Assistant Professor in Finance and Banking	PhD	UK	Y
Alex	35-44	Male	Associate Professor in Arabic studies	PhD	Jordan	Y
Ali	25-34	Male	Senior Lecturer in Political Science	PhD	Jordan	Y
Andy	35-44	Male	Head of Business Administration	PhD	Jordan	X
Arda	45-55	Male	Assistant Professor in Computer Science	PhD	Malaysia	Y
Ashley	55+	Male	Head of Film, Television and Theatre Design	PhD	Libya	X
Ava	55+	Female	Assistant Professor in Science Teaching Methods	PhD	UK	Z
Claire	45-55	Female	Assistant Professor in Interior Design	PhD	Egypt	X
Emma	45-55	Female	Assistant Professor in Accounting	PhD	Jordan	Z
Hala	55+	Female	Head of the Marketing Department	PhD	Jordan	Z
Heba	35-44	Female	Vice Dean for Accreditation and Quality Affairs	PhD	Jordan	X
Isabela	25-34	Female	Professor Assistant in Architecture and Design	PhD	UK	X
Isla	35	Female	Lecturer in Accounting and Finance	Masters	Jordan	Z

James	45-55	Male	Vice Dean of the Faculty of Business for Accreditation and Quality Affairs	PhD	UK	X
John	35-44	Male	The Head of Humanities Department	PhD	Jordan	Y
Jose	35-44	Male	Assistant Professor in e-Business and Commerce	PhD	UK	Z
Kelly	35-44	Female	Assistant Professor in Interior Design	PhD	UK	Y
Lara	35-44	Female	Assistant Professor in Mathematics	PhD	Jordan	Y
Layla	45-55	Female	Associate Professor in Pharmacy	PhD	UK	Z
Lizzie	35-44	Female	Assistant Professor in Software Engineering at the Faculty of Information Technology	PhD	Jordan	Y
Lorina	35-44	Female	Assistant Professor in Software Engineering at the Faculty of Information Technology	PhD	UK	Y
Robert	55+	Male	Head of Accounting Department	PhD	UK	X
Saka	25-34	Male	Assistant Professor in Accounting	PhD	UK	Z
Shireen	25-34	Female	Lecturer in Interior Design	Masters	UK	Y
Stam	35-44	Male	Assistant Professor in Accounting	PhD	UK	Z
Susan	55+	Female	Assistant Professor in Finance and Banking	PhD	Jordan	Z
Tracey	35-44	Female	Head of Radio and Television Department	PhD	Lebanon	Z
Victoria	45-55	Female	Assistant Professor in Design and Graphic Communication	PhD	Egypt	X
Maria	35-44	Female	Assistant Professor in English Literature	PhD	UK	Y
William	45-55	Male	Head of Digital Media Department	PhD	UK	Y

Table 3-2:Participants' demographics

3.4.5 Transcription and translation

Following the online interviews via MS Teams, the data were saved on the same platform and then uploaded to Trint software for transcription. Trint is a paid transcription software used to transcribe and translate data simultaneously. The reason for choosing Trint was its support for the Arabic language. The interviews were conducted in both Arabic and English, with some conducted fully in English, fully in Arabic, or in a mix of both. After completing the interviews, the data were saved on my computer and uploaded to Trint. Due to the use of Arabic and English, I initially transcribed the interviews in Arabic by listening to the Arabic audio and reading the Arabic transcription simultaneously to ensure accuracy and validity. Once the Arabic transcription was completed, the data was translated into English using the same software. I then conducted a second English transcription by listening to the original Arabic audio and reading the new English transcription to ensure the data was valid, clean, verified, and ready for analysis. This process was repeated for all interviews; although time-consuming, to create clear data for analysis. It is important to note that the researcher took responsibility for translation verification due to the significant time investment required to ensure that the data was verified and ready for analysis. Table 3-3 summarises the research methods used in this research.

Research philosophy	Epistemology (Interpretivism)
	Ontology (Constructionism)
Research approach	Inductive
Research strategy	Qualitative
Data collection tool	Semi-structured online interviews (Individual)
Population	Academic staff (N=more than30)
Sample	Purposive sampling (N=8) Snowball sampling (N=More than 22)
Reliability and credibility	Ensure guided research ethics

Table 3-3: Summary of the research methods

3.4.6 Ethical considerations

3.4.6.1 Trustworthiness

Ethical considerations involve distinguishing between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Establishing guidelines to protect participants from risks is essential, reflecting the validity, importance, and scrutiny of the project, which ultimately contributes to achieving the research objectives. As stated in the Ethical Guidelines

for Educational Research, “Individuals should be treated fairly, sensitively, and with dignity and freedom from prejudice, recognising both their rights and differences arising from age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, nationality, cultural identity, partnership status, faith, disability, political belief, or any other significant characteristic” (BERA, 2018; 6). Hamilton, Corbett-Whittier and Fowler (2012) emphasise that ethical practice must be integrated into every stage of a case study, from its design to its analysis and presentation (p. 64)

#Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research on performance appraisals among academic staff in private Jordanian universities. Ethical approval was obtained from the Brunel Research Ethics Committee (BREO) at Brunel University London, demonstrating a commitment to conducting research that adheres to ethical standards (see Appendix 1). Following BREO approval, formal requests were made to the MOHR to interview academic staff in Jordanian private universities (see Appendix 2). Upon approvals, I made a formal contact with the three chosen universities’ administration X, Y and Z for permission and arranged interviews, data and time with academic staff, and all necessary approvals were obtained (see Appendix 3).

To ensure voluntary and informed participation, an ethical framework was established. Participants were approached via official email invitations that outlined the research’s purpose, procedures, and significance (see Appendices 4 and 5). Before the interviews began, a comprehensive participant information sheet was provided, detailing the research’s context, objectives, and potential implications (see Appendix 7). Additionally, each participant signed a consent form, indicating their voluntary agreement to participate after receiving clarifications and having the opportunity to ask questions (see Appendix 8)

The ethical considerations implemented in this research were rooted in the principles of respect, transparency, and beneficence based on the oral feedback received from the participants once the interviews were completed. The informed consent process and detailed participant information sheets aimed to empower participants, ensuring they were fully aware of the research’s nature and potential impact. The voluntary nature of participation was underscored, emphasising participants’ right to withdraw from the study at any point without repercussions.

Furthermore, the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were rigorously safeguarded. Any information that could potentially identify participants was handled with the utmost care, and all data were securely stored and accessible only to the researcher.

Additionally, their names were replaced with pseudonyms. According to BERA (2018), this guarantees that the data will be confidential and anonymous, as mentioned before in Table 3-3. Also, sensitive questions, such as about personal life and privacy, were prohibited here, as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2017) stated that "the greater the sensitivity of the information, the more safeguards are called for to protect the privacy of the participant." So, words like "brother," "sister," and "friend" were not used during the interview. Also, all the data records were stored and saved on my personal computer and backed up on the university's OneDrive. These measures were instrumental in upholding the participants' privacy rights and fostering an environment of trust.

To enhance the reliability of the data, participants were drawn from diverse academic and managerial positions, with a gender distribution of 55% male and 45% female. This near balance between male and female participants ensured objectivity and reduced the risk of gender bias, despite the fact that female academics represent less than 20% of staff in Jordanian higher education (Alshdiefat *et al.*, 2024). I deliberately sought to achieve this balance in order to capture a comprehensive range of perspectives across age, gender, and job position. Moreover, uniformity in the questioning process was maintained, with all participants being asked the same questions in the same manner. This approach aimed to uphold fairness and equality, ensuring objectivity in responses while mitigating the potential influence of subjectivity on the data collection process. These meticulous details significantly contributed to the establishment of a comfortable and trustworthy environment for the participants, enhancing the overall quality of the research (Creswell, 2020). It is important to note that not all interviewees grasped the questions on the initial inquiry, prompting the researcher to rephrase and reiterate questions to guarantee thorough comprehension, which affected the interview outcomes and findings (Bryman, 2012)

Overall, the ethical considerations embedded in this research underscore the commitment to conducting research that respects the dignity and autonomy of participants. The robust ethical framework, as approved by BREO, served as a foundation for ensuring the integrity, validity, and ethical soundness of the research process. The implementation of these ethical safeguards contributes to the reliability and credibility of the research outcomes, reinforcing the ethical imperative in academic inquiry.

3.5 Thematic Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is defined by Creswell (2014) as "repairing and organising the data (i.e., text data as in transcripts or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion" (p. 180). Data analysis aims to make the data meaningful by breaking it down into themes and connecting different concepts (Gray, 2014). I utilised thematic analysis in my research as a method for identifying, examining, and interpreting recurring patterns within the qualitative data (Flick, 2014, p. 421). Thematic analysis was chosen due to its suitability for exploring participants' experiences, perceptions, and behaviours across the dataset (Kiger and Varpio, 2020). According to Braun and Clarke (2022), thematic analysis is a structured approach that enables researchers to generate, analyse, and make sense of patterns through systematic coding practices. The literature widely recognises a six-phase process for conducting thematic analysis (Flick, 2014; Kiger and Varpio, 2020; Braun and Clarke, 2022; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023). Additionally, thematic analysis is a technique used to analyse data based on ideas, thoughts, and comprehended experiences in blocks or themes; each theme contains codes that describe the title of that theme. The importance of thematic analysis is to systematically organise and interpret qualitative data derived from sources such as interviews, focus groups, or textual documents. Its methodological flexibility allows for both inductive and deductive approaches, making it well-suited to addressing a wide range of research questions.

Due to the reasons discussed before, this research relied on in-depth interviews; the volume of qualitative data collected was substantial. To manage and interpret this extensive dataset effectively, I followed the systematic six-phase process of Braun and Clark thematic analysis that includes familiarisation with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finally producing the report. Table 3-4 below summarises the six steps of thematic analysis used in this study.

Braun and Clark's six phases of thematic analysis	
Step 1: Data familiarisation	Step 4: Review the themes
Step 2: Generate initial codes	Step 5: Determine the significance of the themes

Step 3: Generate themes	Step 6: Write up

Table 3-4: The six steps of data analysis

3.5.1 Phase 1: Data Familiarisation

At the initial step, I read the interview transcripts more than once, as this helped me to understand the participants' views. Braun and Clarke (2022) insist on the importance of data immersion to become familiar with the data, and accordingly, I read the data transcripts more than once, watched the video interview at least once, and re-listened to the audio transcriptions to understand the data in depth. After repeated readings of the transcriptions, I began to understand the blocks, segments, and even the passages that identified potential codes and probable meaning patterns. I used NVIVO software, pens and paper to take notes of the ideas around the transcriptions. Figure 3-4 below clarifies that the interviewees' data uploaded in NVIVO considered the interview transcripts for one of the participants. The names registered in the software are pseudonyms to protect the participants' privacy, as mentioned above. Appendix 9 presents a full transcript for one of the interview participants.

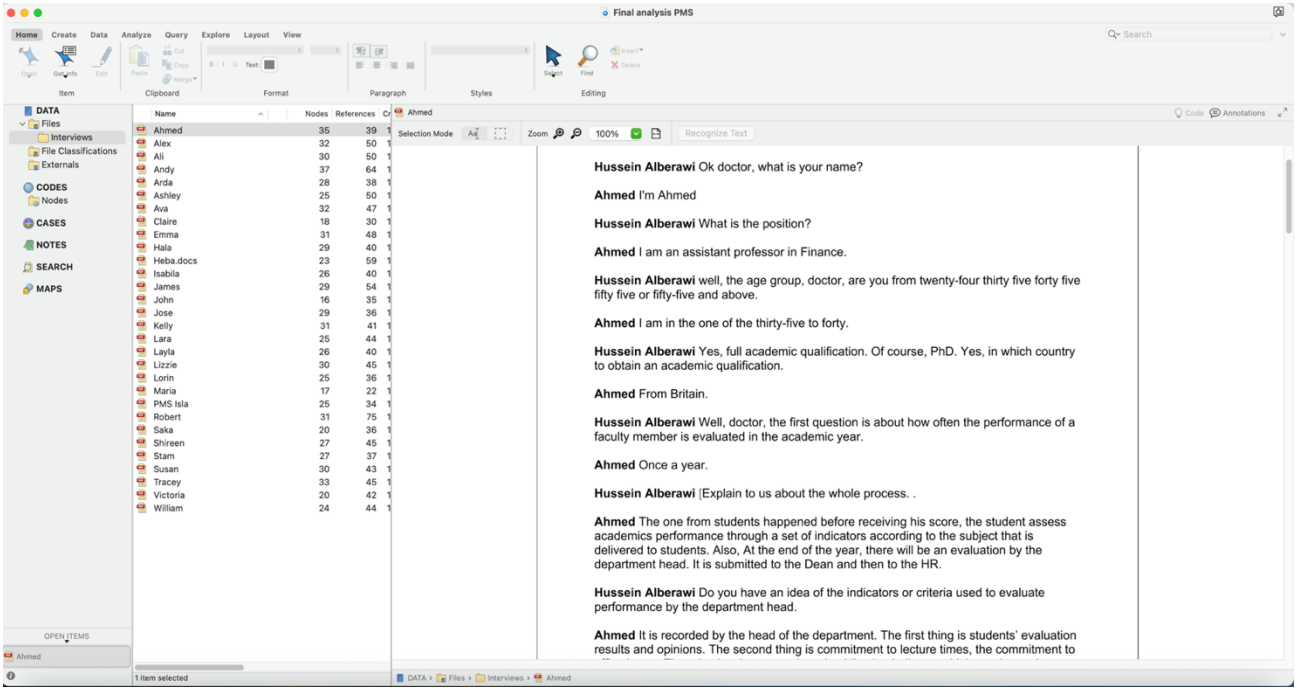


Figure 3-4: An example of participants' data uploaded to NVIVO

3.5.2 Phase 2: Generating initial codes

During the second phase of Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis, generating initial codes, I started reducing the large amount of data transcripts into small pieces by providing labels to meaningful excerpts, which is called coding (Braun and Clarke, 2022). I employed a combination of holistic and pattern coding approaches, which are widely used in qualitative research (Saldana, 2016). Holistic coding was applied in the early stages of analysis, where large segments of text, such as full sentences or entire paragraphs, were reviewed and assigned overarching codes that captured the general meaning or intent behind participants' responses. This method allowed for the preservation of context while identifying broad ideas across interviews. The process involved skimming substantial data segments to grasp their overall significance and then assigning a label that reflected the essence of the participants' responses.

Holistic coding was conducted via NVIVO software to manage and organise my data. Coding was carried out line by line by reading the full transcripts and identifying labels for excerpts' meanings that were relevant to the research questions. The codes remained close to participants' language at this stage to make it simple and easy to use for further stages in the analysis. Each code was assigned to relevant extracts of the transcripts, and similar codes were grouped together for ease of comparison across participants. This was the first stage of coding.

In the second stage of the analysis, pattern coding was employed as it enabled the condensation of a large number of initial codes into more meaningful clusters that reflected broader patterns across the dataset. According to Saldana (2016), pattern coding is particularly valuable in qualitative studies with rich and complex interview data because it facilitates the grouping of conceptually similar codes into categories that form the foundations of sub-themes and themes. This method allowed me to move beyond the descriptive level of coding and begin identifying the underlying relationships, consistencies, and variations in participants' experiences of PM practices and their psychological needs. By organising the initial codes into patterned sets, I was able to develop a more analytic and coherent understanding of how the satisfaction or frustration of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs influence motivation, engagement, and well-being. Pattern coding, therefore, served as an essential interpretive step that supported the transition from detailed coding to higher-level thematic development within the structure of reflexive thematic analysis. Table 3.5 below shows some excerpts from the interviews and how they were initially coded.

Data Excerpt	Initial codes
- The first thing is students' evaluation results and opinions. The second thing is commitment to lecture times, the commitment to office hours. There is also the research and publication indicator.	'Academics' performance indicators'
- which requires at least two published papers from the scientific colleges and one from social sciences schools, regardless of its first or co-author. - we have to publish two papers from the scientific college or one paper from the social sciences department regardless of its first or co-author, but it should be in a reputational journal like Q1 to Q4	'Research publication indicator'
- the indicators like giving free or paid lectures to students from other colleges, guide students in a program or project that serves the society, we also have public services for serving the community and public people.	'Community service indicators'
- I feel that there are some restrictions but the reference we rely on is the syllabus…	'Partial autonomy in teaching'
- We have the right to edit with the agreement of the department committee	'Syllabus as a guiding reference'
- The evaluation assessment doesn't affect the salary increases as the salary increase is fixed for all the staff.	'No salary increases effects by PM practices'
- The issue with the students evaluation, when you force students to evaluate academics to get their marks, this means students will evaluate usuriously and in a rush way to get their marks as quick as possible, I think this is unfair which may affect academic members evaluation which may affect their contract renewals	'Students' evaluation challenges'/ 'unrealistic evaluation'
- You have the full freedom to publish in your area because this is your field	'Autonomy in research'
- In terms of knowledge, the benefit is limited but in terms of connections and building relations, it is very important mean I can download the conference paper ad gain the knowledge from the internet but building the connections is completely from the conferences and events.	'Lack of knowledge benefits'/ 'Networking and connections'

- For me myself, we have a message we should deliver so, in the first instance, we are trusted at work, and we should give as much as possible to affect the young generation which will take the lead in the future.	'Message delivery as a motivation'
- If you ask any of your colleagues, they will say we are not happy, to be honest, the life has become very expensive and the expenses are getting higher, everything is getting higher apart from the salary	'Salary dissatisfaction'
- I wake up every morning to go to work and get financial return at the end of the month as I have bills and living expenses to cover	'Financial motivations'
- No way, there is no comparison, the academia salary is very little compared to the practical work. At least I get double and triple my current salary in the industry. However, I feel more like job security in academia.	'Salary between academia and industry'/ 'Job security in academia'
- No, no, there is no role for the HR in the universities I worked in, The HR role is limited to call the applicants and arrange interviews with the dean, receive papers from the dean to accept or not. So, there is no role for planning, in recruiting, in evaluating performance even in training and compensation.	'HR operational role in universities'/ 'nonstrategic role for HR in universities '

Table 3-5:Generating initial codes

3.5.3 Phase 3: Generating initial themes

After completing the coding process for all interviews, at this stage, I examined the coded data to identify broader patterns of meaning, which helped me to meet the research objectives. A theme is defined as a collection of information or data that contains a specific meaning and is directly or indirectly related to the research questions and objectives (Braun and Clarke, 2022). The codes in my study were organised and collated in sub-themes and main themes, which captured the essence of recurring ideas across interviews.

I followed three simple steps to select themes. First, I carefully read and reviewed the codes with a thorough understanding so that I could group them to serve my research objectives. Second, I used thematic tables and mind maps to facilitate the process of categorising codes

with the same meaning under a specific title or theme. NVIVO software facilitated the process of categorising codes and generating themes in a simple, smooth, and uncomplicated manner.

Mind maps have previously been confirmed as one of the easiest and simplest methods for understanding codes and categorising them under specific titles or themes that are later used to achieve the research objectives (Saldana, 2016; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023). Third and finally, I gave this theme a name and defined it with simple words reflecting the codes that are categorised under it.

An example to show how to make it clearer, codes were generated, such as (academics have sufficient freedom to choose research topics) (academics choose their own research interests), and (academic staff are happy to publish in their research interests). Upon reading these codes, it occurred to me that these codes spoke of a specific topic, namely (autonomy support in research). Immediately, a large theme was created, named with this term and, defined as the codes concerned with supporting research autonomy. The title of the theme was read and revised with the codes that were classified under it to ensure that they were interconnected and coherent in meaning. Table 3.6 below shows an example of how the initial codes were turned into sub-themes and potential themes, which are used later on in the discussion to meet the research objectives and answer the research questions.

Initial Codes	Themes	Aggregate dimensions
- 'Research publication indicator' - 'Community service indicators' - 'Teaching evaluation indicators'	'Evaluation standards'	Current PM system
- 'Message delivery as a motivation' - 'Working in a safe environment' - 'Respected and appreciated at work' - 'Autonomy in research'	'Intrinsic motivations'	Academics' motivations
- 'Financial rewards' - Financial research incentives' - 'Benefits and allowances'	Extrinsic motivations	

- 'Students evaluation challenges' - 'Unrealistic evaluation' - 'Evaluation based on emotions'	'Students' evaluation crisis'	'Students' evaluation'
- 'Lives like a family' - 'Community and social initiatives' - 'Regular social events'	'Relatedness and support'	Community service evaluation effects
- 'No role for HR' - 'Administrative role in universities' - 'HR departments roles are not supported for academics'	'Administrative vs strategic'	Limited role HR plays in PM
- 'Lack of research goals setting' - 'Teaching goals are forced to academics' - 'Vision and mission alignment'	'Teaching and Research goals settings'	Universities goals settings
- 'Women prefer working academia' - 'Men prefer to work in industry'	'Gender '	Individual differences responses on the PMS

Table 3-6: Searching for themes

Appendix 10 presents the full themes and sub-themes that emerged in this study.

3.5.4 Phase 4: Review Themes

Validating the themes, subthemes, and the relations between them constitutes this phase. On this stage, I asked myself questions like “Are the themes too broad or vague?” and “Does the data support the theme?” “Can I split the theme into two subthemes?”. This stage focused on refining, splitting, collapsing and discarding themes to enhance internal coherence. Two levels of review process were undertaken to ensure that the themes clearly represented the coded data and the entire dataset. Reviewing at the coded data level was the first review for the data. This involved reading the codes again and ensuring that they matched the sub-themes. For example, some codes placed under the theme ‘goal setting and autonomy’, such as (autonomy in research topics), were found strongly aligned with ‘academics’ motivation’ under the sub-theme ‘intrinsic motivation’ as they reflected academics’ motivations rather than individual agency in goal formulation. Similarly, the code ‘networking and connections’ was aligned with a theme called ‘connections’, but it was regrouped again with a theme called ‘competence support’ to make it more coherent and clearer.

Reviewing the entire dataset is the second level of reviewing the themes and subthemes that have emerged. In particular, this step involved rereading the full set of interview transcripts to examine whether the themes, subthemes and codes adequately reflected the meaning evident in the data as a whole, as well as to examine whether the data were misconstrued, misclassified or not represented. To avoid redundancy, some themes emerged and were renamed as they tended to the same meaning. For example, ‘social support’ and ‘institutional support’ were regrouped and renamed under a subtheme called ‘relatedness and support’ within the main theme called ‘academics’ motivations’ as they both refer to organisational and interpersonal mechanisms fostering a sense of belonging and collegiality. Similarly, a theme initially named under ‘administrative process’ was redefined as ‘HRM roles in universities’ to better capture participants’ emphasis on HR’s administrative, rather than strategic, function.

3.5.5 Phase 5: Renaming the themes

In Phase 5 of the thematic analysis, themes were carefully defined and named to reflect their analytical scope and relevance to the research questions. Each theme was reviewed to ensure clarity, internal consistency, and distinctiveness. Concise definitions and thematic labels were developed to accurately capture the essence of each theme. For example, a main theme called "Autonomy Restricted in Teaching" defines all the meanings, data and relations of aspects that restrict teaching tasks for academic staff. Subthemes and codes are categorised under this main one, and all of them are aligned and integrated. Also, the themes were mapped and aligned with SDT, focusing on how PM practices (research, teaching and community services indicators) support or undermine the psychological needs of satisfaction (autonomy, competence and relatedness) as well as motivations (intrinsic and extrinsic). Table 3.7 below shows an example of how initial codes were transferred to subthemes and themes relevant to the main concepts and theory.

Initial Codes	**Themes**	**Aggregate dimensions**	**Relevant to the research questions?**
• 'Two papers published annually' • 'Publish as first or co-author'	'Research publication indicators'	Performance management practices in Jordanian private universities	RQ1
• 'Portfolio and documentation' • 'Students evaluation'	'Teaching evaluation indicators'		
• 'Participating in social events like Ramadan'. • 'Providing free lecturers for peers and colleagues.	'Community services indicators'		

• 'Benefits and allowances'			
• 'Students' evaluation challenges' • 'Unrealistic evaluation' • 'Evaluation based on emotions'	'Students' evaluation crisis'	SET effects undermines both BSN and motivations	RQ1+ RQ2
• 'Lives like a family' • 'Community and social initiatives' • 'Regular social events'	'Relatedness and support'	CSEP supports both BSN and motivations	RQ1+RQ2
• 'No role for HR' • 'Administrative role in universities' • 'HR departments roles are not supported for academics'	'Administrative vs strategic'	The institutional policy of PM shapes the design of PM as the role of HR is operational.	RQ3
• 'Lack of research goals setting' • 'Teaching goals are forced to academics' • 'Vision and mission alignment'	'Teaching and research goals settings'	Undermines intrinsic motivation and support controlled motivations	RQ1
• 'Women prefer working academia' • 'Men prefer to work in industry'	'Gender '	Autonomy support which reflects on individual's performance and intrinsic motivations	RQ3

Table 3-7: The alignment between sub-themes and SDT

3.5.6 Phase 6: producing the report

In Phase 6, the findings were presented through a structured narrative, with each theme supported by illustrative participant quotes. Analytical commentary was used to interpret these extracts, linking them to the theoretical framework of SDT and the broader literature. This

approach enabled the development of a coherent, data-driven account of academic staff motivation and PM practices in private Jordanian universities.

3.6 Reflection on NVIVO

NVIVO software helped me to store, organise, and categorise my data using one software. It helped me to divide the large data into small pieces to be categorised into pots or themes. For instance, I asked questions about the academics' staff motivation, and one of the themes was intrinsic motivation, and inside that theme were all the codes that were relevant to intrinsic motivation, such as self-determination, environment, and autonomy in teaching and research. The only drawback I found was that NVIVO does not support Arabic, so I had to use Trint software to translate the data to English before it was ready for analysis.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented a comprehensive overview of the research methodology adopted to explore how PM practices influence the motivation and psychological needs satisfaction of academic staff in private universities in Jordan, framed through the lens of SDT. A qualitative research approach was selected to capture the depth and complexity of academic experiences, allowing for a nuanced understanding of how institutional practices, such as research evaluation, teaching assessment, and community service expectations shape motivation, autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The use of semi-structured interviews provided the flexibility to explore individual perspectives in rich detail while maintaining consistency across core themes.

A total of 30 academic staff were interviewed from three different private universities. An initial purposive sampling strategy was used to identify knowledgeable participants who could contribute meaningfully to the research objectives. This was followed by snowball sampling, which expanded the participant pool through peer recommendations. This combined strategy ensured both depth and diversity in the data collected. Ethical considerations were addressed rigorously at every stage of the research, including the acquisition of ethical approval from Brunel University, the distribution of informed consent forms and participant information sheets, the protection of confidentiality through pseudonymisation, and the secure data

handling and storage protocols. Interviews were held online via MS Teams in both Arabic and English and lasted around 45 minutes. Trint software was used for transcription and translations, considering my responsibility for the validity of the translation for the fully Arabic interviews.

To analyse the data, Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework for thematic analysis was employed. This involved familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, developing and reviewing candidate themes, and refining and defining themes to ensure they were analytically sound and aligned with the research questions. Codes were generated using a combination of holistic and pattern coding strategies, informed by Saldaña's work on qualitative coding. Themes were constructed inductively, grounded in the voices of the participants, and interpreted in relation to SDT's conceptual focus on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Finally, to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, strategies addressing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were incorporated throughout the research process. These included maintaining a detailed audit trail, employing reflexive practices, using thick description, and triangulating insights across participants. Collectively, this methodological framework establishes a solid foundation for the next chapter, which presents and analyses the key findings of the study.

Chapter 4: Results and Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings generated through the thematic analysis discussed in Chapter 3. The organisation of the findings is aligned with the aggregate themes identified in Table 3-7 and structured around the study's three research questions. Specifically, Section 4.2 and all its subheading address Research Questions 1 and 2 by examining how performance management practices, including research evaluation practices (REP), teaching evaluation practices (TEP), community service evaluation practices (CSEP), influence the satisfaction or frustration of academics' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness as well as motivations and satisfaction. Sections 4.4 and 4.6 addressed Research Question 3 by exploring the role of cultural, institutional, and governance-related factors shaping the design and implementation of performance management systems in Jordanian private universities. Finally, Sections 4.7 and 4.8 present participants' perspectives on promotion systems and suggestions for improving performance management practices. The chapter therefore demonstrates how the aggregate themes emerging from Table 3-7 collectively explain the relationship between performance management systems, motivation, job satisfaction, and well-being through the lens of Self-Determination Theory.

4.2 Performance Management Systems

The participants from the three private universities, X, Y and Z, identified the indicators that assess their performance during the academic year. They demonstrated that the PMS is a substantial component of measuring staff and academics' performance within the academic year, and plays a significant role in academic staff's contract renewals and promotions. Several sub-themes have emerged under this main theme, each of which identifies the main indicators that policymakers and department heads use to evaluate academic staff's performance. These indicators emerged as themes from the collected data: "research evaluation indicators", "teaching evaluation indicators" and "community services evaluation indicators":

"Our assessment at the department or university is based on three basic standards; this is the scientific output of the faculty member. The teaching performance of the faculty member and the university, college, and academic services, which we called the community services." (Andy, Department Head of Business Administration)

Victoria, Susan, and Isabela, who are lecturers in different departments at X university, supported this view and praised the importance of these three standards for assessing academic performance. It is worth mentioning that the assessment marks of PM at Jordanian private universities are divided into scientific production (35%), teaching performance (35%), university and college services (20%) and to public services that academics provide for the local community(10%). Each of the themes under this main theme id discussed further below as it emerges from the data. Figure 4-1 below summarises the main indicators that Jordanian private universities use to assess academic staff's performance based on the participants' results.

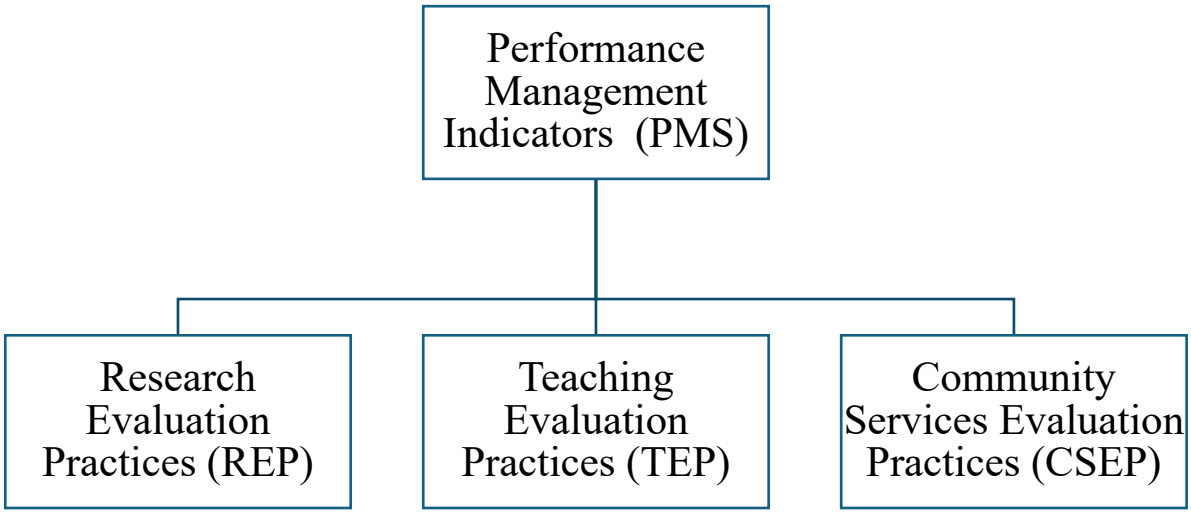


Figure 4-1: Performance management evaluation practices in Jordanian private universities

4.2.1 Research evaluation practices (REP)

All the participants from the three Jordanian private universities indicated the importance of research production, which has a great impact on universities' reputation and ranking nationally and globally. Private universities in Jordan require academic employees to publish at least one research paper annually, regardless of whether they are first or co-authors and regardless of the ranking of the journal in which they are publishing.

Publishing scientific research is a fundamental aspect of academic success, allowing faculty members to expand their knowledge, stay updated on the latest developments, and contribute to the scholarly community. Therefore, research indicators should be a significant factor in evaluating faculty performance. Ashley, Ahmed, and Emma, lecturers from different departments and colleges and universities, outlined that the main research indicator for academic employees is to publish two papers annually if you are from a scientific field and one journal paper if you are from the arts and humanities department:

> "*The research indicator at our university requires at least two published papers from the scientific colleges and one from social sciences schools, regardless of its first or co-author" (Ahmed, Assistant Professor in Finance and Banking)*

> *"At least one research paper in Scopus or high-ranking journal from Arts and humanities subjects and two from scientific subjects" (Emma, Assistant Professor in Accounting)*

There is no exact reason behind assessing academic staff on two papers for scientific colleges compared to one paper for academics in different departments and subjects. However, Heba, a Vice Dean for Accreditation and Quality Affairs, justified that conducting scientific and laboratory experiments leads to various results from different aspects, and that having more results increases the opportunities for writing papers and publications for academics in these fields. Hence, such academics are considered a special case and are therefore required to publish at least two papers per academic year:

Yes, we ask academic employees who are in the scientific or practical fields to publish at least two journal papers annually as a part of performance assessment because they spend long period of time doing experiments in labs and the results of the experiments may be extracted to more than one scientific paper for each experiment. (Heba, Vice Dean for Accreditation and Quality Affairs)

Besides the number of publications, Jordanian private universities asked academic members to show the number of conferences, workshops and seminars they participated in, as this way of evaluation achieves professional growth and skills development and enhances relations and networking. Nevertheless, this standard of research evolution is not considered a main factor for contract renewal purposes:

"When we complete the self-evaluation form for the department head, we are required to list all the papers we published during the year, as well as the number of conferences, seminars, or workshops we attended." (Maria, Assistant Professor in English Literature)

"The number of conferences and workshops we participate in, whether local or international, is considered one of the indicators used to assess our research performance." (Layla, Associate professor in Pharmacy)

"Yes, we are asked to report the conferences we attended, even if they are not related to our field, but we already know that this does not really count when it comes to contract renewal." (Susan, Assistant Professor in Finance and Banking)

From this standpoint, the number of papers published and the number of participations in conferences and seminars are the main indicators to assess research evaluation practice in Jordanian private universities based on the interviewees. These standards have divergent effects on needs satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which affects motivation and job outcomes. This will be presented later in this chapter. The following will consider the second theme that emerged from the data, which is the second way of measuring academic performance, namely "Teaching Evaluation Practices".

4.2.1.1 Research evaluation practices' effects on needs satisfaction

Academics are required to produce a specific number of publications annually as a measure of their research performance, which is directly linked to contract renewal, as mentioned earlier. In addition, the freedom to choose research interests or topics is almost non-existent. Academic staff in the three Jordanian private universities reported that they receive direct or indirect instructions from department heads to publish on specific topics within their field or area of specialisation. This is often driven by global research trends in those areas. Such control over topic selection contributes to increased pressure on individuals, which affects their scientific productivity and overall performance:

> *"We don't really follow our research interests literally, we have to follow the research aims and objectives of the department, even if they go against our own interests." (Alex, Associate Professor in Arabic Studies).*

> *"Yes, sometimes we have the freedom to choose our research interests for publication, but they must be aligned with the department's objectives. Otherwise, the work is not counted towards my credit." (Layla, Assistant Professor in Mathematics)*

The restriction of research freedom contributes to the frustration of the psychological need for autonomy, as conceptualised within SDT. Autonomy requires individuals to feel volitional and self-directed in their choices; however, academic staff reported limited freedom in selecting their research interests or preferred topics. Several participants, including Ashley, Claire, Emma, Lara, and Maria, described how Jordanian private universities exert indirect control over research publication directions by encouraging or pressuring academics to publish in specific domains that align with institutional priorities or global trends. These areas often include sustainability, artificial intelligence, climate change, the robotics revolution, and other contemporary themes. Such institutional steering restricts academics' ability to pursue personally meaningful research topics, thereby undermining their sense of autonomy:

> *"There is no direct control over choosing the research topics or fields. However, we are encouraged by the department heads to publish on trending topics or areas that have high societal impact." (Ashley, Head of Film, Television and Theatre Design)*

> *"We have to follow trending and emerging topics. For example, media illiteracy has become a global issue affecting, even in major countries. In this direction, I convince my faculties to focus more here." (William, Head of Digital Media Department).*

Interviewees were also asked whether the research evaluation practices used to assess academic research performance contribute to professional development, skills enhancement, and the growth of experience; the aim was to understand their impact on competence, one of the key psychological needs in SDT. The findings indicate that academic staff are primarily assessed based on a specific number of publications each year, as well as the number of conferences, workshops, and seminars they attend. This narrow focus results in the neglect of several important aspects, such as research quality, theoretical or practical contribution, impact factor, citations, research culture, and innovation. Consequently, these omissions have a significant negative impact on academics' professional skills and competencies:

> *"The focus on research quantity for contract renewal and promotion purposes leaves me stuck in the same cycle, without any real professional development." (Isabela, Assistant Professor in Architecture and Design)*

> *"Unfortunately, you find some colleagues publishing four or five papers a year just for renewing contract purposes or for promotion purposes. But if you ask them, what impact factor or contributions have been made to society, they would not be able to answer." (Shireen, Lecturer in interior design)*

The findings also reveal that competence is strengthened when Jordanian private universities recognise diverse forms of practical and theoretical contributions, such as book chapters, conference papers, collaborative projects, and community-engaged research. The results indicate that academic staff feel more capable when these aspects of their research performance are valued, rather than focusing solely on publications, promotions, or even contract renewals:

> *"The system pushes us to publish just to meet the requirements. It doesn't make me feel competent, just pressured." (Jose, Assistant Professor in e-Business and Commerce)*

> *"Many colleagues attend conferences to present papers or participate in workshops, but this work doesn't count as a valued work because it is not published." (Lara, Assistant Professor in Mathematics)*

> *"My field requires longer research cycles, but the university still expects the same number of publications as other departments. It makes me feel that my real skills are not recognised." (Stam, Assistant Professor in Accounting)*

It is evident from the above that using the number of conferences, seminars, and workshops attended as an indicator for assessing academic staff frustrates the need for competence for several reasons. First, academics primarily focus on the number of research publications, knowing that their evaluation and career progression are largely based on publications rather than conference participation. As a result, conference attendance becomes a secondary activity, pursued only to satisfy formal requirements, rather than as an opportunity to enhance skills, develop expertise, or engage in knowledge exchange. Second, academics experience this process as a source of pressure rather than professional growth. The emphasis on quantity over quality creates a climate in which staff feel compelled to meet quantitative targets without gaining meaningful learning experiences. For example, many participants noted that attending conferences "just to tick the box" provides little opportunity for skills development or recognition of their expertise. Finally, universities often emphasise the number of events attended, regardless of the relevance, quality, or impact of these conferences. This approach fails to incentivise academics to select events that would genuinely enhance their knowledge or research capabilities. Consequently, academics may avoid engaging fully with these professional development activities, perceiving them as unproductive or meaningless. Taken together, this method of evaluation undermines the satisfaction of competence, as defined by SDT, by depriving academics of opportunities to feel effective, skilled, and professionally capable in their roles. Such frustration can reduce motivation, engagement, and overall professional satisfaction, limiting the development of both individual and institutional research capacity.

Furthermore, the results also indicate that some academics rely on personal networks and relationships to have their names added to colleagues' publications, with the expectation that the favour will be returned when they publish their own work. This practice raises concerns about the integrity of scientific research and its genuine contribution to society. It also affects academics' professional growth and competence, as many feel unable to meet unrealistic performance standards and resort to publishing simply to secure their employment for the

following year. Such pressures frustrate their need for competence, which may have negative consequences for their motivation and engagement:

> *"There is a kind of unspoken deal between some colleagues, you put my name now, I'll put yours later. It's the only way some can survive the pressure." (Saka, Assistant Professor in Accounting)*

> *"I don't publish for knowledge contribution anymore; I publish to keep my job on. That's the reality." (Maria, Assistant Professor in English Literature)*

> *"We all know this system does not reflect real scientific contribution. It becomes about numbers, not impact or quality." (Lara, Assistant Professor in Mathematics)*

Successful research achievements reinforced feelings of competence, a critical element in maintaining intrinsic motivation and professional satisfaction among academic staff. However, the results showed that this method of assessing academic research performance frustrates the need for competence because staff experience pressure to publish for the sake of contract renewal rather than making a real contribution or achieving professional growth. In addition, the use of personal relationships between colleagues encourages academic staff to add each other's names to papers simply to secure their contracts for the following year.

Figure 4-2 below demonstrates the influences of research evaluation practices on both autonomy and competence. The model demonstrates that research performance indicators employed by private universities in Jordan, such as the requirement to publish two papers annually or at least one paper as the main author, are perceived by academics as constraining their autonomy in selecting research topics and areas of interest. Participants also noted that attending conferences, seminars or workshops, which is the second way of assessing research performance, frustrates the needs of competence because attending conferences is hence seen by academic members as a tick box exercise and does not affect job contract renewals; therefore, it is considered not a good opportunity to enhance research skills or professional development. This is contrast to the research publication indicator, which determines the academics' continued employment at the university. The following will present the effects of research evaluation practices on motivation and engagement.

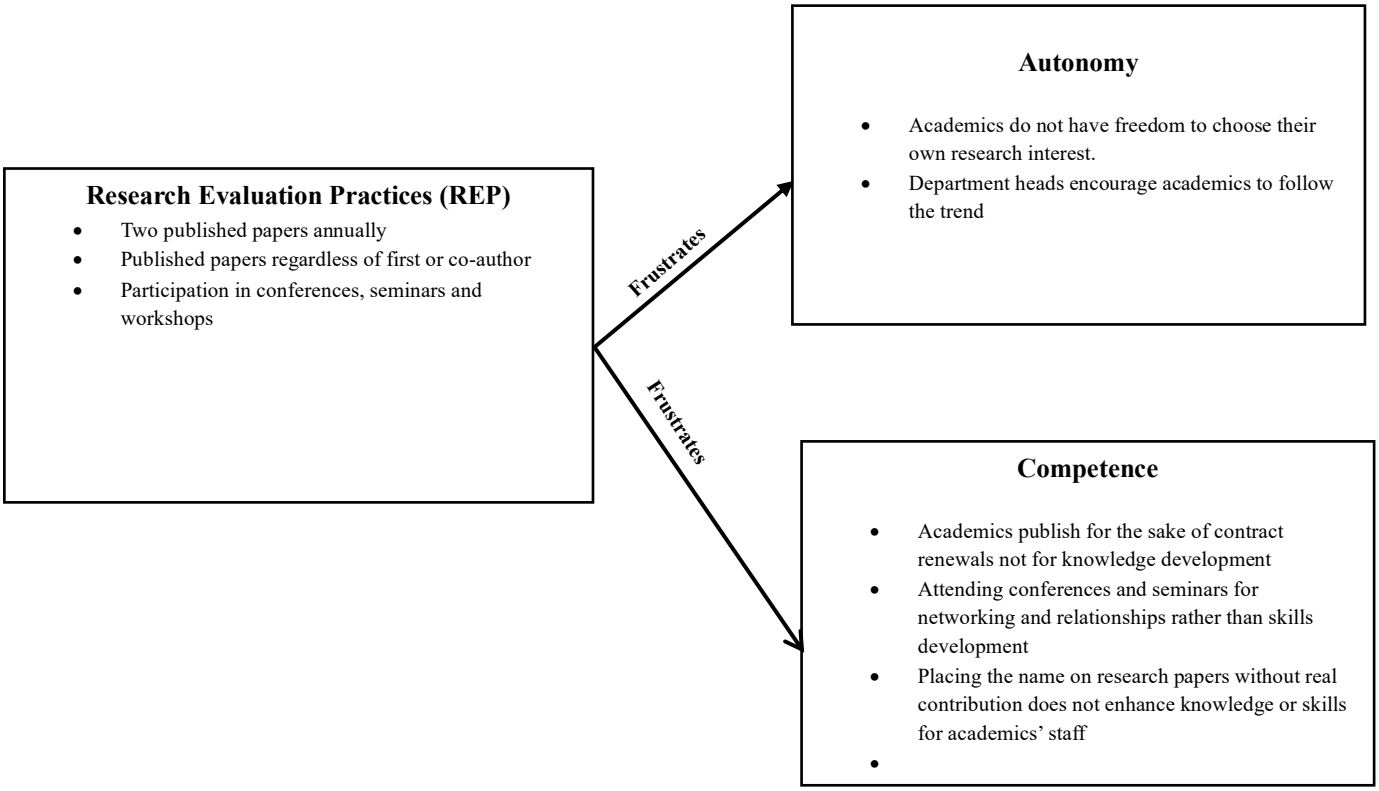


Figure 4-2: REP frustrates both autonomy and competence

4.2.1.1.1 Institutional Mechanisms Restricting Research Autonomy

The findings revealed that universities exercised indirect control over academics' research autonomy through several institutional mechanisms linked to publication expectations, monitoring systems, and funding priorities. Participants explained that these mechanisms were largely driven by universities' attempts to improve institutional rankings, international reputation, and research visibility. The first one is pressure to publish in high-ranking journals. Participants reported that universities strongly encouraged academic staff to publish in high-

ranking journals, particularly Scopus-indexed and Q1 journals. However, publishing in such journals often required academics to focus on trending and internationally attractive research topics rather than personally meaningful or socially relevant areas of interest. Consequently, participants felt pressured to align their research interests or outcomes with institutionally preferred themes that increased publication opportunities and enhanced university rankings.

> *"The university encourages us to publish in top journals, but these journals usually prefer specific trending topics. Sometimes we cannot research what we are genuinely interested in because we need publications that improve the university ranking." (Saka, Assistant professor in accounting)*

Another participant explained:

> *"You start thinking about what is publishable rather than what is important or meaningful for your research interests." (Kelly, Assistant professor in interior design)*

These findings suggest that publication requirements indirectly constrained academics' intellectual autonomy by steering them toward externally valued research areas. Although universities did not formally prohibit certain topics, the emphasis placed on high-ranking publications created implicit pressures to conform to institutionally desirable research agendas.

The second institutional mechanism that limits academics autonomy is monitoring publication outputs and research direction. Participants further explained that universities continuously monitored publication outputs on an annual basis, particularly regarding where academics published and the type of research being produced. This monitoring process was closely connected to performance evaluations, contract renewals, and promotion decisions. Several participants perceived that universities used publication monitoring systems not only to measure productivity but also to ensure alignment with institutional expectations and strategic priorities.

> *"Every year they check how many papers we published, where we published them, and whether these publications match the university expectations." (Isla, Lecturer in Accounting and Finance)*

Similarly, another participant stated:

"Research output is constantly monitored because the university wants publications that strengthen its reputation and international ranking." (Arda, Assistant professor in Computer Science)

The findings indicate that annual monitoring systems functioned as institutional control mechanisms that shaped academics' research behaviour and publication choices. Participants described how this environment encouraged compliance with externally imposed performance expectations rather than supporting independent and intrinsically motivated scholarly inquiry.

The final one is funding priorities and indirect rejection of research areas. Another institutional mechanism identified by participants involved the allocation of conference funding and research support. Participants reported that universities were more willing to financially support conferences, workshops, and research activities that aligned with institutional priorities and strategically valued research areas. Consequently, academics perceived that some research topics received greater institutional encouragement than others:

"The university usually funds conferences that align with its research priorities and reputation goals." (Layla, Associate professor in Pharmacy)

Another participant added:

"Some research areas receive more support because they are easier to publish internationally, while other topics are indirectly ignored." (Maria, Assistant professor in English literature)

Participants explained that this selective funding approach indirectly discouraged certain research interests, particularly those perceived as less publishable or less beneficial to university rankings. As a result, academics increasingly prioritised trend-based and internationally marketable research topics to secure institutional support and career progression opportunities.

To summarise, these institutional mechanisms constrained academics' perceived freedom in selecting research directions and pursuing personally meaningful scholarly interests. Through

publication pressures, performance monitoring, and selective funding practices, universities indirectly shaped academic knowledge production in ways that prioritised institutional rankings and reputational outcomes. From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, these practices frustrated academics' psychological need for autonomy by limiting their sense of volition and intellectual independence in research activities.

4.2.1.1.2 Reasons for limit research autonomy

During the interviews, department heads and vice deans were asked about the reasons for encouraging academic staff to align their annual publication topics with the goals of the department and university, even when these topics were outside their personal interests. Their justification focused on encouraging staff to publish in top-ranked journals, which would enhance the university's global ranking and reputation. This, in turn, was believed to increase student enrolment ratio, both locally and from neighbouring countries, thereby contributing to the country's economic, social, and cultural development:

> *"Academic staff in my department get upset when I ask them to join a research group outside their interests, but we have to follow the contemporary research trends even if they contradict individual research interests for the sake of rankings and classification." (Andy, Head of Business Administration)*

> *"The change at the beginning is difficult, but it becomes easier afterwards, we politely ask academics to focus their research on contemporary topics to improve global and local standings, as this attracts more students via enhancing universities ranking and picture." (James, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Business for Accreditation and Quality Affairs)*

> *"This is not only about publishing in prestigious or top-ranking journals but also about keeping faculty members up to date with the latest developments in knowledge in their field, which positively and directly affects students' learning outcomes." (William, Head of Digital Media department)*

It is evident from the quotes above that academics are required to publish a specific number of papers annually for the purpose of contract renewal. At the same time, department heads are keen to politely advise academics to focus on contemporary topics that are more likely to be published in top-ranked journals. This, in turn, enhances the university's global ranking and reputation, which increases revenue and profits by boosting student enrolment annually. From this standpoint, the research evaluation practices used to assess academic research performance undermine and frustrate the academic's psychological need for autonomy.

4.2.1.2 Research evaluation practices' effect on motivation

The evaluation practices used by private universities in Jordan significantly influence the type and strength of motivation experienced by academic staff, particularly in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions. Research evaluation, in particular, demonstrates a strong extrinsic motivational effect. Academics are required to publish two papers annually, either as lead authors or co-authors, and this requirement is directly linked to bonuses and promotions. Furthermore, academics are encouraged by department heads to publish in contemporary research areas that align with university and national missions, primarily to enhance global rankings and institutional classification. Because research output is directly tied to contract renewals, publication becomes a strategic goal driven by external pressures, rather than by knowledge contribution or genuine scholarly interest. Failing to meet the annual publication requirement may result in job loss, further reinforcing the dominance of extrinsic motivation within these evaluation practices:

> *"Yes, we can publish in the area we want but it has to be aligned with the university's research goals that aim to achieve better standings both globally and locally." (Robert, Head of the Accounting Department)*

> *"I will be honest with you; I just publish to secure my contract for the following year. Yes, publications are important for my promotions, but the main concern for me is contract renewals." (Arda, Assistant Professor in Computer Science)*

"Having the complete freedom to research the areas I am interested in motivates me to publish more. This not only enhances my promotion position, but it also contributes to enhancing the universities' ranking and reputation". (Layla, Associate Professor in Pharmacy)

Furthermore, the research evaluation practices used to assess academic staff also motivate them financially. The results showed that academics receive financial rewards for each paper they publish annually, with the amount depending on the journal's ranking and their authorship position (whether first author or co-author). Consequently, this form of motivation reinforces extrinsic, reward-based incentives and encourages academic staff to publish more in order to secure these financial benefits:

"We also have incentives in regard to scientific research; if we publish in Q1 and Q2 we get 1000 JOD; if we publish in Q3 and Q4, we get 800 JOD. This encourages us to publish more to increase the citation and the university rank." (Ava, Assistant Professor in Science Teaching Methods)

"We receive living expenses compensation, we receive thirteen salaries, and we receive 1000 JOD if we publish in Q1 and Q2 journals. These are the main incentives we receive." (Emma, Assistant Professor in Accounting at Z university)

"Our economic situations are hard, so it is a great opportunity to publish more to cover living expenses; so, yes, this way of evaluation motivates me to publish more." (Lizzie, Assistant Professor in Software Engineering at the Faculty of Information Technology)

It can be observed from these examples that the research evaluation practices used to assess academic performance in private universities undermine both autonomy and competence and consequently foster predominantly extrinsic forms of motivation. Academics publish primarily to secure contract renewals, achieve promotions, or obtain financial rewards, rather than to contribute meaningfully to knowledge or develop professionally. This reliance on extrinsic incentives may negatively affect job performance, as failing to publish regularly carries the risk of job loss. Moreover, research evaluation outcomes are directly tied to employment contract renewal; every component of the assessment process must be handled with accuracy and fairness. Any errors or inconsistencies made by department heads or college deans during

evaluation could result in the non-renewal of an academic's contract, thereby leading to severe consequences such as unemployment.

Furthermore, and most importantly, the results indicate that this reliance on extrinsic forms of motivation may lead to job dissatisfaction, disengagement, and even job insecurity. Academics perceived the research evaluation indicators primarily as mechanisms to secure their employment for the following year, rather than as tools for meaningful knowledge contribution or scholarly development. This perception arises largely from the limited autonomy they experience in selecting their research interests, which reduces intrinsic motivation and reinforces a compliance-driven approach to publishing rather than genuine academic engagement:

> *"If I don't publish at least one paper annually, I may lose my job for the following year so, I have to publish even when I am not interested in the topic." (Claire, Assistant professor in interior design)*

> *"It is a good way to earn money by publishing papers every year, but what about the quality of knowledge, the ranking of the journals we publish in, or the impact we make? I think most of us publish mainly for contract renewal and financial rewards." (Isla, Lecturer in Accounting and Finance)*

> *"We have research groups in the university, so we must align our work with their research topics. Yes, it helps with promotions and contract renewal, but I do not think I enjoy doing research that is outside my own interests." (Lara, Assistant Professor in Mathematics)*

Figure 4-3 below summarises the relationship between research evaluation practices and the satisfaction of psychological needs. It illustrates how these practices frustrate both autonomy and competence and demonstrates how such need frustration leads to a reliance on extrinsic motivation, specifically through financial rewards, contract renewals, and promotions. Although these extrinsic incentives can positively influence motivation and performance in the short term, overreliance on them may result in job dissatisfaction, disengagement, and even job loss. These outcomes can ultimately undermine the university's ranking and reputation.

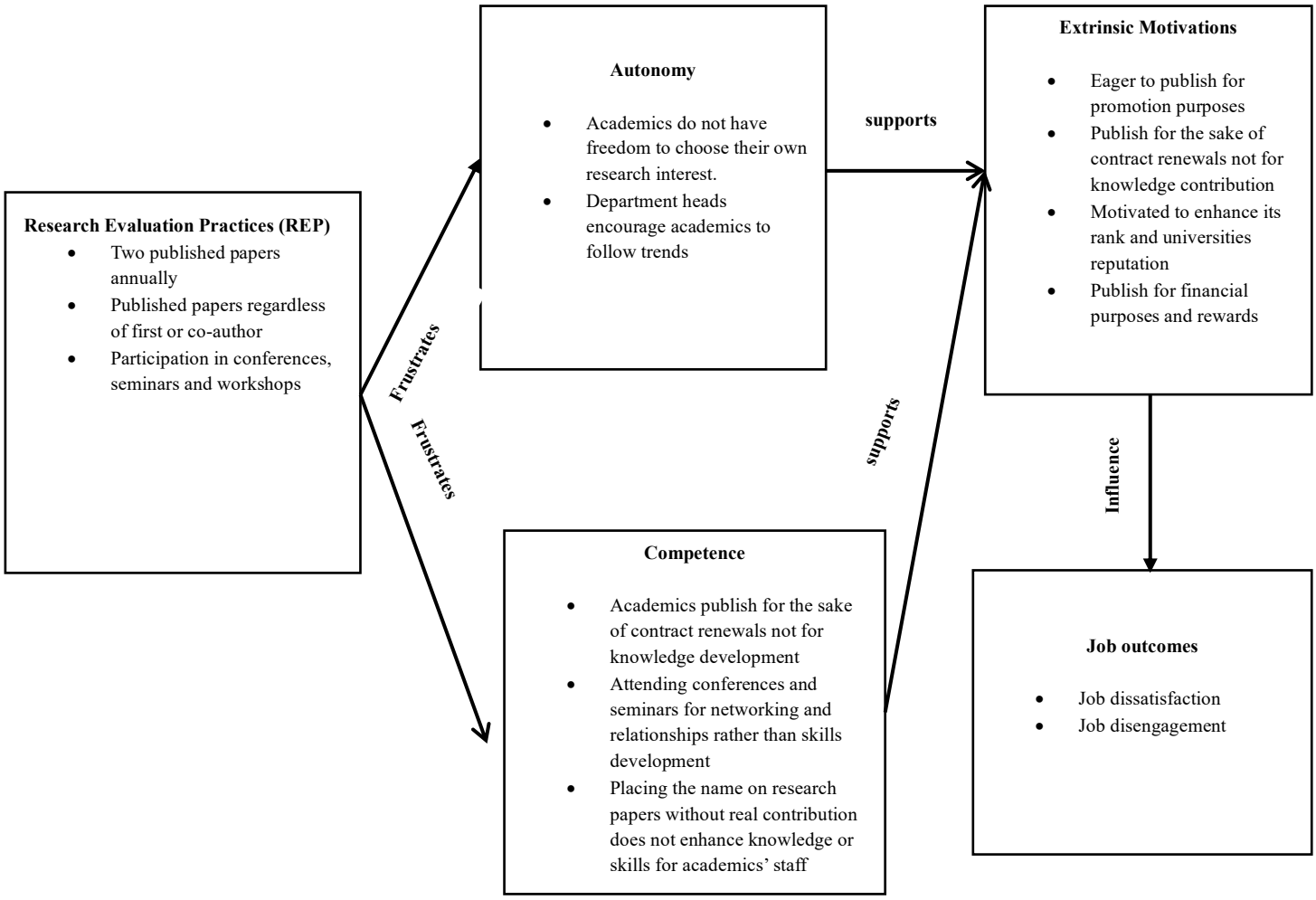


Figure 4-3: REP effects on needs satisfaction and motivations

4.2.2 Teaching evaluation practices (TEP)

The second type of assessing academic staff's performance after the research evaluation practice is teaching evaluation practice. Participants indicated that university departments use four main methods to evaluate the teaching dimension, namely student feedback, peer observation of teaching, teaching portfolios and learning analytics. All of these will be

presented here under the teaching evaluation practice theme, followed by their effects on the psychological needs of satisfaction and motivation.

Students' evaluation of teaching is conducted by students, taking place once at the end of each semester through an electronic questionnaire that students fill out before receiving the grade for the prescribed subject. Upon completion of the questionnaire, the student's grades appear immediately. Various indicators and criteria are utilised to evaluate academic employees in this dimension, such as knowledge delivery, teaching strategies, dealing with students, exam levels, and general attitudes:

> *"The focus here is on three main aspects: knowledge delivery, the utilisation of a variety of methods in teaching, and the support provided for students; this includes commitment to lectures and the design of a syllabus, encompassing quizzes, exams, activities, and extracurricular activities." (Ahmed, Assistant professor in Finance and Banking)*

> *"Students' standards like knowledge delivery, dealing with students, exam revision, and answering students' enquiries either academics or general? I mean, it is a survey that tests the academic performance in general." (Alex, Associate Professor in Arabic Studies).*

William emphasised the importance of student evaluations that assess both managerial and academic aspects of faculty performance to maximise student learning outcomes by focusing on indicators such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes:

> *"Is the faculty member committed to attending the lecture time? Does the faculty member adhere to the designated lecture schedule? Does the faculty member employ innovative teaching methods such as PowerPoint presentations and group work? Does the faculty member possess sufficient knowledge? Does the faculty member develop a clear plan for the lectures?" (William, Head of Digital Media Department)*

Interviewees indicated that students assess academic staff based on both academic and managerial factors. Academic factors encompass subject-related elements such as subject syllabus, quizzes, exams, seminars, and practical projects. Managerial factors, on the other hand, pertain to student-centred aspects such as teaching methods, student well-being, and attendance policies. Both sides of the assessment are capable of providing a clear picture regarding the academic employee's performance in the classroom. However, Tracey, Susan,

Lizzie, Robert, Shireen, and Stam opposed and criticised the idea of students evaluating faculty members, citing students' lack of competence and readiness to assess academic performance:

> *"I feel sometimes not all the students are mature enough to evaluate academic performance; they may sometimes evaluate based on their emotions and relations with that faculty member." (Lizzie, Assistant Professor in Software Engineering at the Faculty of Information Technology)*

> *"Students in our culture evaluate based on subjective impressions; if they have good relationships with academics' staff, they will evaluate them positively, and vice versa." (Heba, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Business for Accreditation and Quality Affairs)*

They also argued that students often complete evaluation questionnaires as a mere formality to receive their own marks for the assigned subject, as filling out the assessment questionnaire for academic employees is a prerequisite for students to obtain their final marks at the end of the term:

> *"Honestly, this is not a fair assessment because students tick the boxes quickly, to the max or to the low, to get their marks without any consideration of the importance of evaluating the academic staff. It is possible that a faculty member may or may not deserve it. I got 100/100 in one of the evaluations, and I was so upset because I know that students evaluated me for the purpose of obtaining the score only, and not for the purpose of improving my performance." (Victoria, Assistant Professor in Design and Graphic Communication).*

> *"I believe the issue with this type of evaluation is that it is aligned to students' grades for the prescribed subject; this makes students rush through the process just to see their marks." (John, Head of Humanities Department)*

Peer evaluation of teaching is the second way of measuring teaching performance for academic staff. The results indicate that colleagues observe classroom teaching using structured rubrics and standards such as curriculum alignment, teaching methods, classroom management and engagement strategies. According to the findings, this approach provides professional feedback rather than subjective opinions. In addition, peers understand academic standards and teaching challenges, making their evaluation more valid for academics:

"We have peer evaluation of teaching, where one of the colleagues in the departments attends one of my lectures and assesses my performance based on fixed indicators like knowledge, skills, curriculum alignment and student engagement." (Emma, Assistant Professor in Accounting)

"Every semester or year, it depends on the department, a visitor attends a lecture for me and evaluates my teaching delivery to students; it is a bit stressful, but it is fine." (Shireen, Lecturer in interior design)

Although this is a valid way of assessing teaching performance as it removes subjective interpretations, it has been criticised by a few participants due to cultural reasons and lack of experience:

"I do not accept someone younger than me, with less experience and fewer qualifications assessing my performance; I show them all the respect, but I do not like it, it feels odd." (Hala, Head of the Marketing Department)

"I think in our culture, it doesn't work very well, because we think the age and academic achievement are enough to prevent someone from assessing or even criticising our work." (John, Head of the Humanities Department)

"One of the evaluators just arrived at the department, how can they assess my performance? I have plenty of publications and hundreds of recorded lectures, I think the system needs to be reconsidered." (Isabela, Assistant Professor in Architecture and Design)

It is noted from the above quotes that there is a divergence of opinions regarding the nature of peer evaluation. While some participants support it as essential for improving skills and identifying weaknesses more clearly, others oppose it, arguing that it is unacceptable for academics' performance to be evaluated by peers for cultural reasons and due to differences such as age, academic achievement, and perceived competence.

Teaching portfolios represent the third way of assessing academics' teaching performance, as indicated by the interview results. This method of evaluation is conducted by department heads twice a semester, once at the beginning and again at the end, to observe the development and progress made over time. Department heads review a variety of dimensions such as course materials, learning outcomes, assessment strategies, sample student work, reflections and

projects or innovations such as scientific visits conducted during the term. According to the findings, this way of evaluation provides a more holistic and comprehensive assessment of teaching performance across the semester, not only for a single moment:

> *"At the end of the term, we upload all the required documents to the HR system, so they can be reviewed by the department heads for our regular assessment." (Maria, Assistant Professor in English Literature)*

> *"We are evaluated based on the materials we prepare, such as the course slides, projects designed for this subject, scientific visits and assessment and exams strategies." (Andy, Assistant Professor in Finance and Banking)*

> *"I think this method of evaluation is good because it ensures that we are on the right track to achieving the students' learning outcomes" (Alex, Associate Professor in Arabic Studies)*

The final method of evaluating teaching performance is through the use of learning analytics by department heads. In this approach, evaluators observe students' engagement, attendance, completion rates, satisfaction with the content, competencies achieved and interaction with course materials. This method enables department heads to assess students' satisfaction and determine whether it aligns with the intended learning outcomes:

> *"Looking at dashboards and analytical screens is paramount for us as department heads because it provides insight into the level of student satisfaction." (Robert, Head of the Accounting Department)*

> *"Attendance rates, interaction with course materials, and student satisfaction are considered key indicators for assessing academics' teaching performance through digital teaching platforms." (Ava, Assistant Professor in Science Teaching Methods)*

To summarise, teaching evaluation practices in universities are conducted using a variety of methods, as identified in the findings: student evaluations of teaching, peer evaluations, teaching portfolios, and learning analytics. Each method employs different indicators, all of which are important for achieving student learning outcomes and enhancing student satisfaction. While some participants support these methods, others oppose them for the reasons discussed above. The following section examines the effects of teaching evaluation

practices on the satisfaction of psychological needs, as well as on academics' motivation and engagement, based on the participants' responses.

4.2.2.1 Teaching evaluation practices' influence on needs satisfaction

The findings not only reveal the teaching evaluation practices that universities use to assess academics' performance but also identify how these practices influence the satisfaction of psychological needs, which is paramount for academics' motivation, engagement and job satisfaction. Students' evaluation of teaching frustrates their need for autonomy as it makes academics feel pressured to teach in ways that satisfy students' wishes or engagement metrics rather than pursuing a pedagogically sound or personally meaningful approach. In addition, the evaluation based on emotions and subjective perspectives according to their opinions does not provide a real picture of academics' performance, making them feel pressured and controlled:

> *"Sometimes I feel I have to change my teaching style just to get good student evaluations, even if it is not the way I think is best for learning." (Layla, Associate Professor in Pharmacy)*

> *"I have the feeling of stress while preparing the content to ensure that students' satisfaction is achieved because we are in the private sector, where customers voices are heard and the customers are students in this case." (Tracey, Head of the Radio and Television Department)*

> *"Students' feedback is not guaranteed in our department because we know students evaluate academics quickly for the sake of obtaining their marks, not for the sake of knowledge development. Therefore, the evaluation method makes academics feel controlled and stressed." (Lizzie, Assistant Professor in Software Engineering at the Faculty of Information Technology)*

Furthermore, the overemphasis on quantitative indicators, such as teaching portfolios and learning analytics, where academics have to show their attendance rates, curriculum completion rates, assignment strategies preparation, exam preparation, scientific visit

preparation and students' satisfaction rates, frustrate the need of autonomy as they feel they are pressured by external sides:

> *"Preparing teaching portfolios every semester makes me feel monitored. I'm not doing it because it improves my teaching, but because the university requires all these documents for evaluation purposes" (Ahmed, Assistant Professor in Finance and Banking)*

> *"The pressure to maintain high attendance and satisfaction rates makes me change my teaching style just to avoid negative analytics, not because I believe it's the right approach." (Heba, Vice Dean for Accreditation and Quality Affairs)*

> *"I am not satisfied with the content I deliver to students, but I have to deliver it because we are asked to upload the course materials in the HR system for evaluation purposes." (Ali, Senior Lecturer in Political Science)*

Regarding teaching practice evaluation and competence, skills and knowledge development cultivated through education, training, and experience are essential components of competence. The findings show that students' evaluation of teaching and learning analytics frustrate the need for competence. When academic performance is highly subjective or biased based on students' emotions, academic staff feel ineffective without leading to identify the points needing enhancement, which means that this evaluation frustrates competence:

> *"I do not think students who are born in the Middle East are accustomed to evaluating experts in the field; they just evaluate for the purpose of getting their marks and, this provides unreal picture for our skills development." (Jose, Assistant Professor in e-Business and Commerce)*

> *"Student evaluations are too subjective. I want feedback that helps me improve, not just ratings that make me feel like I'm failing; that's why this evaluation does not add anything for our skills and knowledge." (Maria, Assistant Professor in English Literature)*

It is the same for learning analytics: if academics' performance is judged by metrics such as attendance, students' satisfaction score, number of projects done, and number of scientific visits, ignoring the side of qualitative improvement or pedagogical quality, academic staff may

feel that their true skills are not recognised and it is very difficult to identify the weak points that need enhancing:

> *"I want feedback that helps me grow, not comments like 'the class was boring' or 'the exam was hard.' This kind of evaluation hurts my confidence instead of developing my competence." (Shireen, Lecturer in Interior Design)*

> *"Students judge based on their emotions. When they're unhappy with their marks, I get the blame. It makes me feel ineffective as a lecturer." (Arda, Assistant Professor in Computer Science)*

> *"When students evaluate me poorly because they didn't like their grade, I don't learn anything about my teaching skills. It just makes me feel like I'm not competent." (Kelly, Assistant Professor in Interior Design)*

Although peer evaluation and teaching portfolios provide constructive feedback, allowing academics to identify strengths and weaknesses, it makes them feel stressed and controlled because they believe the quantitative metrics are not enough to provide a clear picture for academics:

> *"Peer evaluation helps me improve but knowing someone is sitting at the back watching every move is stressful. It feels more like control than development." (Isla, Lecturer in Accounting and Finance)*

> *"The portfolio is useful, but it reduces my work into numbers how many slides, how many activities, how many assessments. That doesn't really show the quality of my teaching". (Isabela, Assistant Professor in Architecture and Design)*

> *"Sometimes I feel monitored rather than supported. Peers observe one lecture, but they don't see the continuous effort I put in throughout the whole semester." (Hala, Head of the Marketing Department)*

Overall, teaching evaluation practices with all four components, i.e., students' evaluation, peer evaluation of teaching, teaching portfolios and learning analytics, frustrate the psychological needs of both autonomy and competence due to the fact that these quantitative metrics provide

an unreal picture for academic staff, making them feel incompetent. Furthermore, academics in the findings believe that due to the students' culture in the Middle East, such assessments are done for obtaining marks, not for the sake of skills development. This creates a significant gap for department heads in terms of knowing the real skills and knowledge gaps that need better enhancements. Figure 4-4 illustrates the impact of teaching evaluation practices, the second indicator of academic performance assessment, on the psychological needs of autonomy and competence. The next section provides further results regarding the effect of teaching evaluation practices on not only needs satisfaction but also motivation, both of which are important for job engagement, well-being and satisfaction.

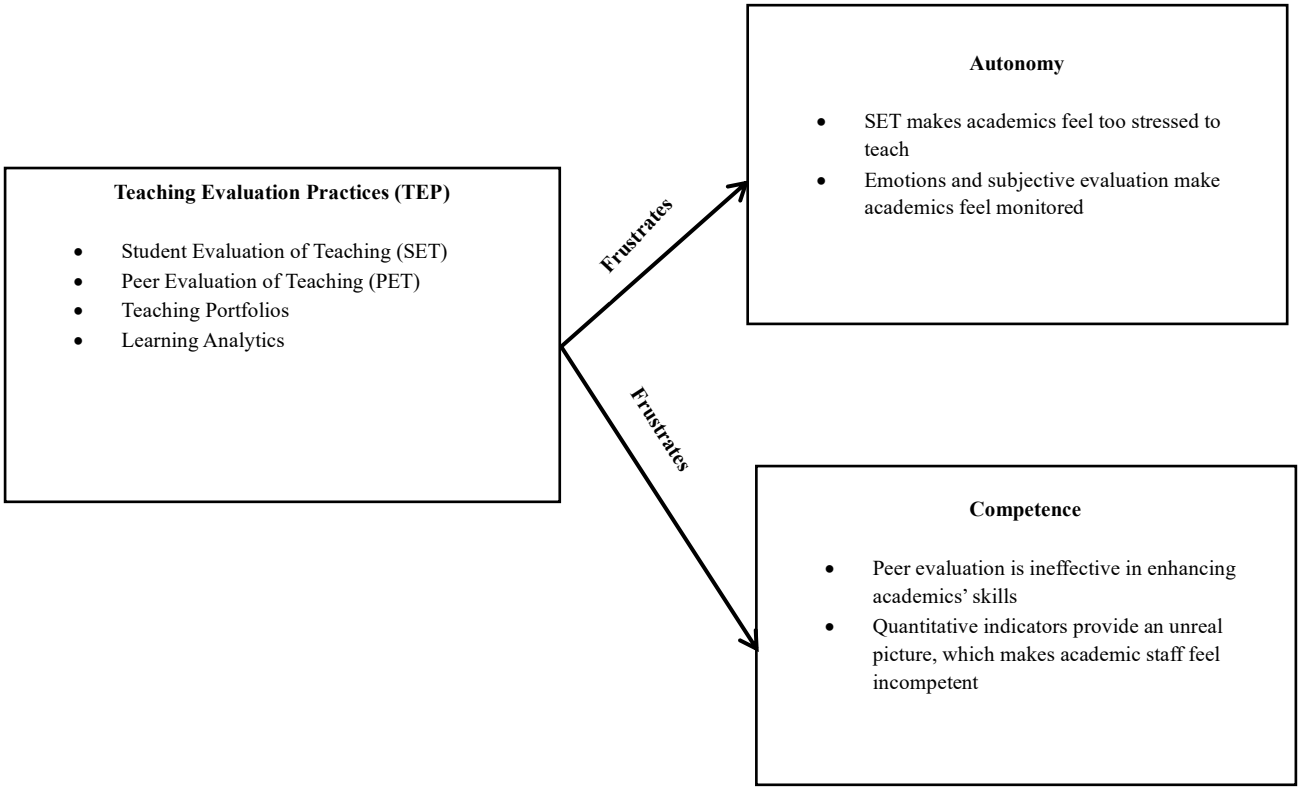


Figure 4-4: TEP's effects on needs satisfaction

4.2.2.2 Teaching evaluation practices' effects on motivation

Teaching evaluation, as mentioned above, is assessed using four methods: student evaluation of teaching, peer evaluation, teaching portfolios, and learning analytics. All of these practices undermine the satisfaction of both autonomy and competence needs. According to the findings, intrinsic motivation, considered the highest form of individual motivation, is weakened due to the unreliability and subjectivity of student evaluations, which makes academics teach to avoid problems rather than teach from genuine interest or commitment.

When academics feel that their teaching performance is judged through emotionally biased student feedback, strict rubrics, or quantitative metrics, they begin teaching to satisfy evaluation requirements rather than to enhance student learning. Consequently, long-term professional fulfilment decreases, supporting controlled extrinsic motivation and reducing intrinsic motivation, which ultimately leads to job stress and burnout.

> *"I adjust my course exams and projects to match students' satisfaction. We have become experts in this, and we know how to achieve their satisfaction." (Ava, Assistant Professor in Science Teaching Methods)*

> *"The process of waiting for students' evaluation results makes me feel stressed and anxious because some universities rely on student feedback to make decisions regarding contract renewals." (Emma, Assistant Professor in Accounting)*

> *"All evaluations are just numbers, dashboards, scores, and indicators. We are simply following numbers like sales staff. I am not motivated anymore; I am just working for the sake of working to receive money to cover my living expenses." (Victoria, Assistant Professor in Design and Graphic Communication)*

Furthermore, the reliance on quantitative indicators, such as student attendance rates, student satisfaction scores, engagement metrics, dashboards, and other numerical measures, makes academics feel stressed, which undermines intrinsic motivation and reinforces controlled extrinsic motivation. As a result, academic staff begin working primarily to achieve favourable student-related metrics rather than to fulfil the university's broader educational goals. This ultimately leads to job burnout and disengagement:

"We are controlled by the system. We have to achieve student satisfaction and meet the university's teaching goals, even if we disagree with them." (Hala, Head of the Marketing Department)

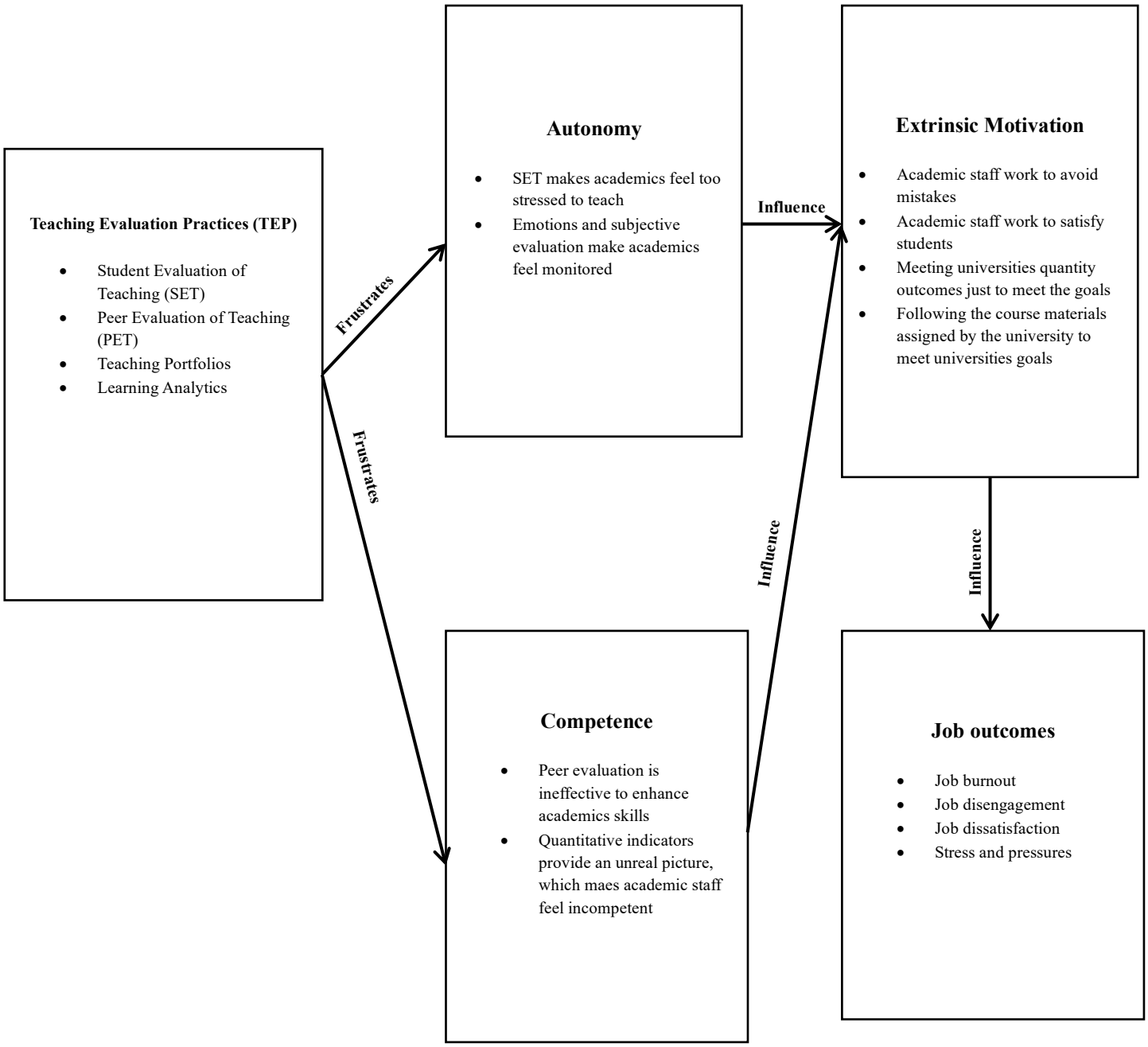
"I used to be motivated to come and teach, but the more quality assurance requirements we have, the more control there is over our tasks. We feel like we are exhausted." (Lara, Assistant Professor in Mathematics)

"I don't like my colleague assessing my teaching performance. This way of evaluation makes me feel fake and inauthentic, as if I am only working to make the lesson appear successful". (Stam, Lecturer in Interior Design)

It is noted from the above points that teaching evaluation practices, student evaluations of teaching, peer evaluation of teaching, teaching portfolios, and learning analytics not only undermine the need satisfaction of autonomy and competence but also diminish intrinsic motivation and reinforce controlled extrinsic motivation. These evaluation methods make academics work primarily to avoid mistakes and to satisfy students, rather than to genuinely enhance learning or achieve personal fulfilment. Furthermore, the heavy reliance on quantitative measures, while neglecting qualitative indicators, contributes to job burnout, disengagement, and dissatisfaction among academic staff.

Figure 4-5 summarises the influence of teaching evaluation practices on motivation through the lens of SDT. As noted earlier, students' teaching evaluations were perceived as undermining both autonomy and competence, affecting controlled motivation rather than intrinsically driven motivation. Participants emphasised that this form of controlled motivation negatively affects job satisfaction, leading to disengagement, burnout and diminished well-being.

Figure 4-5: TEP's effects on needs satisfaction and motivations



4.2.3 Community services evaluation practices (CSEP)

The last way of assessing academic staff's performance in universities, according to the findings, is community services. This can involve providing services such as free workshops and lectures on topics like job interview preparation, resume writing, work-life balance, health and safety, entrepreneurship, environmental issues, and other subjects relevant to students and staff within their own college or department, as well as to those in other departments or colleges. Ahmad, Jose, Ashley, Tracey, Andy, and Victoria identified the community services as a valuable contribution to the community:

> *"The community services indicators include giving free or paid lectures to students from other colleges, guiding students in a programme or project that serves society, and providing free workshops for the staff in other departments and schools." (Ahmed, Assistant Professor in Finance and Banking).*

> *" I mean, for example, our university is keen to provide services to the local community to guide our students and faculty members' projects and research to target local communities near the university in order to implement field projects for the benefit of all sectors and sectors of society." (Ashley, Head of Film, Television and Theatre Design at X university)*

Based on these examples, it is clear that community services practice is primarily internal, focusing on services provided to students and staff within the university, college, and department.

Additionally, Participants explained that community service evaluation practices formed a relatively small component of the overall performance management system in comparison to research and teaching evaluation practices. According to participants, research performance represented approximately 60% of the total evaluation criteria, while community service activities accounted for only 10%, with the remaining percentage allocated to teaching-related activities. Despite its limited weighting within the formal evaluation system, community service remained an institutional requirement through which academics demonstrated societal engagement and external representation of the university:

"Community service only represents around 10% of the evaluation system, while most of the focus is placed on research publications." (John, The head of Humanities department)

"We provide evidence such as certificates, workshops, seminars, and participation in social activities to prove our community service contributions during annual evaluation." (Lara, Assistant professor in Math)

"Although community service is included within the evaluation system, it carries much less weight compared to research output, which remains the university's main priority."(Layla, Associate professor in Pharmacy)

These findings also suggest that community service evaluation practices were formally recognised within institutional performance systems but occupied a comparatively limited role relative to research performance indicators. Nevertheless, participants perceived community engagement activities as important for strengthening social contribution, institutional visibility, and academics' sense of belonging and societal value. Furthermore, Participants also reported that evidence of community service was typically documented through certificates of participation, official invitation letters, attendance records, photographs, conference presentations, or reports submitted to department heads and university administration. In several cases, academics were required to include these activities within annual performance review files as supporting evidence of institutional and societal engagement.

"We submit certificates and evidence of workshops, seminars, or community activities as part of our annual evaluation file." (Isabela, Professor assistant in architecture and design)

"Community service exists in the evaluation system, but its weighting is much smaller compared to research publications." (Hala, Head of the Marketing Department)

Although community service contributed less directly to promotion and contract renewal decisions, participants perceived it as an important institutional expectation that reflected academics' contribution to society and strengthened the university's public image and community relationships

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that community service evaluation practices constituted a formally recognised yet comparatively limited component of the overall performance management system within Jordanian private universities. Although community service activities accounted for only a small proportion of the evaluation criteria relative to research and teaching performance, participants nevertheless viewed them as meaningful forms of academic and societal contribution. The findings further indicate that universities assessed community engagement through documented evidence such as certificates, workshops, seminars, reports, and participation records submitted during annual evaluations. While these activities had less direct influence on promotion and contract renewal decisions, they remained important for enhancing institutional visibility, strengthening university-community relationships, and fostering academics' sense of social contribution and belonging. Therefore, unlike research evaluation practices, which were primarily associated with external pressures and performance monitoring, community service practices were more closely linked to collaboration, engagement, and relational aspects of academic work.

4.2.3.1 Community service valuation's influence on needs satisfaction

The findings reveal that community service practice plays a crucial role in fulfilling academic staff's psychological need for relatedness, as outlined in SDT. Participants described how the evaluation of their internal and external community activities contributed to a sense of connection with colleagues, students, and the broader university environment. Academic staff are evaluated based on their participation in delivering lectures or workshops to students or staff members beyond their usual teaching responsibilities. These practices not only serve institutional objectives but also foster a collaborative and supportive academic atmosphere, which positively supports relatedness. As one participant noted:

> *"When I was invited to deliver a training on how to protect your social media accounts, it gave me the chance to connect with different students and colleagues; I feel more part of the university, and I had the sense to keep them safe and aware of using these platforms." (Lorina, Assistant Professor in Software Engineering at the Faculty of Information Technology)*

"When you assess how much I contribute to the society whether local or public one, this makes me feel engaged with the community which enhances my belonging to the place and the land." (Stam, Assistant Professor in Accounting)

Furthermore, universities also assess community services through involvement in public-facing events, such as organising social gatherings during Ramadan and Eid. These cultural events were seen as important opportunities for strengthening interpersonal ties and building a sense of community. One academic explained:

"Ramadan activities are more than just obligations; they're moments where we share, laugh, and support each other. It really boosts our sense of belonging." (Susan, Assistant Professor in Finance and Banking)

"Of course, we have a university club that is specialised in organising events like parties, sports events, trips, and cultural seminars for academics at the university. The reason behind it is to keep academics engaged and being as one family." (Layla, Associate Professor in Pharmacy)

It can be noted from the above examples that the indicators used to assess academics' connections and engagement with societies support the psychological need of relatedness, which makes them contribute to better well-being and improved health.

Many participants also mentioned that community services evaluation practices were often facilitated by university-based social clubs or committees, which regularly organised cultural trips, competitions, or annual dinners. Such efforts were described as contributing to improved well-being, motivation, and morale across faculties. This leads to supporting the psychological need of autonomy, as academics have the freedom to choose their own activities within the social club, and they are evaluated based on that:

"We have a social committee in each college; they arrange a dinner together from time to time, we have social trips to the beach together, we gather to break the fast in Ramadan, and we do a lot of different activities during the term. So, we feel like we work as a family." (Stam, Assistant Professor in Accounting)

"We have something called the Social Committee, where events and activities are well organised. In fact, we are in the Department of Basic Sciences. Thank God, we are a family. I mean, even if we differ in points of view, but on the contrary, I mean, we are one family." (Lara, Assistant Professor in Mathematics)

"The social club in our universities allows us to select the activities we need to participate in this year; I chose this year to organise a free conference for the public raising their awareness about cyber extortion." (Maria, Assistant Professor in English Literature)

It can be seen from the above examples that this community services evaluation practice supports the need for autonomy, when academic staff choose the time, type and form of community services they need to do this year; this makes them engage with their interests and expertise and gives them a sense of meaningful contribution to society beyond the routine academic tasks.

Regarding competence, the way of assessing academics via community services also supports the need for competence, as the results indicate that academic staff gain practical experience in public communication and receive valuable feedback from people when they deliver their knowledge. This is seen by participants as a valuable and meaningful way of enhancing their weaknesses and increasing their awareness about community engagement:

"The feedback I receive after these sessions always boosts my confidence. It reminds me that I am competent and that my experience is valued beyond the classroom." (Kelly, Assistant Professor in Interior Design)

"When I deliver workshops to the local community, I actually feel like I'm improving my communication skills. It pushes me to simplify complex ideas and that makes me feel more capable as an academic." (Shireen, Lecturer in Interior Design)

Overall, the integration of community services into performance evaluation criteria was not only seen as a professional expectation but also as a meaningful way to support the psychological need of relatedness, helping academic staff feel connected, valued, and engaged in their academic communities, which motivates them to provide more. Figure 4-6 summarises the influence of community service practices on the psychological need of relatedness. In private universities in Jordan, academics are typically assessed on their involvement in social

and community activities, such as organising, participating in, or contributing to events throughout the year. Participants indicated that this method of assessment fosters engagement and strengthens connections within the academic community, which in turn enhances their psychological well-being. In this regard, community evaluation practices were viewed as a valuable component of performance assessment, as they support the need for relatedness, a key factor in sustaining academic staff motivation, satisfaction, and overall engagement, which is presented in the next paragraph.

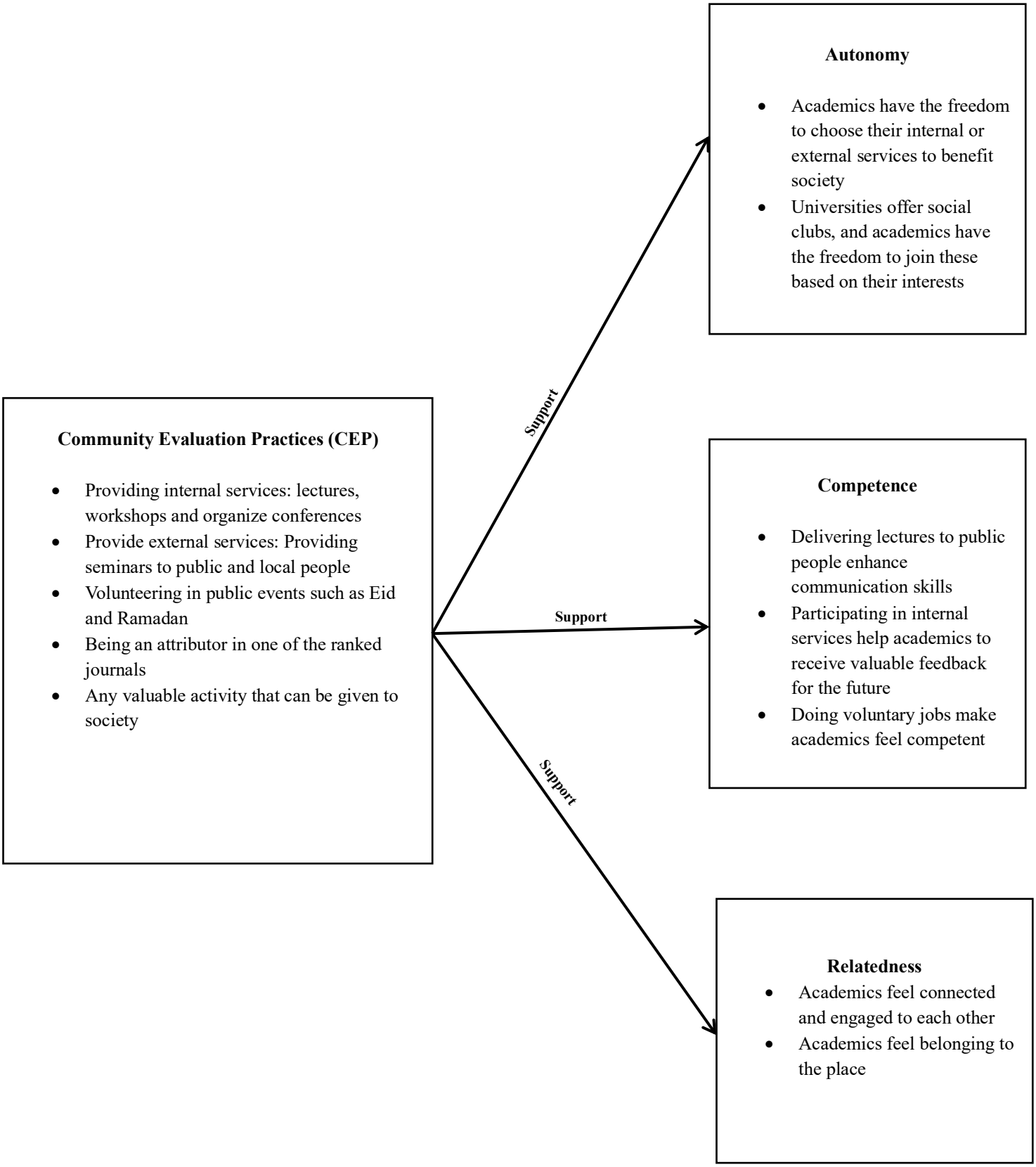


Figure 4-6: Community Services Evaluation's effects on needs satisfaction

4.2.3.2 Community service evaluation practices' effects on motivation

It is noted from the above that community service evaluation practices assess academic staff on internal indicators, such as lectures and seminars for colleagues, students and staff within the education environment, as well as external indicators such as voluntary jobs for the public, providing lectures and seminars for the public. This approach supports the satisfaction of autonomy, competence and relatedness needs, with a positive impact on intrinsic motivation. The results indicate that the freedom to join social clubs within the university increases competence satisfaction, leading to higher intrinsic motivation as academics feel capable, effective and value the purpose of the task:

> *"Delivering workshops and seminars makes me feel more competent. When I see that people benefit from my sessions, it motivates me from within not because it's required, but because I feel effective and capable." (Isabela, Professor Assistant in Architecture and Design)*

> *"Whether it's giving a lecture for our students or doing voluntary work outside the university, these activities make me feel connected to people. That sense of connection really encourages me and keeps me motivated." (John, Head of the Humanities Department)*

> *"Joining social clubs inside the university really boosts my confidence. Being part of these groups helps me develop new skills, and that makes me more motivated to contribute and participate." (Victoria, Assistant Professor in Design and Graphic Communication)*

In addition, assessing the number of charitable initiatives they have contributed to, e.g., their public voluntary work such as helping the poor during Ramadan, increases relatedness satisfaction as academics experience teamwork and social recognition. Furthermore, they feel that their work is appreciated and valued by the wider community. This leads to enhanced intrinsic motivation as it makes academics feel engaged, positive and meaningfully connected to society. This has a positive and significant impact in that it improves the psychological well-being of academic lecturers. It also motivates them to work independently to serve the community and directly impact it, which ultimately serves the nation and its people and improves the university's reputation:

"If a faculty member has a membership at the university cultural club, they make trips, they organise events, and they make annual dinners twice a year. They make a cold breakfast and the annual breakfast for Ramadan, so they feel like they live as one family. This motivates me to wake up every day and go to work." (Emma, Assistant Professor in Accounting)

"We have a university club that is specialised in organising events like parties, sports events, trips, and cultural seminars for academics at the university. The reason behind it is to keep academics engaged and enhance our well-being and work as one family." (Susan, Assistant Professor in Finance and Banking)

"Joining social clubs inside the university really boosts my confidence. Being part of these groups helps me develop new skills, and that makes me more motivated to contribute and participate" (Susan, Assistant Professor in Finance and Banking)

Figure 4-7 summarises the influence of community service evaluation practices on job performance and satisfaction. As discussed earlier, community service is a formal component of academic performance assessment in Jordanian private universities, although it typically carries the lowest weight among evaluation criteria. Participants reported that measuring social and community activities strengthens the psychological need for relatedness, as it fosters a sense of belonging and mutual care among colleagues. This sense of connection was perceived as reducing reliance on extrinsic motivation while enhancing intrinsic motivation, which in turn positively influences engagement, satisfaction, and well-being. Several participants recommended that community service evaluation should be more actively implemented in practice, rather than remaining a symbolic requirement, in order to ensure meaningful engagement, satisfaction, and long-term sustainability.

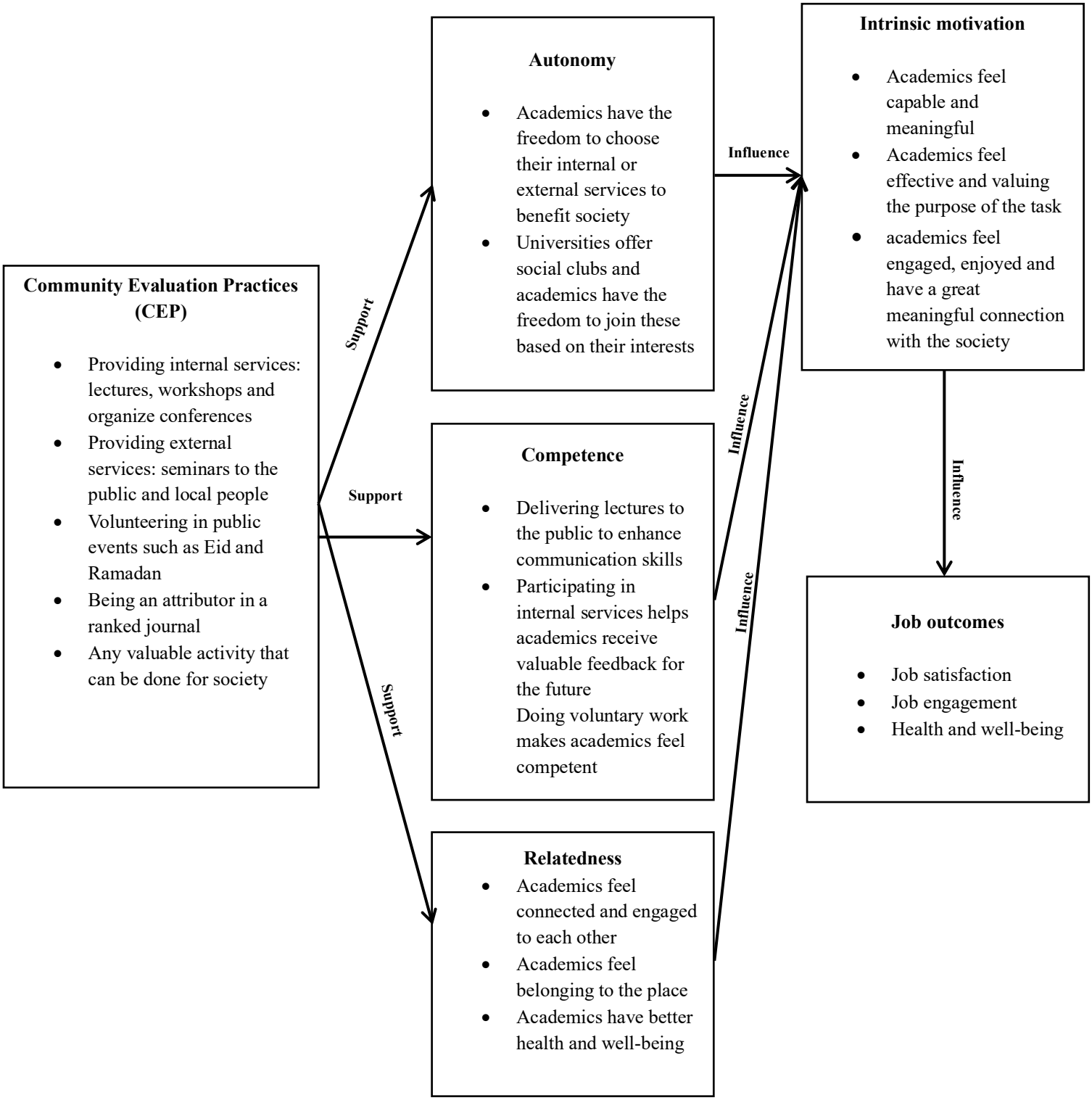


Figure 4-7: *CSEP's influences on needs satisfaction and motivations*

4.3 Academic Staff's Motivations in Jordanian Universities

Academic motivation in Jordanian private universities is one of the findings that participants shared when asked about the most important incentives that motivate them to work in academia. Accordingly, subthemes were generated containing codes that reflect their meaning, and all subthemes were categorised under this larger theme. The subthemes that were generated, and around which we review the most important findings, are "Extrinsic motivation", which addresses the most prominent external incentives that influence academic performance and satisfaction. "Intrinsic motivation" is also addressed, and its importance in this educational environment is identified. It is worth mentioning that this sub-theme has also been classified under many sub-themes, and these results are presented in detail for each sub-theme and sub-sub-theme in the following paragraph.

4.3.1 Extrinsic motivations

Participants emphasised the importance of extrinsic incentives in their daily work and their impact on their overall performance, job satisfaction, and work engagement. Participants emphasised that there are three types of extrinsic motivation among academic staff in Jordanian private universities: "financial incentives", "logistics incentives" and "financial research incentives." Each of these aspects will be addressed below.

4.3.1.1 Financial incentives

A significant number of academics, slightly more than a third, emphasised the pivotal role of money as their primary and fundamental motivator, considering it an extrinsic motivator. They assert that without financial means, progress in their lives would be impeded, hindering their ability to meet basic and secondary expenses:

> *"The financial motivation is my main motivation. We all need money for life, Even if I work the easiest job offer, we still need money in return to what we give." (Arda, Assistant Professor in Computer Science at Y university)*

> *"My motivation is money; I get up early, and I strive to earn money to secure my living expenses." (Susan, Assistant Professor in Finance and Banking)*

They also added that financial returns (i.e., salaries) are considered fuel for life, and without money, it would be challenging to cover these living expenses. This kind of motivation keeps academic staff engaged, happy, satisfied and eager to provide more and meet universities expectations.

4.3.1.2 Logistics incentives

Another kind of financial incentive can be termed logistics incentives. This is specifically mentioned here in reference to the special costs of attending or participating in regional or international conferences, i.e., the conference registration fees, travel costs, accommodation, transportation, and other expenses. This also motivates academics to always participate in this type of conference, which in turn plays a major role in improving their job satisfaction and enhancing the university's reputation.

> *"Regarding conferences. The university constantly encourages conference attendance. It supports a conference in terms of plane tickets, hotel accommodation, and daily expenses." (Andy, Head of Business Administration)*

> *"The university supports the conferences financially, from flight tickets to hotel reservations to all the expenses needed during the conference." (Saka, Assistant Professor in Accounting).*

4.3.1.3 Financial research incentives

The final type of extrinsic motivation that emerges from the findings is financial research incentives, where academics are given financial incentives and rewards based on the quantity and quality of their publications annually. This plays a significant role in motivating academic staff to engage in research and publication activities. Staff from all three universities (X, Y, and Z) praised the importance of offering financial rewards for publications to encourage academics to publish and expand their knowledge in the field. The amount of the research incentive varies depending on the journal's impact factor or ranking. Publishing in top-ranked journals such as Scopus Q1 or Q2 is different from publishing in Scopus Q3 or Q4. Participants like Ahmad, Ava, Emma, Jose, and Kelly support this point of view:

"We also have incentives in regard to scientific research; if we publish in Q1 and Q2 we get 1000 JOD; if we publish in Q3 and Q4, we get 800 JOD. This encourages us to publish more to increase the citation and the university rank." (Ava, Assistant Professor in Science Teaching Methods)

"We receive living expenses compensation, we receive thirteen salaries, and we receive 1000 JOD if we publish in Q1 and Q2 journals. These are the main incentives we receive." (Emma, Assistant Professor in Accounting at Z university)

It is noted from the above examples that publication in high-ranking journals keeps academics updated within the field and keeps them engaged with the subject. Universities in Jordan encourage academics to keep publishing in their fields, as this will meet the university's objectives, which are in line with the Ministry of Education's objectives. Also, it will contribute to and affect students' educational outcomes, as they will be updated with the latest knowledge in the field. Furthermore, the participants indicated that research financial incentives support their extrinsic motivation and significantly affect their engagement and satisfaction:

"When I receive money, I am motivated to publish more in order to receive more money, that's what achieve happiness for me." (Ava, Assistant Professor in Science Teaching Methods)

"Papers publication is the most motivation element that motivates me to publish in academia." (Claire, Assistant Professor in Interior Design)

Financial incentives emerge as a significant motivator for the academic employees, as evidenced by their responses. While not the sole motivating factor for all participants, approximately one-third of the sample, or ten academic staff members, identified financial considerations as a primary motivation. The financial incentives here refers to money as a basic motivator, as all people, even academics, work for money to meet their daily financial needs. The second incentive concerning money relates to attending internal and external workshops and conferences, here termed logistics incentives. Securing the financial needs for attending conferences motivates academics to advance in their field of knowledge, which will positively reflect on their productivity at work and directly affect the outcomes of students' education and the reputation of the university and the country. And finally, research financial incentives also

refer to when academic staff receive financial rewards upon publication; the higher the rank of the journal in which they publish, the more financial reward they will receive, and this research incentive significantly supports academics' research performance, engagement and satisfaction.

4.3.1.4 Motivational Environment

The findings reveal that a positive work environment and a sense of belonging are crucial factors in motivating academic staff. Participants highlighted the importance of factors such as respect, appreciation, and opportunities for professional growth. Many participants emphasised the importance of feeling valued and respected by colleagues and administrators. They noted that recognition for their contributions, such as through awards, certificates, or public acknowledgements, can significantly boost morale, motivation and well-being:

> *"The appreciation is far better than other motivational aspects, in my opinion. I feel motivated when my voice is heard, when my effort is appreciated, and when my notes are taken into consideration. This is something better than money for me." (Hala, Head of the Marketing Department)*
>
> *"Appreciation is a very expensive thing that should be given for free; it costs nothing, but it keeps me moving forward." (James, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Business for Accreditation and Quality Affairs)*
>
> *"I mean, your voice is heard, and you feel that your opinion is reliable. This is the biggest incentive because the financial incentive will end after a while in two days, a week, a month, the moral appreciation is the most important one and enhances our psychological aspect." (William, Head of Digital Media at Y university)*

The above shows that academic productivity is boosted when they receive appreciation and respect from leaders in the field. When their voices are heard, they feel that they are decision-makers; this also boosts their productivity, motivation and well-being, which will positively reflect on their students' performance and the university's reputation. Hence, such interviewees prefer moral motivation, which is considered an intrinsic motivation. A positive work environment characterised by collaboration, support, and mutual respect was also identified as

a key intrinsic motivator and an informal control. Participants highlighted the importance of a supportive work culture where colleagues are willing to help and collaborate:

> *"It is very important when you have a supportive environment that provides the financial and human resources that keep you motivated to give more." (Victoria, Assistant Professor in Design and Graphic Communication).*

The opportunity to engage in research, teaching, and other scholarly activities was also seen as a major motivator here in the motivational environment. Participants valued the chance to develop their skills, share their knowledge, and contribute to their field. Additionally, the support provided by institutions, such as funding for research projects and opportunities for professional development, was highlighted as a significant factor:

> *"The university has provided me with what I need. Here, I was able to develop my personality. I was able to look forward. I was able to implement a program, and I was able to make a dialogue with politicians in the country. I was able to sit with political elites, get to know political elites, and get to know media professionals and journalists." "I was able to compete positively with others in writing scientific research." (Ali, Senior Lecturer in Political Science)*

Overall, the findings suggest that a combination of factors, including respect and appreciation, a positive work environment, and opportunities for professional growth, can contribute to a high level of job satisfaction and motivation among academic staff. By fostering a supportive and stimulating work environment, institutions can attract and retain top talent and create a thriving academic community within Jordanian private universities. This will boost academic productivity and motivation, which will positively reflect on student outcomes and university reputation.

4.3.2 Intrinsic motivations

After presenting the extrinsic motivational approaches favoured by academics in private universities in Jordan, it is pertinent to delve into intrinsic motivational methods that enhance psychological and health aspects, ultimately improving academic performance and, consequently, positively impacting students' learning outcomes. Two main intrinsic motivations preferred by academic employees in the private higher education sector are motivational environment and self-motivation. Both of them are discussed in detail below. Interviewees with this type of motivation do not set the financial reward as the main motivator. However, there are other motivations that keep them in academia and motivate them to provide more from the teaching and research aspects. Such practices add value to the academic experience, leading to a beneficial impact on overall performance and student outcomes. The following examples highlight specific instances praised by the interviewees regarding the best intrinsic motivations for them.

4.3.2.1 Self motivation

The interview data from academics in the field highlights the strong presence of self-motivation among academic staff. This is the second intrinsic motivation that was extracted from the data. The interviewees' drive comes from a combination of internal desires and a sense of responsibility. Passion for knowledge and teaching is one of the self-motivations that keep academic employees motivated. Isabela, Maria, Saka, and Jose emphasised the significance of message delivery; learning and delivering knowledge to students will have a direct impact on their motivation and productivity:

> *"The message I deliver to my students is something that motivates me to wake up every morning and come to university. We help students to move forward in terms of personal development, knowledge, skills, and even attitudes." (Jose, Assistant Professor in e-Business and Commerce).*

> *"The thing that motivates me is the message delivery, the passion of teaching, and the internal motivation to progress my students in terms of knowledge and research." (Maria, Assistant Professor in English Literature at Y university).*

Other participants, such as Lizzie, Susan, Lara, Tracey, and Lorina, praised that self-determination is the main motivation that keeps them moving forward and growing in the field. This plays a high role in their motivation, productivity, and performance.

> *"Self-determination is the main motivation for me. When I see my students got high marks and got good positions in big companies, that makes me so proud of myself. We touch the effect we make on our students". (Lizzie, Assistant Professor in Software Engineering at the Faculty of Information Technology).*

> *"My biggest motivation is students and my relationship with them if I see students happy and comfortable. I mean, for example, when students enrol in the module with me, honestly, it is a sufficient incentive for me. The reputation is something very good." (Lorina, Assistant Professor in Software Engineering at the Faculty of Information Technology).*

This sense of duty and responsibility keeps them motivated and engaged to contribute more, which has a positive impact on academics' satisfaction, engagement and students' learning outcomes. Victoria also focused on the sense of trust and belonging to the place:

> *"Number one is the honesty, or, let's say, the knowledge message. We are accountable for it as an employee who provides educational services regardless of the salary I receive, I have to trust the place, I should belong to this place." (Victoria, Assistant Professor in Design and Graphic Communication)*

The above shows that a few participants are self-motivated to work, passionate about work, and passionate about influencing students and others inside and outside the field because they believe in the idea of leaving a positive impact on students, and this is better than money for them:

> *"Imagine the impact you can have when forty or fifty students' study with you if you leave an impact on only five students, which will be kept for years as they may impact*

other people when they are older." (Heba, Vice Dean for Accreditation and Quality Affairs)

Overall, the findings indicate that academic staff are self-motivated by a combination of factors, primarily passion for teaching and research, which is also prescribed as message delivery and self-determination. These factors contribute to job satisfaction, professional development, and academic performance, ultimately having a positive impact on student learning outcomes and university reputations.

4.4 Contextual Factors Shaping Perforamnce Managmeent And Academic Motivation

4.4.1 Institutional Factors

4.4.1.1.1 Unequal promotion

The findings revealed that institutional promotion structures within private Jordanian universities significantly shaped academic motivation and perceptions of fairness within the performance management system. Participants indicated that although both PhD and Master's holders were required to meet similar research publication requirements for annual evaluation and contract renewal purposes, the rewards and career progression opportunities associated with these requirements differed substantially between the two groups.

Faculty members holding Master's degrees were expected to publish research papers annually in the same manner as PhD holders. However, unlike PhD holders, Master's holders received limited recognition, promotion opportunities, or financial rewards for their research contributions, where similar performance expectations were attached to unequal professional outcomes.

"They ask both PhD and master's holders to publish two papers annually. For me, with a master's, even if I publish in Q1, it does not help my promotion because I cannot be

promoted beyond lecturer. So why should the expectations be the same?" (Layla, Teacher in Education)

"We are evaluated the same as those with PhDs, but our ceiling is low. It feels demotivating when your work doesn't count the same way." (Heba, Vice Dean for Accreditation and Quality Affairs)

Similarly, another academic commented:

"*Sometimes Master's holders feel less motivated because they are required to meet the same research expectations, but there is no clear promotion pathway for them inside the university." (Emma, Assistant Professor in Accounting)*

The findings suggest that the institutional design of performance management systems within private universities is strongly linked to promotion structures and reward allocation mechanisms. Although performance indicators, particularly research publications, were standardised across academic staff, institutional policies differentiated the value attached to these outputs according to academic qualification and rank. This created perceptions of inequity and reduced motivational engagement among some faculty members, particularly Master's holders who viewed research publication as a contractual obligation rather than a pathway for professional growth.

From a performance management perspective, these findings demonstrate that institutional promotion systems shape employee motivation by determining how performance outcomes are recognised and rewarded. The unequal alignment between performance expectations and career advancement opportunities contributed to controlled forms of motivation, where academics engaged in research activities primarily to satisfy institutional requirements rather than pursue meaningful academic development. Such institutional arrangements may weaken perceptions of fairness, reduce long-term engagement, and limit the developmental role of performance management within higher education institutions.

4.4.1.1.2 Research focused promotion

The findings revealed that promotion systems within private Jordanian universities were heavily research-oriented, with academic advancement largely dependent on research publication output. Participants consistently reported that research productivity was prioritised over other academic responsibilities, such as teaching quality, student support, and community

engagement. As a result, academic staff perceived research publication as the primary determinant of promotion, salary progression, and professional recognition within the university.

Academics in the study explained that institutional performance management systems placed significant emphasis on measurable research indicators, particularly the number of published papers, with less attention was given to teaching effectiveness or academic community engagement. The interviewees indicated that research evaluation accounted for 70% of the overall performance appraisal, while teaching and community service represented only 20% and 10% respectively. Slightly difference in terms of percentage between private university to another with all prioritise research activities over others because of their direct influence on promotion, contract renewal, and career progression:

> *"Promotion in the university depends mainly on research publication. No matter how good you are in teaching or supporting students, research remains the most important factor." (John, Head of the Humanities Department)*

Similarly, another participant explained:

> *"Research has the highest percentage in the evaluation system. Teaching and community service exist, but research is what really determines promotion and salary increments." (Layla, Associate Professor in Pharmacy)*

Participants further indicated that this research-centred promotion structure influenced how academics allocated their time and effort. Several academics reported prioritising research activities over teaching preparation and student engagement due to the institutional importance attached to publication outcomes:

> *"Sometimes I spend more time thinking about publication deadlines than improving my teaching materials because research is what really matters for promotion." (Emma, Assistant Professor in Accounting)*

Another participant stated:

> *"Teaching is important, but in reality, research is the area that determines your future in the university." (William, Head of Digital Media Department)*

At the same time, participants questioned the appropriateness of prioritising research performance within undergraduate-focused institutions. Several academics argued that most undergraduate students enrol in private universities primarily to gain knowledge, practical skills, and employability competencies required by the labour market rather than to engage with academic research activities. Consequently, participants believed that excessive emphasis on research publications within performance evaluations created a misalignment between institutional priorities and students' educational needs:

> *"Bachelor students come to university to learn practical skills and prepare for the job market; they do not really care about how many papers the lecturer publishes." (Andy, Head of Business Administration)*

Similarly, another participant explained:

> *"The university focuses heavily on research rankings, but students are more concerned about teaching quality and gaining experience that helps them find jobs." (Isla, Lecturer in Accounting and Finance)*

The findings suggest that the institutional design of performance management systems within private universities strongly privileges research productivity as the central criterion for academic advancement. By allocating approximately 70% of performance evaluation to research activities, universities institutionalised a research-dominant performance culture that shaped academic priorities, behaviours, and motivational patterns. This emphasis reflects broader institutional objectives associated with university rankings, accreditation standards, and organisational reputation. However, participants perceived that this research-focused orientation often occurred at the expense of teaching quality and student-centred learning outcomes, particularly within undergraduate education where students prioritise practical knowledge and employability skills over institutional research output.

From a performance management perspective, the findings demonstrate how evaluation weightings and promotion structures shape academic behaviour by directing attention toward activities most strongly linked to institutional rewards and career progression. The overemphasis on research outputs contributed to externally regulated forms of motivation, where academics prioritised publication primarily to satisfy institutional requirements rather than pursue meaningful scholarly development. Furthermore, the imbalance between research and teaching evaluation created tensions within academic roles and contributed to perceptions

that the performance management system was more accountability-driven than development-oriented.

4.4.1.1.3 HR application in academia

The findings revealed that the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) within private Jordanian universities was largely administrative and operational rather than strategic or developmental. Participants consistently described HR departments as primarily responsible for routine administrative functions such as attendance monitoring, leave management, recruitment coordination, and documentation processing, with minimal involvement in strategic decision-making related to academic performance management, career development, motivation, or organisational planning.

Several participants expressed dissatisfaction with the limited scope of HR practices in academia, arguing that HR departments lacked meaningful participation in performance evaluation, professional development, and employee support mechanisms. Participants perceived HR as functioning mainly as an executive body responsible for implementing decisions made by deans and department heads rather than actively contributing to performance improvement or strategic workforce planning:

> *"There is no role for HR in the universities I worked in. The HR role is limited to calling applicants, arranging interviews with the dean, receiving evaluation documents, and organising training sessions. There is no role for planning in recruitment, evaluation, training, or compensation." (Ava, Assistant Professor in Science Teaching Methods)*

> *"HR looks mainly at administrative matters such as attendance, leaves, holidays, and these types of administrative aspects." (Lara, Assistant Professor in Mathematics)*

Participants further highlighted the limited involvement of HR departments in performance evaluation processes. According to several interviewees, HR departments mainly ensured that evaluation procedures were completed administratively without critically analysing evaluation outcomes or contributing to developmental feedback and performance improvement initiatives:

Hala explained:

> *"They only make sure that the procedures are implemented, especially in the performance evaluation process. They do not analyse the evaluations themselves; if there is an issue, they simply require training without examining the reasons behind the performance problem." (Hala, Head of the Marketing Department)*

Other participants criticised the passive role of HR in important organisational decisions such as contract renewals, promotions, incentives, and rewards. Several academics argued that these decisions remained heavily dependent on deans and academic leadership, while HR departments possessed limited authority or influence within university governance structures:

Kelly commented:

> *"The issue I criticised is that contract renewals are based mainly on the dean's decision. HR should have a stronger role and responsibility in these decisions rather than simply following administrative procedures." (Kelly, Assistant Professor in Interior Design)*

Similarly, Susan stated:

> *"The HR department does not play any role in incentives, rewards, salary increases, or even evaluation; they simply implement what the department and deanship approve." (Susan, Assistant Professor in Finance and Banking)*

The findings suggest that HRM within private Jordanian universities operates within a predominantly administrative framework that limits its contribution to strategic performance management and academic development. Rather than functioning as a strategic partner responsible for enhancing motivation, supporting career progression, and aligning institutional objectives with employee development, HR departments were perceived as procedural units focused on policy implementation and organisational compliance.

From a performance management perspective, the limited strategic involvement of HR weakens the developmental function of performance management systems within academia. The absence of HR participation in evaluation analysis, career planning, compensation design, and employee support reduces opportunities for meaningful feedback, professional growth, and motivational enhancement among academic staff. Furthermore, the concentration of authority within deanship structures contributes to perceptions of centralised decision-making and restricts the potential of HR to function as an independent and supportive organisational actor.

These findings indicate a significant gap between the potential strategic role of HRM in higher education and its actual implementation within private Jordanian universities. Participants consistently advocated for a more proactive HR function capable of contributing to academic development, performance improvement, and organisational effectiveness.

4.4.2 Cultural Factors

4.4.2.1.1 Demographic and work life balance

The findings revealed that demographic characteristics, particularly gender and age, influenced how academic staff perceived and experienced employment within private Jordanian universities. Female participants frequently associated academic work with greater work-life balance and flexibility, particularly in relation to childcare responsibilities and family commitments. Academia was perceived as offering more stable working hours and a supportive environment that enabled women to balance professional and personal responsibilities more effectively than employment in industry:

> *"Academic work gives women more flexibility because they can balance teaching responsibilities with family and childcare duties." (Layla, Associate Professor in Pharmacy)*

> *"Many women prefer universities because working hours are more suitable for family life compared to private companies." (Hala, Head of the Marketing Department)*

The findings also indicated that age influenced perceptions of academic employment and motivation. Participants above the age of 45 viewed academia as a stable long-term career that enabled them to maintain professional engagement and remain connected to their academic specialisation. Job security, professional identity, and long-term stability were frequently identified as important motivational factors among senior academics:

> *"At this stage of my career, academia gives me stability and keeps me connected to my field and students." (John, Head of Humanities Department)*

> *"Older academics usually prefer universities because the work is more stable and suitable for long-term careers." (William, Head of Digital Media Department)*

The findings suggest that demographic and social factors shape how academics value and respond to performance management practices within higher education institutions. While

some academics prioritised flexibility and work-life balance, others emphasised stability, professional continuity, and long-term engagement. These differences influenced motivational priorities and expectations regarding academic work environments, performance evaluation, and career progression systems within private universities.

4.4.2.1.2 Academic vs industry preferences

The findings revealed that comparisons between academic employment and industry careers significantly influenced how academic staff perceived motivation, career satisfaction, and performance expectations within private Jordanian universities. Participants consistently highlighted the financial disparity between academia and industry, with many academics perceiving industry positions as offering substantially higher salaries and financial rewards compared to academic employment. However, despite acknowledging the financial advantages associated with industry careers, participants frequently identified non-financial benefits of academia, particularly flexibility, stability, and work-life balance, as important factors influencing their continued commitment to academic work.

Several participants stated that salaries within practical and industrial sectors were considerably higher than academic salaries, particularly within disciplines closely connected to the private sector and labour market demands:

> *"As for the salaries of academics and their comparison with other salaries, the salaries of practical sectors are certainly much better than academic salaries. Even in countries such as Britain and the United States, salaries in industry are higher than in academia." (Isabela, Assistant Professor in Architecture and Design)*

> *"For our specialisation, I can earn much more in industry than in teaching and research. My cousin holds only a bachelor's degree and earns double my salary although he is younger than me." (Assistant Professor in Software Engineering)*

Despite these financial differences, participants frequently described academia as offering forms of stability and flexibility that were less available within industry environments. Female participants particularly associated academic employment with work-life balance and the ability to manage family and childcare responsibilities alongside professional duties.

Hala explained:

> *"I see myself more in academia because I have home and children to look after. There is flexibility in this field, whereas in the private sector I used to work until six o'clock. The private sector has more money, but academia offers stability and flexibility." (Hala, Head of the Marketing Department)*

Other participants similarly emphasised long-term job security and professional continuity as important advantages of academic employment, particularly among older academics and those seeking stable long-term careers.

At the same time, the findings revealed that perceptions regarding financial rewards varied according to academic discipline and professional background. While most participants believed that industry salaries exceeded academic salaries, some academics within professional fields such as pharmacy perceived academia as financially more rewarding than industry practice.

Layla explained:

> *"As a pharmacy lecturer, the salary in academia is much better than working as a pharmacist in the sector. In the end, it depends on the discipline and the sector itself." (Layla, Associate Professor in Pharmacy)*

The findings suggest that academics evaluate career satisfaction and motivation through a combination of financial and non-financial considerations. While industry careers were associated with higher salaries and financial incentives, academia was perceived as offering greater flexibility, work-life balance, stability, and long-term professional engagement. These differences shaped how academic staff experienced performance management practices and influenced their motivational priorities within university environments.

From a performance management perspective, the findings indicate that employee motivation within academia cannot be understood solely through financial rewards and performance incentives. Instead, academics valued broader employment conditions, including flexibility, autonomy, job security, and professional identity, which interacted with institutional performance expectations and career progression systems. Consequently, effective performance management systems within higher education institutions should recognise the

diverse motivational priorities of academic staff and balance financial performance indicators with supportive work environments that sustain long-term engagement.

4.4.3 Governance Factors

4.4.3.1.1 Research productivity policies

The findings revealed that research productivity policies constituted a major governance factor shaping the design and implementation of performance management systems within private Jordanian universities. Participants consistently reported that institutional policies strongly emphasised research publication as a central requirement for academic evaluation, contract renewal, promotion, and organisational recognition. These policies established formal and informal expectations that academic staff should continuously produce research outputs regardless of disciplinary differences, workload variations, or individual professional interests.

Participants explained that research productivity requirements were embedded within university governance structures and institutional regulations, particularly through annual contract renewal conditions and promotion criteria. Faculty members described publication expectations as compulsory performance indicators that significantly influenced their academic priorities and professional behaviour:

> *"Research publication has become a mandatory requirement in universities. Whether you want to focus on teaching or not, you still have to publish every year if you want your contract renewed." (John, Head of the Humanities Department)*

> *"The university governance system focuses heavily on research output because publications improve accreditation and university rankings." (Layla, Associate Professor in Pharmacy)*

Several participants further indicated that research productivity policies encouraged quantity-driven performance behaviours, where academics prioritised meeting publication requirements rather than pursuing meaningful or impactful research agendas:

> *"Most academics publish because they are required to do so by university policy, not necessarily because they are passionate about research itself." (Jose, Assistant Professor in e-Business and Commerce)*

"The focus has become on producing papers quickly to satisfy university requirements rather than focusing on the quality or impact of the research." (William, Head of Digital Media Department)

Participants also highlighted that research productivity policies shaped the allocation of effort and time within academic work. Due to the strong institutional emphasis on publications, academics often prioritised research activities over teaching preparation, student support, and community engagement:

"Research has become the priority because it affects promotion and contract renewal directly. Sometimes teaching becomes secondary because publication is what matters most in evaluations." (Emma, Assistant Professor in Accounting)

"Even though students need more practical teaching and support, academics are pressured to spend more time on research because of institutional policies." (Andy, Head of Business Administration)

The findings suggest that research productivity policies function as governance mechanisms that institutionalise research-centred performance management practices within private universities. Through promotion regulations, contract renewal requirements, accreditation pressures, and ranking objectives, universities embedded research output as the dominant measure of academic performance. Consequently, these governance arrangements shaped academic behaviour by directing attention toward measurable publication outcomes and reinforcing accountability-driven forms of performance management.

From a motivational perspective, the findings indicate that research productivity policies contributed to externally regulated forms of motivation, where academics engaged in research activities primarily to satisfy institutional requirements and secure career continuity rather than pursue intrinsically meaningful scholarly work. Participants frequently associated these policies with increased pressure, reduced autonomy, and the prioritisation of quantity over quality. This governance-driven emphasis on measurable research outputs therefore influenced not only performance expectations but also the broader academic culture within private Jordanian universities

4.4.3.1.2 Ranking Pressures

The findings revealed another governance factor that shape the design and implementation of performance management systems within private Jordanian universities which is ranking pressures. Academics staff consistently indicated that institutional priorities were increasingly influenced by international rankings, accreditation requirements, and competitive positioning within the higher education sector. As a result, universities placed significant emphasis on measurable performance indicators, particularly research publication outputs, as a means of enhancing institutional reputation and visibility.

Several participants explained that university management strongly encouraged research productivity because publications contributed directly to institutional rankings and external recognition. This created a performance culture in which academic staff perceived themselves as operating within a highly competitive environment focused on measurable outputs and institutional image:

> *"Universities today are competing through rankings, and research publication is one of the main indicators used to improve the university's position." (Layla, Associate Professor in Pharmacy)*

> *"The administration focuses heavily on research because rankings and accreditation depend on publications and citations." (William, Head of Digital Media Department)*

Participants further indicated that ranking pressures influenced how universities designed evaluation systems, promotion criteria, and academic expectations. Several academics argued that performance management practices increasingly prioritised activities that could improve institutional rankings rather than focusing on teaching quality, student development, or broader educational outcomes:

> *"The university wants numbers that improve its ranking, especially research publications, because rankings have become very important for attracting students and reputation." (John, Head of the Humanities Department)*

"Sometimes it feels like academics are working to improve the university's ranking more than improving teaching itself." (Emma, Assistant Professor in Accounting)

Participants also highlighted that ranking-oriented performance systems created additional pressure on academic staff to continuously publish research regardless of workload, teaching responsibilities, or personal research interests. This intensified perceptions of competition and accountability within the academic environment:

"There is pressure to publish because universities want to appear stronger in rankings and accreditation reports." (Jose, Assistant Professor in e-Business and Commerce)

"Universities are trying to compete locally and internationally, and this pressure is transferred directly to academics through performance evaluations." (Andy, Head of Business Administration)

These findings demonstrate how governance priorities influence the selection of evaluation criteria and organisational performance expectations. The emphasis on rankings reinforced research-centred evaluation systems and contributed to accountability-driven management practices focused on measurable outputs. While participants acknowledged the importance of institutional reputation and competitiveness, many also perceived that excessive focus on rankings shifted attention away from teaching quality, student learning, and the developmental role of academic work. As a result, ranking pressures contributed to increased performance demands, externally regulated motivation, and heightened publication pressure among academic staff.

4.5 Conclusion

The PMS in private universities in Jordan significantly influence academic staff's needs satisfaction, motivation, and performance through their structure, evaluation practices, and interaction with individual differences. PMS primarily evaluate performance based on research production, teaching effectiveness, and community services. Research evaluation, driven by implicit annual publication requirements for contract renewal and financial incentives tied to journal ranking, undermines the satisfaction of the needs of autonomy and competence and acts

as a strong extrinsic motivator, with academics working to avoid job loss and for contract renewal purposes. Teaching evaluation practices are used by universities to assess teaching performance. Students' evaluation of teaching, peer evaluation of teaching, teaching portfolios and learning analytics are the indicators used to assess teaching performance; these four indicators frustrate the satisfaction of autonomy and competence needs, undermining the intrinsic motivation and supporting controlled extrinsic motivation. Conversely, community services evaluation, encompassing both internal and external activities, consistently fosters the psychological need for relatedness and a sense of belonging within the academic community, significantly enhancing intrinsic motivation, well-being, and morale. Regarding motivation, academics are satisfied with both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. Academics receive financial rewards, considered an important element as it covers living expenses, as well as research incentives to cover their publications and conference expenses. Others are passionate about delivering a message not for the sake of fear or the sake of money, which means they are self-determined in teaching and their effect on students.

Furthermore, individuals' differences influence career advancement in the higher education sector in Jordan. Women prefer to work in academia for cultural and stability reasons, and older people from both genders prefer to work in academia as they become overqualified for industries after the age of 50. Neither men nor women are fully satisfied with the salaries received in academia. However, they are fulfilled due to the stability and the chance for a long-term career offered in academia. These are the results of the individual differences that emerged from the results. Goal setting for both research and teaching are explicit and undermine intrinsic motivations, and Jordan lacks a structured research setting approach for faculty members as academics do not set goals for publication; rather, they publish papers to avoid job loss. It is the same for teaching goals where institutions predetermined CLOs and ILOs for academics to follow, as these restrict academic freedom and lead to motivation driven more by external regulation than internal values.

The function of HR is limited to an administrative role ,which means it plays a less strategic part in addressing these factors. While promotion is generally perceived as transparent and merit-based, the overall impact of the PMS reveals a complex interplay where certain practices, particularly in research (quantity focus) and teaching (evaluation method, rigid goals), can undermine psychological needs and foster controlled motivation, while others, like community

service and the intrinsic value of teaching, enhance autonomous motivation and relatedness, ultimately shape academic staff's performance, job satisfaction, and contribution to the university and broader community.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results and findings of the current research in relation to the existing literature and the theoretical framework of SDT. This study explored how PM practices (research, teaching and community services) influence academic staff motivation through the lens of the psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness. While the SDT literature predominantly emphasises environmental factors that support the satisfaction of psychological needs, the current study finds that PM practices related to research and teaching evaluation practices frustrate the psychological needs of autonomy and competence, resulting in controlled forms of motivation and negative outcomes for academics. Conversely, community service evaluation practice emerged as an unexpected yet meaningful indicator that supports the satisfaction of psychological needs, leading to more positive motivational and behavioural consequences. This chapter interprets these findings, explains their alignment or divergence from existing literature, and highlights the study's theoretical and practical contributions.

SDT posits that individuals' motivation and well-being depend on the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Ryan and Deci, 2020). When these needs are supported, individuals develop autonomous forms of motivation, such as intrinsic motivation and identified regulation, which are associated with high engagement, well-being, and sustained performance. Needs-supportive environments are characterised by choice, meaningful rationales, positive feedback, inclusion, and opportunities for growth (Ng et al., 2012; Bamforth et al., 2024).

Most SDT research across sectors such as education, healthcare, business, and public sector environments focus on identifying conditions that enhance needs satisfaction. For example,

autonomy is supported through participatory decision-making and flexibility (Ryan and Deci, 2020); competence is enhanced through constructive feedback and realistic expectations (Vansteenkiste and Ryan, 2013); and relatedness grows through collegial support and respectful leadership (Ryan, Soenens and Vansteenkiste, 2019).

However, SDT also acknowledges that environments can frustrate these needs, leading to controlled motivation, disengagement, stress, and burnout (Vansteenkiste and Ryan, 2013). Despite this, fewer studies focus explicitly on needs frustration, especially in higher education PM systems. The present study addresses this gap by examining how the PM practices used in private universities, particularly research and teaching evaluation practices, function as controlling mechanisms that undermine both autonomy and competence. It here by reveals how community service evaluation practice emerges as a way to support needs satisfaction, leading to positive outcomes. The following sections discuss how these findings align with and extend SDT theory.

5.2 Research Evaluation Practices: Needs Frustration

5.2.1 Autonomy frustration through REP

Existing literature within higher education has consistently emphasised the importance of autonomy in supporting motivation, engagement, creativity, and performance. According to Self-Determination Theory, autonomy represents individuals' need to experience choice, volition, and psychological freedom in their work and learning environments (Ryan and Deci, 2020) . Within academic settings, autonomy is considered fundamental because it enables academics and students to pursue intellectually meaningful activities aligned with their interests, values, and professional identities. Studies grounded in SDT argue that individuals experience higher levels of intrinsic motivation, satisfaction, and engagement when they perceive their activities as self-directed rather than externally controlled (Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2016, 2021)

Research conducted within higher education contexts further demonstrates the positive consequences of autonomy-supportive environments. Johansen, Eliassen and Jeno (2025) found that autonomy need satisfaction during learning activities positively influenced students' perceived value, vitality, interest, and psychological well-being, whereas autonomy frustration generated lower engagement and reduced motivation. Similarly, Soe et al. (2025) demonstrated

that autonomy-supportive educational environments significantly enhanced students' achievement and motivation in science and mathematics subjects by promoting feelings of competence, ownership, and self-regulation. These findings suggest that autonomy-supportive practices within educational institutions positively shape motivational outcomes and improve engagement and performance.

The significance of autonomy within academic environments has also been highlighted in relation to research and professional development. Willison, Sabir and Thomas (2017) argued that autonomy plays a central role in developing independent scholarly identity, particularly through the freedom to select research directions, manage learning activities, and engage critically with knowledge production. Their findings suggest that autonomy enables individuals to move beyond compliance-oriented behaviours toward genuine intellectual engagement and self-directed development. Likewise, Jiang and Tanaka, (2022) and Niemczyk and Rónay (2023) found that autonomy satisfaction within higher education environments positively influenced individuals' vitality, perceived value, and academic engagement, whereas autonomy frustration reduced motivation and psychological well-being. Their study demonstrated that academics who experienced autonomy-supportive environments, such as having opportunities to choose their own research interests, select project topics, and express their opinions freely during learning activities, reported stronger feelings of interest, energy, and psychological satisfaction. In contrast, environments characterised by rigid instructions, excessive monitoring, and externally imposed requirements generated lower engagement and reduced motivational persistence. This indicates that autonomy-supportive educational environments encourage individuals to perceive academic activities as personally meaningful and self-directed rather than externally controlled obligations.

However, the findings of this study contrast sharply with these autonomy-supportive perspectives. The results indicate that research evaluation practices within private Jordanian universities restrict academics' ability to freely determine their research interests, publication strategies, and scholarly priorities. Instead, academics reported feeling pressured to pursue publication activities aligned with institutional performance requirements, rankings, and contract renewal expectations. This aligns with SDT's description of autonomy frustration, which occurs when individuals experience pressure, control, and restricted choice within their work environment (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017).

Rather than acting from genuine scholarly curiosity or intellectual interest, participants described research activities as externally imposed obligations driven by quantitative performance indicators such as publication numbers and conference participation. Consequently, academics focused on meeting institutional targets for survival purposes rather than pursuing meaningful knowledge contribution. While previous SDT literature within higher education demonstrates that autonomy-supportive environments enhance motivation, vitality, persistence, and achievement (Johansen, Eliassen and Jeno, 2025; Soe *et al.*, 2025), the findings of this study reveal the opposite dynamic. Quantitative research evaluation practices frustrated academics' need for autonomy and shifted motivation from intrinsic scholarly engagement toward externally regulated "survival mode" behaviours associated with contract renewal, promotion, and avoidance of negative consequences. This contributes to the performance management literature by demonstrating how quantitative evaluation systems within higher education undermine autonomy, weaken intrinsic motivation, and reduce meaningful academic engagement

5.2.2 Competence frustration through REP

Research evaluation practices were also found to frustrate competence. According to SDT, competence is supported when individuals receive clear, constructive feedback and have access to resources that help them succeed and improve their skills (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017). Effectively, the pressure to publish two papers annually for the sake of contract renewals rather than knowledge development lead to weak research skills and the publication of low-quality papers, resulting in stress, self-doubt and lack of trust among the academics.

The SDT literature describes competence satisfaction and its impact on individuals' intrinsic motivation. Jang, Reeve and Deci (2010) found that secondary school students experienced higher competence satisfaction when teachers provided constructive feedback, explained assignments clearly, and offered optimally challenging activities, leading to intrinsic motivation and resulting in students' improved outcomes. In the workplace, competence satisfaction is a key predictor of job performance, engagement, and well-being. Grenier et al. (2024a), Hajjawi (2012) and Robillard et al. (2025) found that corporate and public-sector employees who received positive performance feedback, opportunities to apply skills, and

training needs experienced greater competence satisfaction, which enhanced job performance and reduced stress, making them motivated and engaged within the work environment.

In contrast, when academics attend conferences for the sake of enhancing relationships and networks rather than learning new updates in the field; when they publish for the sake of contract renewals rather than for knowledge development; and when their training needs are not assigned properly and clearly due to reliance on numeric and unrealistic indicators, competence frustration can occur, making them feel stressed and anxious. This, in turn, leads them to publish low-quality papers and attend conferences for the sake of contract renewals rather than to make meaningful contributions to the knowledge. This aligns with Gilbert, Foulk and Bono (2018), who showed that quantitative measures frustrate the need of employees' competence, leading to reduced creativity, lower performance, and heightened anxiety. Similarly, Van den Broeck et al. (2021) confirmed that competence frustration is a significant predictor of employee turnover intention and disengagement, particularly in organizations that prioritize control over employee development. The study by Bezanilla et al. (2019) on universities demonstrated that the focus on volume rather than the depth of "knowledge development" forces academics to prioritize speed and quantity over the actual contribution to their field. Consequently, they feel more like "output machines" than experts advancing human knowledge as this leads to competence frustration. Additionally, when research quantity performance is aligned to job contract renewal, the motivation for work shifts from professional excellence to avoid punishment. When an academic's primary goal becomes job security, they loose the sense of competence that comes from pursuing research for the sake of engagement and contribution. They are no longer working to be "good" at their jobs, but rather to ensure they are not "penalised" by the system.

To summarise, this study advances SDT by elucidating how quantitative research evaluation practices serve as systemic mechanisms that undermine the fundamental psychological needs of autonomy and competence. While the existing SDT literature primarily examines interpersonal controls, such as the authoritative styles of managers or teachers, this research highlights that numeric performance indicators and mandatory publication quotas function as system-level controls that restrict academics' ability to freely choose research interests, methods, and publication outlets. These practices compel academics to prioritize institutional rankings and contract renewals over genuine intellectual inquiry, effectively shifting their professional orientation into "survival mode", driven by extrinsic pressure rather than intrinsic

curiosity. Furthermore, the emphasis on volume and speed specifically the requirement to meet annual publication targets results in competence frustration, as the pressure to produce high-quantity output often leads to diminished research quality, inadequate skills development, and increased anxiety. Consequently, academics are transformed from expert knowledge producers into "output machines", causing a detrimental motivational shift whereby work is performed primarily to avoid institutional sanctions or job loss rather than to achieve professional excellence or meaningful scientific contribution.

5.2.3 Reciprocal Authorship as a Response to Autonomy Frustration and Relatedness Needs

The findings revealed that reciprocal authorship emerged as a common coping mechanism within performance-driven academic environments. Participants described collaborative publication arrangements in which academics exchanged co-authorship opportunities to increase publication output and satisfy institutional performance requirements linked to promotion, contract renewal, and annual evaluation systems. Although reciprocal authorship is commonly discussed in the literature as an ethical or strategic publication issue, the present study extends existing understanding by interpreting this behaviour through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), particularly in relation to autonomy frustration and relatedness satisfaction.

Existing literature on performance management in higher education demonstrates that universities increasingly rely on publication metrics, citation counts, and journal rankings to evaluate academic performance (Taylor and Baines, 2012; Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Franco-Santos and Doherty, 2017) . Research-focused evaluation systems have intensified managerial control over academic work, encouraging academics to prioritise measurable outputs over intellectual autonomy and intrinsic scholarly engagement (Kallio and Kallio, 2014; Gribling and Duberley, 2020). Within such environments, academics often experience pressure to continuously publish in high-ranking journals, creating highly competitive and performance-oriented institutional cultures (Hutaibat *et al.*, 2021; Al-Twal, 2022).Previous studies have shown that excessive performance monitoring and externally imposed publication expectations can frustrate academics' psychological need for autonomy by reducing their sense of volition and control over scholarly activities (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2021)

The present findings support this argument by demonstrating that reciprocal authorship frequently emerged as an adaptive response to these institutional pressures. Participants explained that collaborative authorship arrangements were often driven less by genuine intellectual collaboration and more by the need to satisfy institutional publication targets and secure professional survival within highly monitored academic systems. Consequently, reciprocal authorship reflected controlled forms of motivation shaped by external pressures rather than intrinsically motivated scholarly engagement. This finding aligns with SDT literature suggesting that when organisational environments become excessively controlling, individuals may adopt strategic or compliance-oriented behaviours to cope with external demands and protect professional security (Ryan and Deci, 2020; Howard, 2024)

At the same time, the findings also revealed that reciprocal authorship functioned as a mechanism for satisfying academics' psychological need for relatedness. SDT emphasises that individuals seek meaningful interpersonal connections, social belonging, and mutual support within professional environments (Ryan and Deci, 2020). Participants described reciprocal publication networks as important sources of collegial solidarity, emotional support, and professional cooperation within highly stressful academic contexts. In many cases, academics relied on collaborative publication relationships not only to improve productivity but also to reduce feelings of isolation and competition generated by performance management systems.

This finding extends the SDT literature by demonstrating that relatedness-supportive practices may emerge as compensatory responses to autonomy frustration within managerial and performance-driven higher education systems. While previous SDT studies have primarily examined autonomy, competence, and relatedness as separate psychological needs, the present study demonstrates the dynamic interaction between these dimensions in academic workplaces. Specifically, when autonomy becomes constrained through publication pressure and institutional monitoring, academics may increasingly rely on interpersonal collaboration and reciprocal support networks to maintain psychological belonging and professional stability.

Furthermore, this finding contributes empirically to higher education literature by showing that reciprocal authorship should not be understood solely as an ethical or opportunistic practice, but also as a psychologically adaptive behaviour shaped by institutional performance structures. In the context of Jordanian private universities, reciprocal authorship emerged as a

relational survival strategy within systems heavily oriented toward rankings, publication outputs, and external performance indicators. Therefore, the study advances current understanding of how performance management systems shape not only academic productivity but also interpersonal academic behaviours, collaborative practices, and motivational experiences within contemporary higher education institutions.

5.2.4 Theoretical contribution: Research evaluation practice and need frustration

This study extends SDT by demonstrating how quantity-driven research evaluation systems create controlled extrinsic motivation, where academics engage in research activities primarily to satisfy institutional requirements associated with contract renewal, promotion, and performance evaluation rather than internalised value or genuine scholarly interest. While SDT literature typically conceptualises controlled motivation as emerging from interpersonal pressures such as supervision, monitoring, or social expectations, the findings of this study demonstrate that quantitative performance metrics embedded within institutional reward and evaluation structures may also function as powerful organisational sources of controlled regulation. This advances SDT by introducing the idea of quantitative measurement need frustration, whereby numerical performance indicators operate as controlling mechanisms that influence academics' behaviours, priorities, and professional decision-making.

The findings further indicate that quantitative research evaluation practices significantly shape how academics allocate their time, effort, and research priorities within higher education institutions. Rather than fostering intrinsically motivated scholarly engagement, publication-based evaluation systems often encouraged compliance-oriented behaviours centred on meeting measurable institutional targets. Academics described prioritising publication outputs because these indicators were closely linked to promotion, annual evaluation, and career continuity. However, some participants also acknowledged that measurable performance criteria provided transparency and clarity regarding institutional expectations and promotion requirements. Clear evaluation standards helped academics understand what was expected of them and reduced ambiguity within appraisal processes.

Nevertheless, despite recognising the value of transparent evaluation criteria, many participants expressed concerns that excessive emphasis on quantitative outputs, particularly publication

numbers, limited opportunities for autonomy, creativity, and meaningful knowledge contribution. Consequently, performance metrics were not perceived as neutral measurement tools but as institutional mechanisms that shaped motivational processes and academic behaviours. The findings therefore suggest that quantitative evaluation systems may unintentionally shift academics away from autonomous scholarly engagement toward externally regulated and compliance-driven forms of academic work.

This theoretical contribution enriches existing SDT scholarship by demonstrating how performance management systems within higher education influence not only employee performance but also academics' psychological experiences, motivational orientations, and perceptions of scholarly identity. Furthermore, the study contributes to the growing literature examining managerialism and metric-driven governance in universities by showing how quantitative evaluation structures shape research culture, professional autonomy, and academic engagement within contemporary higher education institutions.

5.3 Teaching Evaluation Practices and Needs Frustration

The findings of this study reveal that teaching-related evaluation practices, namely student evaluations of teaching, peer evaluations, teaching portfolios, and learning analytics, constitute significant mechanisms through which academic performance is assessed in private universities in Jordan. The participants consistently described these practices not as supportive developmental tools but as sources of pressure, surveillance, and control. When examined through the lens of SDT, these evaluation mechanisms appear to frustrate academics' basic psychological needs for autonomy and competence, thereby weakening intrinsic motivation and strengthening controlled forms of extrinsic motivation. Ultimately, these dynamics contribute to job dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and disengagement from teaching responsibilities.

The participants demonstrated that teaching evaluation practices are aligned directly with quantitative measures, wherein students evaluate for the sake of getting their marks rather than developmental purposes. This means that teaching evaluation practice functions as managerial control rather than skills and knowledge development mechanisms. This contrasts the global literature of PM in higher education settings, where teaching practices presented as a "feedback culture" or "supporting teaching skills", especially in universities where teaching is the central

focus that bring students to universities (Cadez, Dimovski and Zaman Groff, 2017; Kayas, Assimakopoulos and Hines, 2022).

5.3.1 Students' evaluation and needs frustration

The results in this study reveal the students' evaluation of teaching can be biased, subjective, and influenced by their personal preferences, course difficulty, or academic grades. Students in the Middle East evaluate academics for the sake of obtaining their grades, which makes academics felt stressed and pressured. In the context of private education in Jordan, job contracts are renewed annually and are based on both teaching and evaluation performance, and thus such evaluations may impact their job contracts (Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, 2022; Kayas, Assimakopoulos and Hines, 2022). Hence, academic staff feel compelled to modify their teaching strategies to satisfy students and obtain higher evaluation scores, often by lowering academic rigor, simplifying course content, or adopting "entertainment-focused" teaching approaches. This pressure undermines autonomy, as academics must prioritise student satisfaction over professional judgment and pedagogical expertise (Jang, Reeve and Deci, 2010; Niemczyk and Rónay, 2023). This finding is consistent with prior studies (Moges, 2019; Rusli et al., 2021; Tang, 2023), which have demonstrated that student evaluations of teaching are often perceived as unrealistic, highly personalised, and lacking objectivity, as they may be influenced primarily by students' expectations regarding course grades. Such evaluative practices encourage academic staff to prioritise student satisfaction over pedagogical rigor, which may negatively affect teaching quality and, in some cases, influence contract renewal or retention decisions. Similarly, Hamka (2023), who examined teacher performance evaluation practices in both school and university contexts, concluded that student-based evaluations should be treated with caution, as students may lack the maturity and expertise required to critically assess the performance of more knowledgeable and experienced educators.

Student evaluations of teaching have been widely used as a PM tool in higher education; however, the findings of this study suggest that their extensive use may have unintended motivational consequences for academic staff. When student feedback is positioned as a high-stakes evaluative mechanism influencing contract renewal, promotion, or salary decisions, academics may perceive their teaching role as externally controlled rather than self-directed. This perception can undermine intrinsic motivation by frustrating the psychological need for autonomy, particularly when evaluation criteria prioritise student satisfaction over pedagogical quality or disciplinary rigor. Consequently, academics may shift their focus toward behaviours

that secure favourable evaluations, such as grade inflation or reducing the academic challenge, rather than engaging in innovative or demanding teaching practices. These findings align with self-determination perspectives, which suggest that performance evaluation systems emphasizing external rewards and sanctions are more likely to foster controlled motivation, emotional exhaustion, and disengagement among academic staff.

The primary theoretical contribution here illustrates how high-stakes student evaluations of teaching act as an external control mechanism that thwarts the psychological need for autonomy. This research shows that by linking students' evaluations of teaching scores directly to job security, such as annual contract renewals and salary decisions, there comes a shift from intrinsic motivation to controlled motivation, where academics prioritize student satisfaction over pedagogical rigor to avoid professional sanctions. This framework explains why academic staff may lower standards or adopt "entertainment-focused" approaches; these are strategic responses to an evaluative system that values student perception, which is often biased and lacking in expertise over objective teaching quality. Consequently, the study contributes to the SDT literature by highlighting how externalized performance metrics can lead to emotional exhaustion, disengagement, and the systematic erosion of academic standards. This study adds to the literature on PM in that academics modify their teaching strategies to meet students' satisfaction and obtaining high evaluation scores from students. This extends the literature on PM in higher education in Jordan as students' evaluation of teaching in Middle Eastern societies undermines the needs of autonomy, leading to controlled motivation rather than intrinsic motivation.

5.3.2 Needs frustration through peer evaluation

Peer evaluations are widely described in the literature on PM as a collegial and collaborative development tool that increases individuals' skills and experience via performance evaluation by colleagues or peers who understand and demonstrate the same daily tasks; this is considered a valuable opportunity for fostering skills and pedagogical enhancement (Rees et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2022). However, the results in this study revel that subjectivity and being evaluated by individuals who are not experts in the field limits the developmental potential of peer review. Instead of receiving valuable feedback on teaching performance during the semester, the participants described the feeling of monitored or judged by those with less expertise in the

field. Meanwhile, the subjective evaluation issued by them frustrated academic competence, leaving the academics without a real picture of their skills and training needs. This causes academics to become stuck in the same cycle without actual development. This is in contrast to studies demonstrating the crucial role of peer evaluation of teaching on academics' performance. For example, Harrison et al. (2022) and Hwang and Chang (2023) indicated the importance of enhanced teaching quality through peer constructive feedback in UK universities as peers identify strengths and areas of improvement clearly due to knowledge in the field and the task. In addition, Rusli et al. (2021) indicated that peers encourage academics to reflect on their teaching strategy, philosophies, methods and classroom behaviours, promoting a cycle of continuous improvement and self-awareness.

It is noted that these results highlight the importance of contextual sensitivity, showing that peer evaluation of teaching led to autonomy and competence frustration, which undermined intrinsic motivation, leading to job disengagement and dissatisfaction.

5.3.3 Learning analytics and job analysis

In this approach, evaluators observe student engagement, attendance and completion rates as well as the students' satisfaction with the content, competencies achieved and interaction with course materials. This method enables department heads to assess students' satisfaction and determine whether it aligns with the intended learning outcomes.

This study indicated that academics in Jordan are also evaluated using managerial aspects such as the learning analytics, which demonstrates teachers' engagement, attendance and completion rates as well as the competencies and skills achieved and the conferences attended during the last year. This was criticized by the participants, as it does not well reflect the image and performance of academics and has a significant negative impact on autonomy as academics prioritise these learning analytics and job portfolios for the sake of satisfying departments heads satisfaction rather than for benefiting students. The same applies for skills development as the results demonstrated that this type of evaluation does not reflect a clear picture of academics' performance, nor does it contribute to identifying training and weaknesses needs. This aligns with Mammadov (2022) and Rawlings et al. (2024), who stated that quantity measures used

for academics in higher education sectors lead to negative consequences, such as job demotivation, job disengagement and work done purely to avoid punishment.

5.3.4 Theoretical contribution: Teaching evaluation practice and needs frustration

The findings of this study offer a significant theoretical contribution by extending SDT into the context of PMS in higher education. While SDT has traditionally emphasised the role of interpersonal relationships such as supervisory support, collegial interactions, or institutional culture in shaping autonomy, competence, and intrinsic motivation, the present study demonstrates that structural, institutionally mandated evaluation mechanisms also act as powerful determinants of motivational regulation. Specifically, four core teaching evaluation practices identified in this study, namely students' evaluations of teaching, peer evaluations of teaching, learning analytics, and job portfolios, were experienced by academic staff as controlling rather than developmental. These practices systematically undermined the psychological needs of autonomy and competence, thereby shifting academic staff from autonomous forms of motivation to controlled extrinsic motivation.

This extends SDT in two important ways. First, it highlights a form of structural or systemic need frustration, where the source of control is embedded not in interpersonal dynamics but in institutional PM tools. Second, the study identifies a performance-evaluation need frustration pathway, whereby evaluation instruments intended to improve teaching quality inadvertently generate competence doubt, fear of negative appraisal, and strategic compliance behaviours. This conceptual pathway broadens SDT by demonstrating that motivation in higher education is shaped not only by individual or relational factors but also by the design and implementation of organisational PMS.

As such, the study offers a refined theoretical understanding of how institutional evaluation frameworks in higher education influence motivational regulation. It challenges existing assumptions that PM tools are neutral or merely administrative, showing instead that they can fundamentally reshape academic motivation through the frustration of core psychological needs. This theoretical extension contributes to a deeper and more nuanced application of SDT in higher education research and provides a platform for future studies to examine the motivational consequences of PMS.

5.3.5 Research and teaching evaluation practices and motivations

The findings of this study provide robust evidence that PM practices in higher education, particularly research and teaching evaluation mechanisms, play a decisive role in shaping academic staff's motivation by systematically undermining intrinsic motivation and reinforcing controlled forms of motivation. According to SDT, intrinsic motivation is sustained when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their professional activities, whereas controlled motivation emerges when behaviour is regulated by external pressures, rewards, and sanctions (Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Ryan and Deci, 2020). The results of this study demonstrate that institutional evaluation practices frequently operate as controlling mechanisms rather than supportive structures, thereby frustrating academics' basic psychological needs and reorienting their motivational patterns toward compliance and performance-driven behaviour.

In relation to research evaluation, the requirement for academics to publish a predetermined number of research outputs annually as a condition for contract renewal or job security reflects what SDT conceptualises as external regulation. Such practices significantly constrain academic autonomy by limiting researchers' freedom to determine their intellectual agendas, methodological approaches, and publication strategies. This finding resonates with existing literature which argues that PM regimes in universities have increasingly transformed research into a quantifiable output rather than a process of knowledge creation (Shore and Wright, 2015, 2018; Davis, Jansen van Rensburg and Venter, 2016). From an SDT perspective, when research activity is driven primarily by fear of sanctions or the pursuit of contractual rewards, academics' sense of competence is also undermined, with the focus shifting from developing scholarly expertise and responding to peer feedback toward merely fulfilling institutional metrics. This aligns with Deci, Olafsen and Ryan (2017) and Ryan, Soenens and Vansteenkiste (2019), who argue that controlling environments reduce opportunities for mastery, learning, and growth, thereby weakening intrinsic motivation and fostering surface-level engagement.

The findings further indicate that teaching evaluation practices constitute another critical domain through which controlled motivation is institutionalised. Student evaluations of teaching, peer evaluations, learning analytics, and job portfolio indicators collectively function as performance surveillance tools that reshape academics' professional identities and teaching practices. Student evaluations, in particular, were perceived as subjective and strategically driven by students' pursuit of favourable grades rather than by pedagogical considerations. This

observation corroborates prior research suggesting that student evaluations are often influenced by non-academic factors such as grading leniency, personality traits, and emotional responses, which raises concerns about their validity and objectivity (Boring, Ottoboni and Stark, 2016; Cook, Jones and Al-Twal, 2022; Kayas, Assimakopoulos and Hines, 2022). From an SDT standpoint, reliance on such evaluative mechanisms undermines academics' competence by delegitimising professional expertise and reducing teaching quality to popularity-based metrics. At the same time, academics' autonomy is constrained as they are compelled to align teaching practices with student expectations and departmental prescriptions rather than with pedagogical principles or disciplinary standards. Similar patterns have been reported in previous studies, which show that market-oriented higher education systems increasingly position students as customers, thereby encouraging academics to prioritise satisfaction over intellectual challenge (Molesworth, Nixon and Scullion, 2009; Jary, 2014).

Peer evaluation practices further reinforce controlled motivation by transforming collegial relationships into evaluative hierarchies. Although peer observation is often framed as a developmental tool, the findings of this study suggest that when such practices are linked to contract renewal or performance appraisal, they become performative rather than formative. Academics strategically deliver idealised lectures to meet evaluative criteria rather than to engage in authentic pedagogical experimentation or professional learning. This finding aligns with broader critiques of audit culture in higher education, which argue that evaluative practices encourage performativity and symbolic compliance rather than genuine quality enhancement (Smeenk et al., 2009; Shore and Wright, 2015, 2018; Sutoro, 2021). Similarly, the use of learning analytics and job portfolio indicators emphasises managerial compliance such as attendance, administrative reporting, and procedural conformity over pedagogical innovation or intellectual development. These practices exemplify what SDT describes as controlling organisational climates, which prioritise surveillance and accountability over support and growth (Ryan, Soenens and Vansteenkiste, 2019).

Collectively, these findings suggest that contemporary PMS in higher education may inadvertently institutionalise controlled motivation among academic staff. Rather than fostering intrinsic motivation grounded in intellectual curiosity, professional autonomy, and competence development, evaluation practices encourage academics to act strategically to avoid punishment, secure rewards, or satisfy external stakeholders. This observation extends existing SDT-based research by demonstrating how organisational performance regimes in

higher education structurally embed control mechanisms within everyday academic work. In doing so, the study contributes to the literature by illustrating that motivation in academia is not merely an individual psychological phenomenon but is deeply shaped by institutional governance structures and managerial ideologies. Consequently, the findings support calls in the literature for a reconfiguration of academic PMS toward more autonomy-supportive and development-oriented evaluation practices, which are more likely to sustain intrinsic motivation and meaningful scholarly engagement (Vansteenkiste and Ryan, 2013; Deci, Olafsen and Ryan, 2017; Ryan, Soenens and Vansteenkiste, 2019).

5.4 Community Service Practice and Needs Satisfaction

The findings of this study reveal that community service evaluation although currently are not considered within PMS in Jordanian private universities plays a uniquely positive role in supporting academic staff motivation. Unlike teaching and research evaluations, which were perceived as controlling and competence-threatening, community service activities were described by academics as autonomy-supportive, competence-enhancing, and strongly related to feelings of connectedness. This contrasts sharply with the dominant performance evaluation mechanisms that generated controlled forms of motivation.

5.4.1 Autonomy satisfaction through community engagement

Participants expressed that community service activities, such as delivering workshops for students and colleagues, engaging in public seminars, or joining voluntary initiatives such as Ramadan and Eid events as well as participating in social clubs, were largely self-selected and aligned with their personal values. This freedom to choose, plan, and execute service activities that benefit society provided a strong sense of autonomy (Luo et al., 2011; Koekkoek, Ham and Kleinhans, 2021).

This finding is consistent with the SDT literature, which highlights that autonomy-supportive environments enhance intrinsic motivation, creativity, and engagement (Ryan, Soenens and Vansteenkiste, 2019; Ryan and Deci, 2020). Previous research in higher education similarly demonstrates that when academics have discretion over service activities, they experience greater job satisfaction and a stronger sense of meaningfulness (Luo et al., 2011; Filges et al., 2022; Munir et al., 2023). However, research on PMS rarely links community service to

motivational benefits. Most PMS studies indicate that evaluation systems tend to be punitive, compliance-based, and narrow, focusing predominantly on teaching and research outputs (Camilleri and Camilleri, 2018; Al-Twal, Rowlans and Cook, 2019; Camilleri, 2021b; Hutaibat et al., 2021; Al-Twal, 2022).

The results of this study reveal the opposite by showing that community service evaluation practices provide a unique space for self-directed, value-driven engagement, making them an exception within an otherwise controlling PMS environment. When academics can freely choose the type of service they provide inside or outside the university and when universities offer social clubs such as sports, cultural, tourism, and arts clubs at no cost, this fosters a sense of autonomy that enhances well-being and psychological health. This previously underexplored area in PMS research strengthens academics' autonomy, which in turn supports intrinsic motivation, helping them feel connected, valuable, meaningful, and engaged with their broader community.

5.4.2 Competence development through public engagement

Although investigating academics' contact with and engagement in society is paramount for individual satisfaction and well-being, research in this area remains scarce and underdeveloped (Fang et al., 2017; Bezanilla et al., 2019). Much of the PM literature continues to focus on the student and research evaluation indicators used to assess academic performance, largely because these measures contribute directly to university reputation and ranking (Smeenk et al., 2009; Camilleri and Camilleri, 2018; Hutaibat et al., 2021). However, the findings of this study demonstrate that community service evaluation practices enable academics to receive constructive feedback for skills development, enhance their communication and presentation skills, and strengthen their sense of competence and confidence. When academics deliver lectures and seminars to diverse audiences, engage in discussion, debate ideas, and receive regular feedback on their performance, their competence is fostered. Many participants described these activities as "confidence-building", "skill-enhancing" and "professionally rewarding".

This aligns with SDT, which emphasises that competence grows when individuals face optimally challenging tasks and are provided with opportunities to demonstrate mastery (Ryan and Deci, 2020). Research on academic service roles supports this perspective, suggesting that outreach and community engagement work enhance professional identity and reinforce a sense

of capability (Fang et al., 2017; Johansen, Eliassen and Jeno, 2025). In contrast, studies on teaching and research evaluation often show competence frustration, where academics feel judged, monitored, or pressured to meet quantitative standards (Fang et al., 2017; Bezanilla et al., 2019; Al-Adwan et al., 2023). The findings in this study therefore contribute to the higher education and PM literature by showing that measuring academic community services not only enhances the needs satisfaction of autonomy, but also supports competence via constructive feedback received, leading to enhance knowledge, skills and experience.

5.4.3 Relatedness and sense of belonging

The findings show strong evidence that community service enhances relatedness, as academics feel connected to colleagues, students, external stakeholders, and the university's mission. Participation in university social clubs, teamwork in volunteering activities, and public engagement fostered a strong sense of belonging among the participants. This consistent with SDT research demonstrating that relatedness is strengthened when individuals interact meaningfully with others and feel valued by their community (Ryan and Deci, 2020; Bamforth et al., 2024)

Previous studies on PM in higher education emphasise that community service evaluation practices are often neglected during performance appraisal, as both global and local universities rely predominantly on research and teaching indicators to assess academic performance, which are believed to enhance student learning outcomes, student satisfaction, and university rankings (Hutaibat et al., 2021; Al-Twal, 2022). In addition, Al-Adwan et al. (2023) and Johansen, Eliassen and Jeno (2025) called for further exploration of the social contributions that academics make to students, staff, and the wider public, arguing that academics are influential actors who have a substantial impact on communities. This highlights the importance of the need for relatedness and its potential effects on academic staff's well-being and performance, which remain under-investigated.

Furthermore, individuals in the education sector spend extensive hours preparing and delivering courses, producing research for publication, and marking assessments. As a result, they often work in isolation and are heavily reliant on digital technologies, which can negatively affect their psychological health and general well-being (Sanz-Menéndez and Cruz-Castro, 2019; Khosa et al., 2024). Consequently, the role of community service and its impact

on academic performance should be carefully considered when offering recommendations to higher education leaders.

These findings address these gaps in the literature, revealing that community engagement assessment strengthens academics' sense of relatedness, encouraging them to care for one another and feel supported by their colleagues. The results demonstrate a significant positive effect of community service evaluation on relatedness and intrinsic motivation, contributing to higher levels of engagement, satisfaction, and overall well-being. This method of evaluation has been neglected in the literature, and scholars have called for further investigation regarding its effect on performance. The results of this study fill this gap by showing that community service evaluation contributes meaningfully to relatedness satisfaction, and that this in turn has a substantial effect on intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and academic engagement.

5.4.4 Theoretical contribution: Community service practice and need satisfaction

A significant theoretical contribution arising from this study concerns the role of community service evaluation in supporting psychological needs' satisfaction and intrinsic motivation – an area rarely addressed within the PM or SDT literature on higher education. Whereas the dominant teaching and research evaluation practices in Jordanian private universities were found to undermine autonomy and competence, the findings also reveal that community service evaluation functions as a positive motivational mechanism, fostering autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The autonomy-supportive nature of these activities, which stems from academics' ability to choose service tasks aligned with personal values and social purpose, extends SDT by illustrating how performance evaluation can enhance, rather than frustrate, psychological needs when discretion and meaningfulness are embedded in the evaluation process.

Moreover, the results show that community service tasks enhance competence through opportunities for skills development, public engagement, and constructive feedback. These challenges prevailing assumptions in the PMS literature that evaluation mechanisms are inherently controlling or performance-pressuring. Instead, the findings introduce the concept

of service-based competence affirmation, where evaluation related to societal engagement reinforces rather than frustrates academic capability. By identifying community service as a domain in which competence can flourish under evaluation, this study expands SDT's application to performance systems, demonstrating that need satisfaction is achievable within evaluative contexts when evaluation aligns with personal meaning and professional growth.

The study further contributes theoretically by showing that community service evaluation supports relatedness in a way that other evaluation practices do not. Engagement in public seminars, voluntary initiatives, and university social clubs fosters a sense of belonging, institutional connection, and social contribution. This highlights an underexplored pathway within SDT evaluation-induced relatedness satisfaction, in which evaluative activities strengthen interpersonal bonds and deepen organisational identification.

Most importantly, the findings reveal that community service evaluation generates intrinsic motivation, as academics engage in service out of genuine interest, purpose, and societal contribution. This contrasts the assumption within the PM literature that evaluation primarily produces controlled forms of motivation. The results demonstrated that, when evaluation is autonomy-supportive and value-congruent, it can cultivate intrinsic motivation, job engagement, and psychological well-being. This theoretical insight introduces a new conceptual model, namely the community service evaluation need satisfaction–intrinsic motivation pathway, which extends both SDT and PMS theory by showing how certain types of evaluation can function as motivational enablers rather than constraints.

Overall, this study advances the theoretical understanding by positioning community service evaluation as a unique evaluative domain that supports rather than suppresses psychological needs, thereby enabling intrinsic motivation and well-being. This contrasts sharply with teaching and research evaluation practices and offers a refined theoretical framework for understanding how different components of PMS differentially influence need satisfaction and academic motivation. This contribution expands SDT's relevance to PM in higher education and highlights community service as a theoretically significant, yet previously under-recognised, component of academic evaluation.

5.5 Institutional, cultural and Governance and Performance Management Design

The findings reveal that the design and implementation of PMS in Jordanian private universities are significantly influenced by cultural norms, institutional structures, and governance mechanisms. Rather than functioning as standardized frameworks, PMS practices appear to reflect broader social values, resource constraints, and power hierarchies, reinforcing the argument that PMS are deeply embedded in their contextual environment (Murphy and DeNisi, 2023; Rajapakse, 2024). This section discusses how each of these contextual dimensions shapes the nature of PM in Jordanian private universities.

5.5.1 Institutional Factors Shaping Performance Management and Academic Motivation

The findings revealed that institutional structures within private Jordanian universities significantly shaped academics' motivational experiences and perceptions of performance management systems. Promotion arrangements, research-centred evaluation systems, and the limited strategic role of HR in universities influenced how academic staff understood career progression, organisational fairness, and professional development. Academics perceived that institutional performance systems prioritised measurable research outputs over broader developmental activities such as teaching quality, mentoring, and academic engagement. Furthermore, unequal promotion opportunities between Master's and PhD holders generated perceptions of inequity, particularly when similar publication expectations resulted in unequal professional rewards. Participants also criticised the administrative nature of HR departments, which were perceived as procedural units with limited involvement in strategic decision-making, career development, or employee support.

These findings align with higher education literature suggesting that managerial university structures increasingly shape academic behaviour through performance indicators, promotion criteria, and accountability mechanisms (Fawehinmi *et al.*, 2020; Parent-Rocheleau and Parker, 2022). Similarly, Xu et al. (2021); Sormani and Sijde (2023) and Khosa et al. (2024) found that academics were more motivated when institutional systems were perceived as fair, developmental, and supportive rather than purely evaluative. The findings also support Armstrong (2009) argument that performance management systems should function as developmental processes rather than administrative control mechanisms. However, the limited

strategic role of HR identified in this study suggests that performance management within private Jordanian universities remains operational and compliance-oriented rather than employee-centred and developmental. Likewise, Al Azzam Salih Jaradat (2014); Mansour, Heath and Brannan (2015) and Al-Twal, Rowlans and Cook (2019) argued that HR structures within higher education institutions frequently remain bureaucratic and administrative, limiting their ability to contribute strategically to employee motivation and organisational development.

From an SDT perspective, institutional arrangements shaped academics' experiences of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Research-focused promotion systems and unequal reward structures contributed to controlled forms of motivation, where academics prioritised publication activities primarily because they were linked to promotion, contract renewal, and institutional recognition. Ryan and Deci (2020) argue that environments characterised by excessive external control and contingent rewards may weaken intrinsic motivation and shift behaviour toward externally regulated compliance. Furthermore, the limited developmental role of HR reduced opportunities for academics to experience competence support through meaningful feedback, professional development, and career planning. Consequently, academics perceived performance management systems as accountability-oriented rather than supportive of long-term scholarly growth and academic well-being (Murphy and DeNisi, 2023; Johansen, Eliassen and Jeno, 2025)

This study contributes to performance management literature by demonstrating that institutional arrangements within higher education shape motivational processes through the allocation of rewards, evaluation weightings, promotion opportunities, and managerial authority. The findings further extend SDT by showing that institutional reward inequalities and research-centred evaluation systems operate as structural mechanisms influencing autonomy satisfaction, competence perceptions, and motivational regulation within academic environments.

5.5.2 Cultural Demographic Factors Influencing Academic Motivation and Performance Management

The findings demonstrated that cultural and demographic factors significantly influenced how academics perceived motivation, career satisfaction, and performance management practices within private Jordanian universities. Gender, age, family responsibilities, and comparisons between academic and industry employment shaped academics' professional priorities and motivational expectations. Female participants frequently associated academic employment with flexibility and work-life balance, particularly in relation to childcare and family responsibilities. Older academics valued academia for its long-term stability, professional continuity, and opportunities to remain connected to their disciplines. At the same time, participants consistently acknowledged the financial advantages of industry careers while continuing to value academia for its flexibility, autonomy, and job security.

These findings are consistent with existing literature suggesting that academic motivation is socially and culturally embedded rather than universally determined. Niyivuga, Otara and Tuyishime (2019) and Xu et al. (2021) found that female academics often prioritise flexibility and work-life integration because academic environments provide greater opportunities to balance professional and family responsibilities. Similarly, Siem, Nguyen and Luc (2025) argued that gendered expectations continue to shape women's experiences and career choices within higher education. The findings also align with Al-Kasasbeh (2016) who found that work-life balance and organisational flexibility were important predictors of motivation and retention among female academics. In relation to age and career stage, Guy and Arthur (2020) and Minello, Martucci and Manzo (2021) argued that employees' motivational priorities change across the life course, with older employees placing greater emphasis on stability, identity continuity, and long-term engagement rather than financial competition or rapid advancement. The findings also reflect SDT's distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivational orientations. Although industry careers were associated with stronger financial rewards and external incentives, participants frequently described academia as offering intrinsic and integrated motivational benefits such as flexibility, professional identity, intellectual engagement, and autonomy. Ryan and Deci (2020) argue that intrinsic motivation is strengthened when individuals experience autonomy, meaning, and psychological ownership within their work. Female participants particularly associated academic work with autonomy over schedules and family responsibilities, while older academics valued opportunities to

maintain professional competence and disciplinary engagement over long periods of time. These findings suggest that academics evaluate career satisfaction through broader psychological and social considerations rather than financial rewards alone.

This study contributes to SDT and performance management literature by demonstrating that motivational experiences within academia are influenced by demographic, cultural, and social contexts. The findings indicate that academics possess diverse motivational priorities shaped by gender roles, family expectations, career stage, and professional identity. Consequently, performance management systems within higher education should avoid adopting universalised assumptions regarding motivation and instead recognise the importance of flexibility, stability, autonomy, and work-life integration in sustaining long-term academic engagement and satisfaction.

5.5.3 Governance Factors Shaping Performance Management and Academic Motivation

The findings revealed that governance mechanisms, particularly research productivity policies and ranking pressures, played a central role in shaping the design and implementation of performance management systems within private Jordanian universities. Participants consistently described institutional priorities as strongly influenced by publication requirements, accreditation standards, international rankings, and organisational competitiveness. Research outputs became dominant indicators of academic performance because they contributed directly to institutional reputation, ranking position, and external recognition. Consequently, academics perceived themselves as operating within highly measurable and accountability-driven environments where publication productivity was prioritised over broader educational and developmental objectives.

These findings align with literature examining managerialism, performativity, and audit culture within higher education. Davis, Jansen van Rensburg and Venter (2016) and Shepherd (2018) argued that universities increasingly operate according to market-oriented governance models where measurable outputs become central indicators of institutional success. Similarly, Smeenk et al. (2009) and Al-Qathmi and Zedan (2021) demonstrated that global ranking systems

significantly influence institutional behaviour by encouraging universities to prioritise publication outputs, citations, and measurable research productivity. (Shore and Wright (2015) and (2018) further argued that audit cultures transform universities into performance-driven organisations centred on accountability, benchmarking, and measurable indicators. The findings of this study similarly indicate that performance management systems within private Jordanian universities were increasingly structured around quantifiable outputs linked to rankings and institutional competitiveness rather than teaching quality or developmental academic practices.

From an SDT perspective, governance pressures contributed to autonomy frustration and externally regulated forms of motivation. Participants frequently described publication activities as compulsory institutional obligations associated with promotion, contract renewal, and organisational expectations rather than intrinsically meaningful scholarly pursuits. Ryan and Deci (2020) argue that controlled motivation emerges when behaviour is regulated by pressure, fear of sanctions, contingent rewards, or externally imposed accountability systems. The findings therefore demonstrate how governance structures embedded within university policies and ranking systems shape academics' motivational experiences by encouraging compliance-oriented behaviours centred on measurable performance outcomes.

The findings also extend existing SDT scholarship by demonstrating that quantitative performance metrics function as organisational mechanisms of psychological control. While traditional SDT literature often focuses on interpersonal sources of control such as supervisors or managers, this study reveals that institutional governance systems themselves may regulate behaviour through numerical indicators, publication targets, and accountability structures. Consequently, academics described operating in "survival mode," where publication activities were pursued primarily to maintain career continuity and institutional compliance rather than to contribute meaningfully to knowledge production.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings of the study in relation to existing literature and the theoretical framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), with particular attention given to how performance management (PM) practices within private Jordanian universities shape

academics' motivational experiences. The discussion demonstrated that research and teaching evaluation practices were largely experienced as controlling mechanisms that frustrated academics' psychological needs for autonomy and competence, thereby shifting motivation from intrinsic scholarly engagement toward externally regulated and compliance-oriented behaviours. In contrast, community service evaluation practices emerged as a unique motivational domain that supported autonomy, competence, and relatedness satisfaction, leading to more positive forms of intrinsic motivation, engagement, and well-being. These findings contribute to the literature by illustrating that different components of PMS do not affect academics uniformly, but instead generate distinct motivational outcomes depending on how evaluation practices are designed and implemented.

The chapter further demonstrated that research evaluation practices within private Jordanian universities were heavily shaped by quantitative indicators linked to publication outputs, rankings, and institutional competitiveness. Such practices generated autonomy and competence frustration by restricting academics' freedom to pursue meaningful research agendas and by encouraging publication behaviours driven by survival concerns, contract renewal, and institutional compliance. Similarly, teaching evaluation practices, including student evaluations, peer reviews, learning analytics, and job portfolios, functioned primarily as monitoring and accountability mechanisms rather than developmental tools. Consequently, academics reported modifying their teaching practices strategically to satisfy evaluation requirements rather than to enhance pedagogical quality or intellectual engagement. These findings extend existing SDT literature by demonstrating that institutional evaluation systems themselves can operate as organisational sources of controlled motivation and psychological need frustration.

In contrast, the discussion highlighted the positive motivational effects associated with community service evaluation practices. Unlike research and teaching evaluation mechanisms, community engagement activities were experienced as autonomy-supportive, competence-enhancing, and socially meaningful. Academics described these activities as opportunities to contribute to society, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and develop professional skills in

ways aligned with their personal values and interests. The findings therefore demonstrated that evaluative systems within higher education are not inherently controlling or demotivating. Rather, when evaluation practices are designed around flexibility, social contribution, and professional growth, they can support psychological needs satisfaction and foster intrinsic motivation. This represents an important theoretical contribution to both SDT and PM literature by introducing the idea that evaluative systems can function either as mechanisms of need frustration or as pathways toward need satisfaction depending on their design and implementation.

The discussion also demonstrated that PM practices within Jordanian private universities are shaped by broader institutional, cultural, and governance contexts. Institutional structures such as unequal promotion systems, research-centred evaluation criteria, and weak strategic HR roles contributed to perceptions of inequity and externally regulated motivation. Cultural and demographic factors including gender roles, work-life balance, age, and career priorities influenced how academics interpreted motivation, flexibility, and career satisfaction. Governance mechanisms such as ranking pressures, publication policies, and accountability systems further reinforced metric-driven academic cultures centred on measurable outputs and institutional competitiveness. Together, these contextual dimensions illustrate that PM systems in higher education cannot be understood as neutral administrative tools, but rather as socially embedded structures that shape academics' identities, behaviours, and motivational orientations.

Overall, this chapter contributes theoretically by extending SDT into the context of higher education PM systems and by demonstrating how institutional evaluation mechanisms shape motivational regulation through the satisfaction or frustration of psychological needs. The study introduced several conceptual contributions, including quantitative measurement need frustration, performance-evaluation need frustration pathways, and community service evaluation need satisfaction pathways. Collectively, these findings provide a more nuanced understanding of how PM practices influence academics' motivation, engagement, and well-being within contemporary higher education institutions. The next chapter presents the conclusion of the study, summarises the key contributions, discusses practical implications for higher education leaders and policymakers, and outlines recommendations for future research.

Chapter 6: Contributions, Limitations and Future Research

6.1 Theoretical Contribution

This study makes several important theoretical contributions to the literature on performance management systems (PMS), motivation, and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) within higher education contexts, particularly in developing and non-Western settings. While previous studies have primarily focused on the structural design of PMS and their observable organisational outcomes, this research advances existing knowledge by explaining the psychological mechanisms through which performance management practices influence academic staff motivation, job satisfaction, and well-being in Jordanian private universities.

First, this study extends Self-Determination Theory by shifting attention from the dominant focus on psychological need satisfaction towards the concept of psychological need frustration within academic performance management systems. Existing SDT literature in higher education has largely concentrated on how autonomy-supportive environments enhance motivation, engagement, and well-being among students and employees. However, limited research has examined how institutional evaluation systems may systematically frustrate the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The findings of this study demonstrate that research evaluation practices and teaching evaluation practices in Jordanian private universities frequently operate as controlling mechanisms that undermine academics' autonomy and competence through publication pressures, externally imposed performance targets, student evaluations, and contract renewal concerns. Consequently, this study contributes theoretically by showing that PMS can function not only as developmental systems but also as sources of psychological need frustration that generate controlled motivation, stress, anxiety, and disengagement.

Second, this study contributes to the PMS literature by conceptualising performance evaluation practices as psychologically differentiated mechanisms rather than treating PMS as a unified organisational process. The findings reveal that different evaluation domains produce distinct motivational consequences. Research evaluation practices and teaching evaluation practices were found to frustrate autonomy and competence, whereas community service evaluation practices supported autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This contribution challenges the dominant assumption within PMS literature that evaluation systems produce relatively similar motivational outcomes. Instead, the study demonstrates that the motivational effects of performance management depend on how evaluation indicators are designed, implemented, and experienced by academics. In doing so, the research introduces a more nuanced theoretical understanding of PMS by linking specific evaluation practices to different psychological and motivational pathways.

Third, the study advances SDT by introducing the concept of evaluation-induced need frustration within higher education environments. The findings demonstrate that performance evaluation systems centred on publication quantity, student satisfaction scores, and institutional ranking pressures can transform academic work into externally regulated and compliance-oriented activities. Academics reported engaging in research and teaching activities primarily to secure contract renewal, avoid negative consequences, or satisfy institutional demands rather than out of genuine intellectual interest or professional fulfilment. This finding contributes to SDT by illustrating how institutional evaluation systems can shift motivation from intrinsic regulation toward controlled forms of motivation. Therefore, the study expands existing SDT applications beyond classroom and leadership settings by positioning performance evaluation itself as a key determinant of motivational quality.

A further theoretical contribution concerns the extension of SDT and PMS literature into a non-Western and underexplored higher education context. Much of the existing literature on performance management and motivation has been developed within Western institutional environments characterised by relatively decentralised governance structures, mature HR systems, and stable employment conditions. In contrast, this study demonstrates that performance management practices in Jordanian private universities are strongly shaped by

hierarchical governance structures, centralised decision-making, resource limitations, market pressures, and weak strategic HRM integration. These contextual conditions significantly influence how academics experience evaluation systems and interpret institutional expectations. Consequently, the study contributes theoretically by demonstrating that the relationship between PMS and motivation is contextually affected by institutional, governance, and cultural factors. This extends the applicability of SDT within Middle Eastern higher education contexts and highlights the importance of contextualising motivational theories beyond Western institutional assumptions.

Finally, this study relates to the role of community service evaluation practices in supporting psychological need satisfaction and intrinsic motivation. While previous PMS literature has predominantly associated performance evaluation with pressure, control, and external regulation, the findings of this study reveal that community service evaluation practices can operate as autonomy-supportive and intrinsically motivating mechanisms. Academics reported that participation in voluntary initiatives, workshops, public seminars, and social activities strengthened their sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness by allowing them to engage in meaningful and socially valuable activities aligned with their personal values and professional identities. This finding challenges the dominant assumption that performance evaluation systems are inherently controlling. Instead, the study introduces the concept of a community service evaluation need satisfaction intrinsic motivation pathway, demonstrating that evaluation systems can enhance motivation and engagement when they are meaningful, flexible, socially connected, and autonomy supportive.

This research advances existing theory by extending SDT into academic performance management contexts, explaining the psychological consequences of evaluation systems, and demonstrating how cultural and institutional factors shape motivational processes within higher education.

6.2 Empirical Contribution

This study makes substantial practical contributions to improving the functioning and effectiveness of PMS in Jordanian private universities. The findings clearly show that existing evaluation mechanisms, particularly those related to research and teaching, are heavily quantitative, compliance-oriented, and controlling in nature. These systems generate stress, fear of sanctions, and competence doubt, ultimately driving controlled extrinsic motivation. University leaders, therefore, have a practical obligation to reassess the appropriateness of such metrics. The study highlights the urgent need to shift from quantity-based assessment models toward more developmental, contextualised, and autonomy-supportive systems. University presidents, provosts, and senior administrators can use these insights to implement balanced scorecards, reduce over-reliance on student evaluations, and encourage diverse forms of scholarly contribution. Introducing clearer workload policies, mentoring schemes, and periodic developmental feedback rather than punitive annual evaluations would improve academics' motivation, well-being, and performance. These changes also require strengthening HR capacity and moving from an administrative role toward a strategic partner that shapes evaluation policies, ensures transparency, and monitors fairness in PMS implementation.

A particularly important practical contribution of this study is the identification of community service evaluation as a powerful yet previously overlooked driver of intrinsic motivation. Unlike teaching and research evaluation practices, community engagement activities, such as public seminars, staff workshops, and voluntary participation in social initiatives, were found to enhance autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The academics described these activities as meaningful, self-chosen, professionally enriching, and socially valuable, highlighting their potential as a motivational and engagement tool. Practically, this means that universities should formally integrate community service into their PMS frameworks rather than treating it as an informal or secondary activity. Deans and department heads can operationalise this by developing evaluation tools that capture the quality, influence, and societal value of community-based work. Providing recognition, workload reduction, certificates of service, or promotion points for community contributions would ensure that these activities are incentivised and sustained. Creating institutional structures such as public engagement offices, university social clubs, or community partnership programmes can further strengthen the

relationship between the institution and society, while enhancing academics' sense of belonging and well-being. This study therefore provides a concrete pathway for universities to design PMS components that support rather than undermine motivation.

Finally, the study offers detailed practical insights for policymakers, accreditation bodies, and governance stakeholders. The findings demonstrate that cultural norms (e.g., high power distance, gendered expectations), institutional limitations (e.g., weak HR infrastructure), and centralised governance structures significantly shape how PMS are experienced and enacted. These conditions often lead to subjective evaluations, inconsistent appraisal standards, and discretionary power concentrated in the hands of department heads. Practically, this calls for regulatory reforms at the national level. The Ministry of Higher Education and the Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC) can utilise these findings to introduce national PMS guidelines that ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency across private universities. This may include establishing national standards for evaluating teaching quality, defining clear criteria for promotion and contract renewal, and reducing subjective interpretations of evaluation indicators. Policymakers could also support capacity-building by offering national training programmes for HR directors, deans, and department heads on performance appraisal, autonomy-supportive leadership, and bias-free evaluation. Strengthening governance transparency and accountability would not only improve academic motivation and well-being but also raise the overall quality, credibility, and competitiveness of Jordanian higher education.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

Despite the valuable insights generated by this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research adopted a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews with 30 academic staff from three private universities in Jordan. While this methodology enabled a rich, nuanced exploration of academics' experiences with PMS and their motivational impacts, it inherently limits the generalizability of the findings. The sample, although carefully selected to represent different disciplines and academic ranks, reflects the perspectives of a relatively small group of participants within a specific institutional context. Therefore, the findings may not fully represent the experiences of academics in other private universities, public universities, or HEIs in different countries. Future research could employ

mixed-methods approaches or larger-scale quantitative studies to validate and extend these findings across broader populations and institutional types.

Second, the study is contextually and culturally specific, grounded in Jordanian private universities characterised by high power distance, hierarchical governance, and collectivist social norms. These cultural and institutional factors strongly influenced how PM practices were perceived and experienced. Consequently, while the study provides theoretically and practically meaningful insights for similar developing-country higher education contexts, the findings may not directly translate to Western universities or to contexts with more egalitarian governance, decentralised decision-making, or different cultural expectations. Similarly, the focus on private universities means the research does not capture potentially different dynamics in public universities, where resource allocation, institutional priorities, and performance evaluation criteria may differ significantly. Future research could compare PMS and motivation across public and private universities or across countries with contrasting governance and cultural systems to strengthen external validity.

Third, the study relied exclusively on self-reported data, which may be influenced by social desirability bias, selective recall, or individual interpretation. Participants may have presented their engagement with research, teaching, or community service activities in a favourable light or minimised negative experiences, particularly given the sensitive nature of discussing institutional evaluation, autonomy, and job security. Furthermore, the study design was cross-sectional, capturing participants' perceptions at a single point in time. Consequently, it does not account for longitudinal changes in PM policies, career progression, or evolving motivational states. Longitudinal studies would allow for examination of how changes in institutional evaluation practices over time influence intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, need satisfaction, and overall well-being.

Finally, while SDT provided a robust framework to explore the satisfaction and frustration of psychological needs, the exclusive reliance on SDT may overlook other organisational or motivational frameworks that could provide complementary insights. For instance, theories such as Expectancy Theory, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, or Organisational Justice frameworks could further illuminate the mechanisms linking performance evaluation, motivation, and well-being. Additionally, although this study identified community service evaluation as a novel motivational indicator, the lack of prior literature on this domain means that conclusions regarding its broader applicability and long-term impact should be interpreted

cautiously. Future research could triangulate SDT with other theoretical perspectives and examine community service evaluation longitudinally to confirm its role as a motivational enabler across different institutional and cultural settings.

Taken together, these limitations suggest that while the study makes significant theoretical and practical contributions to understanding how research, teaching, and community service evaluation practices influence academic motivation in Jordanian private universities, caution is needed when generalising the findings. Addressing these limitations in future research would strengthen the external validity, longitudinal applicability, and theoretical integration of findings, providing a more comprehensive understanding of PMS and academic motivation in higher education.

6.4 Future Research

The findings of this study open several avenues for future research aimed at deepening the understanding of PMS and their impact on academic motivation and well-being in higher education. First, given that the current research employed a qualitative approach with a relatively small sample of academics from private universities in Jordan, future studies could adopt quantitative, mixed-methods, or multi-site approaches. Large-scale surveys and structural equation modelling could empirically test the relationships between PM practices, psychological needs satisfaction (autonomy, competence, and relatedness), types of motivation (intrinsic versus controlled extrinsic), and well-being outcomes. Comparative analyses across disciplines, academic ranks, gender, and years of experience would offer insights into how contextual and demographic factors moderate these relationships, enhancing the generalizability of the findings.

Second, the study highlights the importance of longitudinal and intervention-based research. Longitudinal studies could track how changes in PM policies, such as modifications to research evaluation requirements, teaching assessment mechanisms, or the formal integration of community service evaluation, affect academics' motivation, engagement, and psychological well-being over time. Such designs could clarify the temporal and sustained effects of needs-supportive versus needs-frustrating PMS practices. Intervention-based research could experimentally test strategies, such as reducing reliance on quantitative research indicators, implementing autonomy-supportive teaching evaluation practices, or introducing structured,

meaningful community engagement programs, to determine causal links between specific PMS modifications and motivational or performance outcomes.

Third, cross-cultural and comparative research could provide valuable insights into how cultural norms, governance structures, and institutional priorities shape the implementation and impact of PMS. Comparative studies could examine differences between private and public universities in Jordan, or between universities in Middle Eastern and Western or other developing-country contexts. Such research would illuminate the ways in which hierarchical power distance, collectivist norms, gender expectations, and centralised governance influence academics' perceptions of evaluation systems and the resulting effects on autonomy, competence, relatedness, and intrinsic motivation.

Fourth, future studies could expand the scope of investigation to include broader performance and organisational outcomes, exploring how academics' motivation and engagement, shaped by PMS, translate into measurable improvements in student learning outcomes, research quality, knowledge production, and societal impact. Linking individual-level psychological needs and motivation to institutional-level effectiveness would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the strategic role of PMS in higher education.

Finally, integrating complementary theoretical frameworks alongside SDT could deepen insights into the mechanisms underpinning motivation in academic settings. Theories such as Job Demands-Resources theory, Organisational Justice Theory, Expectancy Theory, or Psychological Empowerment frameworks could help explain the interplay between environmental demands, evaluative pressures, perceived fairness, and intrinsic motivation. Exploring how these frameworks intersect with SDT could lead to more sophisticated models of PM, motivation, and well-being in higher education, particularly in developing-country contexts where cultural, institutional, and governance factors strongly shape academic work.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: BREO Approval

College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Brunel University London
Kingston Lane
Uxbridge
UB8 3PH
United Kingdom

www.brunel.ac.uk

6 July 2023

LETTER OF APPROVAL

APPROVAL HAS BEEN GRANTED FOR THIS STUDY TO BE CARRIED OUT BETWEEN 06/07/2023 AND 31/03/2025

Applicant (s): Mr Hussein Alberawi

Project Title: Performance Management System of Academics in private universities in Jordan.

Reference: 42700-LR-Jun/2023- 45449-1

Dear Mr Hussein Alberawi

The Research Ethics Committee has considered the above application recently submitted by you.

The Chair, acting under delegated authority has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. Approval is given on the understanding that the conditions of approval set out below are followed:

- **The agreed protocol must be followed. Any changes to the protocol will require prior approval from the Committee by way of an application for an amendment.**
- **Please ensure that you monitor and adhere to all up-to-date local and national Government health advice for the duration of your project.**

Please note that:

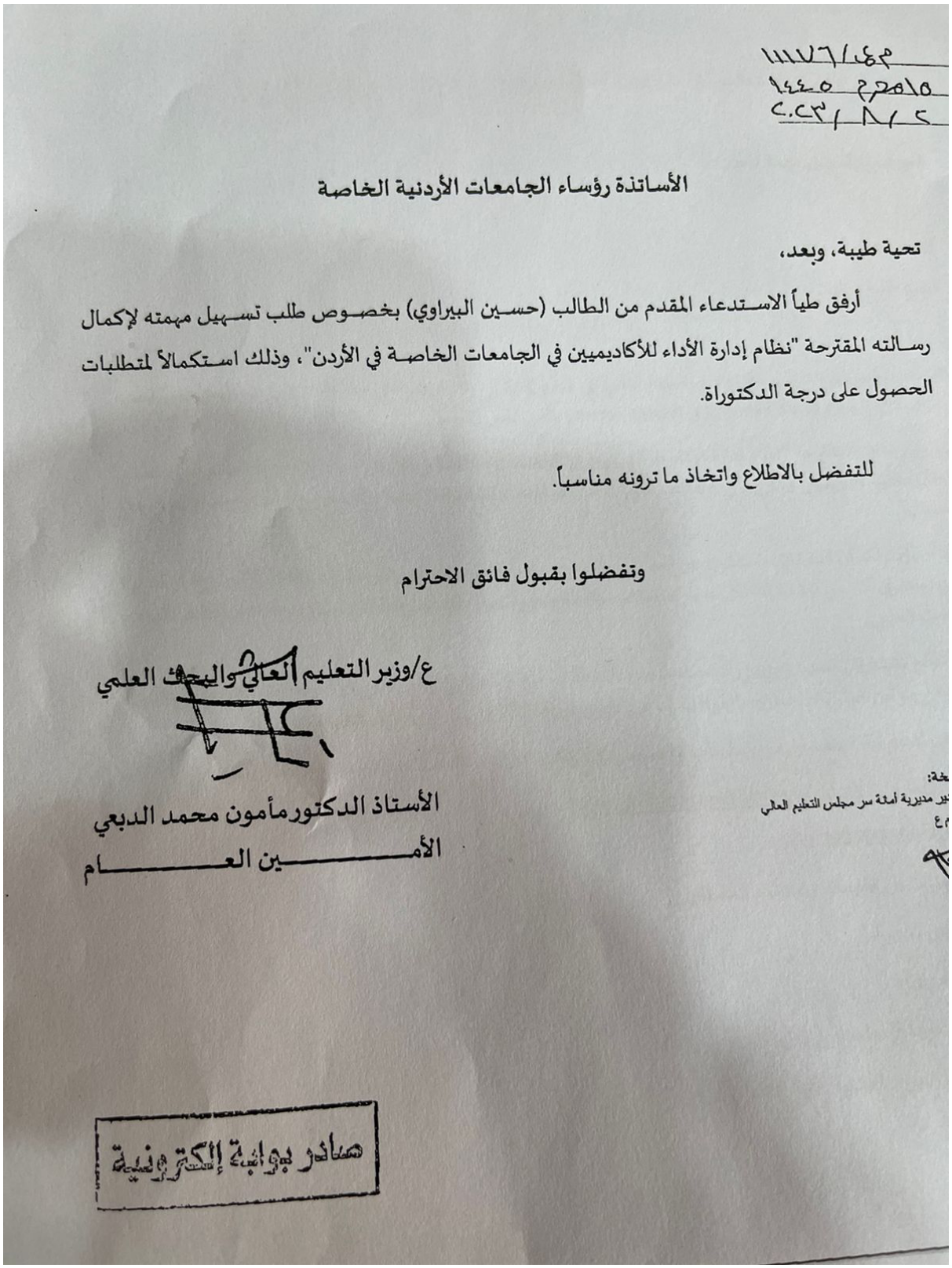
- Research Participant Information Sheets and (where relevant) flyers, posters, and consent forms should include a clear statement that research ethics approval has been obtained from the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- The Research Participant Information Sheets should include a clear statement that queries should be directed, in the first instance, to the Supervisor (where relevant), or the researcher. Complaints, on the other hand, should be directed, in the first instance, to the Chair of the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- Approval to proceed with the study is granted subject to any conditions that may appear above.
- The Research Ethics Committee reserves the right to sample and review documentation, including raw data, relevant to the study.
- If your project has been approved to run for a duration longer than 12 months, you will be required to submit an annual progress report to the Research Ethics Committee. You will be contacted about submission of this report before it becomes due.
- You may not undertake any research activity if you are not a registered student of Brunel University or if you cease to become registered, including abeyance or temporary withdrawal. As a deregistered student you would not be insured to undertake research activity. Research activity includes the recruitment of participants, undertaking consent procedures and collection of data. Breach of this requirement constitutes research misconduct and is a disciplinary offence.

Professor David Gallear

Chair of the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Brunel University London

Appendix 2: Ministry of Higher Education approval



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٤٠٤٣/٨/٤

الأساتذة رؤساء الجامعات الأردنية الخاصة

تحية طيبة، وبعد،

أرفق طياً الاستدعاء المقدم من الطالب (حسين البيراوي) بخصوص طلب تسهيل مهمته لإكمال رسالته المقترحة "نظام إدارة الأداء للأكاديميين في الجامعات الخاصة في الأردن"، وذلك استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الدكتوراة.

للتفضل بالاطلاع واتخاذ ما ترونه مناسباً.

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام

ع/وزير التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

الأستاذ الدكتور مأمون محمد الدبعي
الأمين العام

نسخة:
مدير مديرية أمانة سر مجلس التعليم العالي
ع

صادر بوابة إلكترونية

Appendix 3: Universities Confirmation

DA

Dr Anas Alsoud <a.alsoud@ammanu.edu.jo>

To: All Faculty <all.faculty@ammanu.edu.jo>

Mon 26/06/2023 10:06

Cc: Hussein Alberawi (Doctoral Researcher); president <president@ammanu.edu.jo>; **+2 others**

Dear Faculty Members,
Hope this e-mail finds you well,

Mr. Hussein Al-Berawi (cc'ed) who is a PhD student at Brunel University - London, might contact you for an online interview (MS Teams) as part of his data collection phase, please collaborate with him at your convenience.

Yours,

Prof. Anas Ratib ALSoud

Vice President *for International Relations & Quality*
Director *- Hourani Center for Applied Scientific Research*
Director *- Department of Accreditation & Quality Assurance*
Director *- Global Engagement Center*
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ASIC AACSB Business Education Alliance Member

Reply Reply all Forward

Appendix 4: Participants invitation & Participants Acceptance

Dear Dr. Ahmad,

I hope all is well with you and Eid Mubarak

I am writing this letter to invite you to participate in my research on the performance management systems of academics in private universities in Jordan. The purpose of this research is to explore the performance management systems of academics at private universities in Jordan.

As an academic staff member of Al-Ahliyya Amman (AAU), You are invited to participate in this research study. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Your participation in this research will involve answering interview questions that will take approximately 30-45 minutes of your time. The interviews will be handled online via Microsoft Teams, and all responses will be kept strictly confidential. The interviews will be audio and video recorded for analysis purposes. Your participation will contribute to a better understanding of the current state of performance management in private universities in Jordan, and a copy of the recommendation will be provided to the educational leaders in the university to inform policies and practises if they want to. Please note that participation in this research is entirely voluntary, and your decision to participate or not will not have any impact on your employment or any other aspect of your relationship with the university.

To confirm your participation, please set any date and time in July, and I will send you back the invitation link, which includes the date and time, the participant information sheet, and the consent form, as it needs to be signed before handling the interviews.

If you have any questions about the research or would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me at:
Email: Hussein.Alberawi@brunel.ac.uk
WhatsApp number: +962 79 270 1885

Thank you for considering this invitation, and I hope that you will choose to participate in this important research study.
Kind Regards,
Hussein Alberawi

Appendix 5: Participants Response

D

Dr Ahmad Al heet <a.alheet@ammanu.edu.jo>

To: Hussein Alberawi (Doctoral Researcher)

Dear Hussein
I Hope this email find you well

Regarding the interview, I suggest to be tomorrow, Monday 10/7/2023, at 1pm , in Arabic language.
My mob no. 0797294066
Best regards

Dr. Ahmad Fathi Alheet (*Associate Prof.*)
Business School
Department of Business Administration
Al Ahliyya Amman University, Jordan
E-mail: a.alheet@ammanu.edu.jo
Tel: 00962 53500211, Ex:2226

Our vision is to be a leading business school in Jordan and the region

...

Reply Forward

Appendix 6: The Interview Questions

1. **Participant details:**

Name: ……

Position: ……

School/College: ……

Age group: ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-55 ☐ 55+

Qualification: ☐ PhD ☐ Masters ☐ Bachelors

Country of qualification: ☐ Jordan ☐ UK ☐ USA ☐ Europe

☐ Canada ☐ Australia ☐ Other

Years of experience:

2. **Questions about the formal performance management evaluation in the university.**

2.1. How many times are performance evaluations conducted for academic staff?
2.2. Can you describe the process of performance evaluation in your university?
2.3. What criteria/indicators are used to evaluate academic performance?
2.4. How are the evaluation results used to inform decisions about promotions?
2.5. How are the evaluation results used to inform decisions about salary increases?
2.6. Are there any problems with the current PMS?
2.7. In your opinion, how can you improve the current system?

3. Questions about self-determination theory

3.1. How much control do you have over designing your own modules, topics, and using your own methods to teach?

3.2. How much control do you have over choosing your research topics and interests?

3.3. Do you attend conferences and workshops? If so, how does it affect your knowledge and skills?

3.4. Do academic staff in universities feel cared for, engaged with, and supported by their leaders, colleagues, and students?

4. Questions about goal-setting's effects on academics' performance.

4.1. Does the management team set performance goals for academic staff in regards to teaching? Such as teaching methods, student engagement, course design and assessment strategies?

4.2. Does the management team set performance goals for academic staff in regards to research?

4.2.1. Do you think the goals set are aligned with the institution's mission, vision and the strategy plan?

4.3. Do you think goal-setting motivates you as a faculty member?

5. Questions about motivations and promotions

5.1. What motivates you to perform well?

5.2. Do you feel that promotions are based on performance?

5.3. Are you satisfied with the pay and rewards of your job?

5.4. Do you think the pay in academia compares well to other jobs?

5.5. From your experience, how could you improve the current promotion system?

5.6. Would you change the incentive structure? If so, how?

6. End up Questions.

6.1. Where is the role of the HR department in the evaluation process?

6.2. Is there anything that you would like to add that has not been mentioned in the interview?

Appendix 7: Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study title

Performance Management System of Academics in Private Universities in Jordan

Invitation Paragraph

I (Hussein Alberawi) would like to invite you to contribute and take part in a research study on performance management systems in universities. Before you decide whether to take part, I would like to explain why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me or us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

To explore the performance management system at private universities in Jordan. The study is being undertaken in the PhD course in management, which should be submitted by March 2025.

Why have I been invited to participate?

In order to understand performance management systems in private universities in Jordan, I am asking academic staff about their experiences of performance measurement within their university. Hence, I am requesting academics, heads of departments, and HR staff from different private universities to answer some questions about the performance evaluation process and how it can be presented better. I am aiming to reach 35 participants from different positions such as professor, reader, senior lecturer, and lecturer, and they will be aged between 26 - 80 years old.

Do I have to take part?

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and there will be no penalties whatever if you choose not to participate.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be informed at the beginning of the interview about the purpose of the study, and then you will have the chance to answer the interview questions. The researcher is using interviews for data collection purposes; the interviews will be held online via MS Teams and will last between 30-45 minutes. Also, it will be recorded for analysis purposes. You will be informed that participants can withdraw from taking part at any time without giving reasons. There will be no financial expenses or time-consuming travel to handle the interview. The data will be presented anonymised, and **pseudonyms will be replaced by real names.** You will be asked to arrange a date and time for the interview at your convenience.

Are there any lifestyle restrictions?

In this case, there are no life restrictions.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no anticipated risks or disadvantages associated with taking part in this study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You may find it interesting to share your experience and knowledge in this study, as it could be a part of changing the performance measurement system for academic staff in private universities in Jordan. A copy of the recommendations will be sent to the educational leaders at different private universities. A high response rate will help me make the strongest possible case for any changes recommended, as it enables me to demonstrate that a high proportion of academic and non-academic staff have been consulted.

What if something goes wrong?

You should be aware that if something goes wrong, you have the right to withdraw before and during the interview process without giving reasons. Also, if there are complaints or issues, you are free to contact the College of Business, Arts, and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Chair, Professor David Gallear (David.Gallear@brunel.ac.uk**). He will be able to answer all the required inquiries or issues that may exist.**

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information that is collected about you during the research will be kept strictly confidential. Any information about you that leaves the university will have all your identifying information removed. With your permission, anonymised data will be stored and may be used in future research. You can indicate whether or not you give permission for this by way of the semi-structured interview consent form.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recording be used?

If you agree to be interviewed as part of this study, these will take place virtually online and be recorded. Pseudonyms will be used to ensure anonymity, and recordings will be destroyed once transcriptions have been downloaded. Data extracted from interview transcriptions will be used to analyse and synthesise findings.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

A copy of the results and findings will be sent to the educational leaders and their directors, and these may be used to inform and guide future practise at different private universities. I also intend to disseminate the findings more widely at conferences and through journal articles.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is organised by Hussein Al-Berawi (a doctoral researcher) in conjunction with Brunel University London.

What are the indemnity arrangements?

Brunel University London provides appropriate insurance coverage for research that has received ethical approval.

Who has reviewed the study?

The study has been reviewed by the College of Business, Arts, and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Chair, Professor David Gallear.

Research Integrity

Brunel University London is committed to compliance with the Universities UK Research Integrity Concordat. You are entitled to expect the highest level of integrity from the researchers during the course of this research.

Contact for further information and complaints.

Researcher contact details:

Name: Hussein Hasan Alberawi

Occupation: PhD student in the College of Business.

Email Address: Hussein.Alberawi@brunel.ac.ukk

Mobile Number: +44 (0) 7512259320

WhatsApp Number: + 962 (0) 792701885

Supervisor contact details:

Name: Prof. Shireen Kanji

Position: Professor in Human Resources Management

Email Address: Shireen.Kanji@brunel.ac.uk

For complaints, contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee in the **College of Business, Arts, and Social Sciences, Professor David Gallear** (David.Gallear@brunel.ac.uk).

Appendix 8: Consent Form

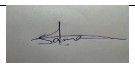
CONSENT FORM

Performance Management System of Academics in Private Universities in Jordan

Hussein Hasan Al-Berawi

APPROVAL HAS BEEN GRANTED FOR THIS STUDY TO BE CARRIED OUT BETWEEN 01/07/2023 AND 31/03/2025

The participant (or their legal representative) should complete the whole of this sheet.		
	YES	NO
Have you read the Participant Information Sheet?	☒	☐
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study? (via email/phone for electronic surveys)	☒	☐
Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions? (via email/phone for electronic surveys)	☒	☐
Who have you spoken to about the study?		
Do you understand that you will not be referred to by name in any report concerning this study?	☒	☐
Do you understand that:		
• You are free to withdraw from this study at any time	☒	☐
• You don't have to give any reason for withdrawing	☒	☐
• Choosing not to participate or withdrawing will not affect your rights?	☒	☐
• You can withdraw your data any time up to 31/03/2025	☒	☐
I agree to my interview being audio recorded	☒	☐
I agree to the use of non-attributable quotes when the study is written up or published	☒	☐
The procedures regarding confidentiality have been explained to me	☒	☐
I agree that my anonymised data can be stored and shared with other researchers for use in future projects.	☒	☐
I agree to take part in this study.	☒	☐

Signature of research participant: 	
Print name:10/7/2023	Date:Sunday

Appendix 9: Anonymous Interview Transcripts

Hussein Al-Berawi

What is your name?

Hala

My name is Hala

Hussein Al-Berawi

What is your position?

Hala

Head of the Marketing Department at the Z University faculty of financial and science management.

Hussein Al-Berawi

As the age group. Are you from twenty-five to thirty-four, thirty-five to forty-four?

Hala

Fifty-five and over.

Hussein Al-Berawi

What is your qualification? From which country did you get it?

Hala

PhD from Jordan

Hussein Al-Berawi

Just fine. Well, doctor, the first question is how often the performance of a faculty member at Z university is evaluated?

Hala

We can talk about this dimension from both sides, the academic and the administrative one as I evaluate academics and staff in my department, and I was evaluated by my dean. This is done once a year.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Alright, tell me more about the process of evaluation. How is it going?

Hala

As a process, an email sent from our Quality Assurance Departments in Schools to the president university and the University President circulates it to the entire university. We are now starting an assessment for Faculty members and administrators because we are not the same. I mean, there are administrative people like a secretary and other staff, the evaluation process begins, an email will be sent, and they give us a specific period. Of course, all of this is electronic. I mean, we receive a link. Accordingly, I enter something called E-HR, I mean the system that was originally used to arrange the leaves, hour leaves and all types of holidays… etc., and part of it is relevant to evaluation. Once I click on the evaluation button,

I start evaluating my employees who are teaching staff. But before evaluating them, we ask academics to evaluate themselves. Once they have done that, they send it to the department head for approval. Once it is approved, it is sent to the dean and to HR. This is the full cycle of the performance management.

Hussein Al-Berawi

So, the staff evaluates him/herself, and your role is to approve it, right?

Hala

I enter and change if I have any concern regarding any particular thing he wrote. Of course, faculty members say that many standards are related to self-development, related to research, and related to commitment to attendance. Giving lectures in a timely manner means that there are many criteria you can know. In terms of evaluating performance, he starts evaluating himself. If I have any observation, I inform him, and we reach a point of agreement. The most important point is that you have the chance to upload your evidence; if you said I got five out of five in something, you should have a reference for it. A very important point in evaluating performance is that I have a screen that opens to me, which this employee suggests training courses for development. I mean, if the programs or training courses tell you that this person who takes them, I give you an example. I am the head of the marketing department. Honestly, I say this person needs to develop his skills in digital marketing, so I want courses related to E-marketing. A copy will go to the end of the department, called the Academic Development Center which is responsible for training, so you will find them preparing training courses for the next year based on the performance evaluation.

Hussein Al-Berawi

This is the right thing to do.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Well, doctor, what criteria/ indicators are used to evaluate academic performance?

Hala

His commitment to giving lectures on time, with the teaching burden required of him to deal with students and his colleagues as well. That means how he deals with the head of his department deals with everyone. Let's talk. I mean, the college that is in the university. The colleagues at the same university dealt with students and all. I mean, let's talk. This category is covered by specific indicators. I'm trying to remember the scientific research. It is true that he is committed to doing research, whether by Scopus or not. This is important because we are the Z University take care of the ranking, I mean, the University Ranking is based on scientific research. When we talk about the international rankings, we should have publications in a high-quality journal. Community service is also one of the important indicators that we use to evaluate academics. Is he active in serving the community? Is he doing extracurricular activities? Is he serving both the academic and the public community? For example, is he a member of the international association, or is he a journal examiner in one of the well-known journals? I mean, these are all the things I want to be active in it to write in order to pay attention to and develop myself. Does he take courses for development? They even ask about whether our research is aligned with sustainability topics or not, whether our research serves social, economic and cultural goals.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Ok, doctor, is there a role for students' evaluation here or not?

Hala

We have students' evaluations at the end of the semester, before students receive their final marks. The evaluation is a survey that consists of plenty of indicators, such as teaching performance, communication with students, adherence to lectures and commitment to serving students.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Well, doctor, what are the decisions they made from the results of the evaluation? I mean, do you make decisions, for example, in renewing the contract, or in raising salaries?

Hala

It takes more than one input. One of them means the renewal of contracts, the other is training. We need to develop the teaching staff, so I need to know the weaknesses which need further development. Evaluation is important for determining training needs and renewing contracts.

Hussein Al-Berawi

What about the salary increase? Is the salary increase linked to the performance evaluation?

Hala

The salary increases are fixed for all the staff; we get a fixed percentage based on our rank, so the evaluation performance is not linked with the salary increases.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Yes, now it's okay. Well, what are the problems with the current PMS, and how do you solve these problems in the current performance management system?

Hala

I think it is transparent because, as I said, it starts with the self-evaluation and goes to concerned parts like the department head, dean, and HR. So, we are open for evaluation from more than one side. This system is very good. On the contrary, I think I mean it is positive and doesn't have problems because in the end it is a session between the evaluator and the staff. I mean, staff can convince when they see they have problems and they are eager to improve them.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Now, ok, doctor, how much control do you have over designing your own modules, topics, and using your own methods to teach?

Hala

Now, we have something called ILOs (Intended Learning Outcomes) for each subject. I mean, by virtue of the evaluation process, does the subject or content achieve educational outcomes or not? No, now, but how do you design it? How do you present the course? How is the method of explanation? As you know, all universities are moving towards blended learning, I mean, the graduation project, for example, electronic, because I meet students every week to tell them what to do in their graduation project without taking them to a classroom. We have now blended learning (2+1), where students attend face-to-face lectures twice a week and they attend once online. The tutor designs an assignment for them or a project to work in or we put them in teams to present something. The tutor has all the freedom to design the content.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Ok, Doctor, the same point, do you have control over the choice of research topics or Interest?

Hala

Now we have instructions for scientific research, which are governed by scientific keywords. Such as the journal rank and university level, but what do you want to research? Which topic are you going to investigate? We have something in Jordan called the knowledge fields where each one should be a specialist in this field, I have one specialise in tourism. For example, I am in the E-Marketing Digital Brand. All my research is related to E-Marketing. You can investigate another topic outside my field, but it should be linked and aligned with E-Marketing.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Well, some people think conferences and workshops are excellent and useful in terms of knowledge and skills, and some think they are a waste of time.

Hala

Now we have a system in place at the university where all those who participate in conferences will receive incentives on this subject. We also have incentives that are given depending on the journal in which you are published. This is a second type. I mean, one of the standards is to publish a paper or write a book chapter. All these matters are asked when faculty members are evaluated, and the university has an incentive system for scientific research through it. If you publish in a high-ranking journal, you get 400 JOD. If you publish in Scopus Q1 and Q2, you may receive 1000 JOD, and so on. You have an existing schedule that is clear for all the members, so they know that once they publish it in X journal, they will receive this amount of money. We also have an external incentive system other than the salary system. It comes from a faculty member linked to scientific research. Also, if you publish with external scholars or not, this is also an important point to consider. So why does the university encourage them? Because when the university applies for international accreditation, they get a higher rank and reputation, and the competition between universities is very high in regards to ranking and qualifications.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Well, doctor, do faculty members feel the attention and adequate care of the university? Here I am measuring the social aspect, whether there is a group breakfast, for example, is there a Ramadan breakfast? Is there an annual dinner? I mean, the aspect outside the academic sector or the academic field.

Hala

We have something at the university, physically called the University Club. This intellectual club allow faculty member there to read newspapers. They meet at tables where we work. I mean, for example, a faculty member is promoted in his work. There is a celebration in the name of his club colleagues. They organise regular trips, they organise the annual dinner for all the staff in the university, and they have a lot of activities that staff can benefit from.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Is it free?

Hala

Our money, the member gets a discount. Okay, and others, a discount instead of three hundred and fifty per night, they get better offers. And powerfully. The university tells us to gather like this on Friday morning at the university and university buses take them and return, they also organise the annual dinner for all the staff, which is a good opportunity to meet. Anyone who wants to organise something they are able to help him/her such as promotion celebration, birthday events, lunch, or anything want to do.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Jamil Tayyeb, doctor, on the aspect of goal setting? Does the management team set performance goals for academic staff regarding teaching? Such as teaching methods, student engagement, course design and assessment strategies?

Hala

We are controlled by the intended learning outcomes (ILOs), we design the module based on the course description that is set by the department's committee. In relation to extracurricular activities, for example, tourism marketing, for example, it is possible for a teacher to ask that you want to take them on a tourist trip, okay, or you should prepare case studies relevant to the Tourism Promotion Authority, and when I evaluate him/her, we look whether objectives have achieved or not at the end of the semester.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Well, the same point is whether there are goals for scientific research? I mean, are we talking to the academic that two research papers should be published in a year or broader research?

Hala

I mean, each faculty member is required to have at least two scientific research Scopus in each year and one Scopus research in the arts and humanities research, regardless of first or co-author, it doesn't matter.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Beautiful. Ok doctor. No, we are talking about motivation, promotions, and incentives. What motivates you? You are a doctor and head of department at the Z University, which performs well every day at the university.

Hala

Now I am after an explanation that varies from one person to another in the same way; some prefer the financial, others prefer non-financial. I consider the moral aspect the most important. I mean, you feel that it is your job appreciated, I live in a comfortable environment in all respects. As I told you, compared to other public universities, the appreciation in my university is far better than in other universities; our voices are heard, and our effort is appreciated. This is something better than money. No one denies that financial reward is important; without financial fund I can't publish in high-ranking journals. Also, we work hard to get international accreditation for the departments at our university. For instance, last year, I got the Canadian international ranking for the marketing department, and we received incentives in return.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Well, Doctor, do you feel that promotions are based on performance?

Hala

Now, the process of promotion is based on points, I mean, when I want, for example, as an associate professor, I should get eight points at least and one of them at least as a first author.

We have a system for scientific research, okay, what has been done? Have you met the basic requirements, which is clear in the system? Did you achieve the eight points section? Each department has something called the Scientific Research Committee who received the promotion application before sending it to the deans and the presidency. They check these matters. Of course, who made the promotion decision? it is sent to external judgments or examiners to study the promotion file. We do not know them. I mean, when I received my promotion, I don't know who judged or examined my application, but they usually send applications to British and American universities so, the process is transparent and there is no relation or nepotism intervention.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Well, doctor, are you totally satisfied with the pay and rewards at the university?

Hala

Yes, I am fully satisfied and calm. Thank God things are good.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Do you think the pay in academia compares well to other jobs?

Hala

I worked in the private sector, and I worked in the academic sector with a practical salary. I used to work for Orange for Jordan Telecom for eighteen years and then I completed my PhD. Then I came to the academic sector. To be honest, it depends on the person and his ambitions. I mean, I worked in the private sector, of course, it added a meaningful value for me. Why? Because when you teach, when you deliver marketing materials or give management materials, you give them. I mean, examples are always practical, not like the one who entered the academic sector directly and did not try the practical sector. I always have a variety of practical examples, so the subject is an attractive element for students. The student hears you and listens to you. Why? Because he feels that the theoretical side is bridging the other side. I mean, you tell them that once you go to the company, you will face

one, two, three, this motivates students to learn and engage with the sessions. As a woman, I see myself more with the academic side as I have a home and kids to look after so, there is flexibility in this dimension whereas when I was in the private sector, I used to finish at six o'clock. Yes, it has more money but with stability and flexibility, the academic dimension is perfect.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Well, doctor, how can you improve the system of incentives? I mean, if you have the decision to make an improvement in it, will the rewards increase, for example? I mean.

Hala

So far it is doing the purpose.

Hussein Al-Berawi

Well, doctor, is there a role for human resources in all of what we mentioned, I mean, between their role and their exact core role in the evaluation process?

Hala

Do they make circulations for the instructions? They send feedback back. If there is an error in the process, they make sure to apply the instructions.

Hussein Al-Berawi

They don't evaluate performance completely because it was referred to the head of the department more, right?

Hala

Yes, yes, we have them as procedures. I mean, they only make sure that the procedures are implemented. They don't go through the evaluation process that much. If there is an issue with one of the academic staff evaluations, they require training for him for improvements.

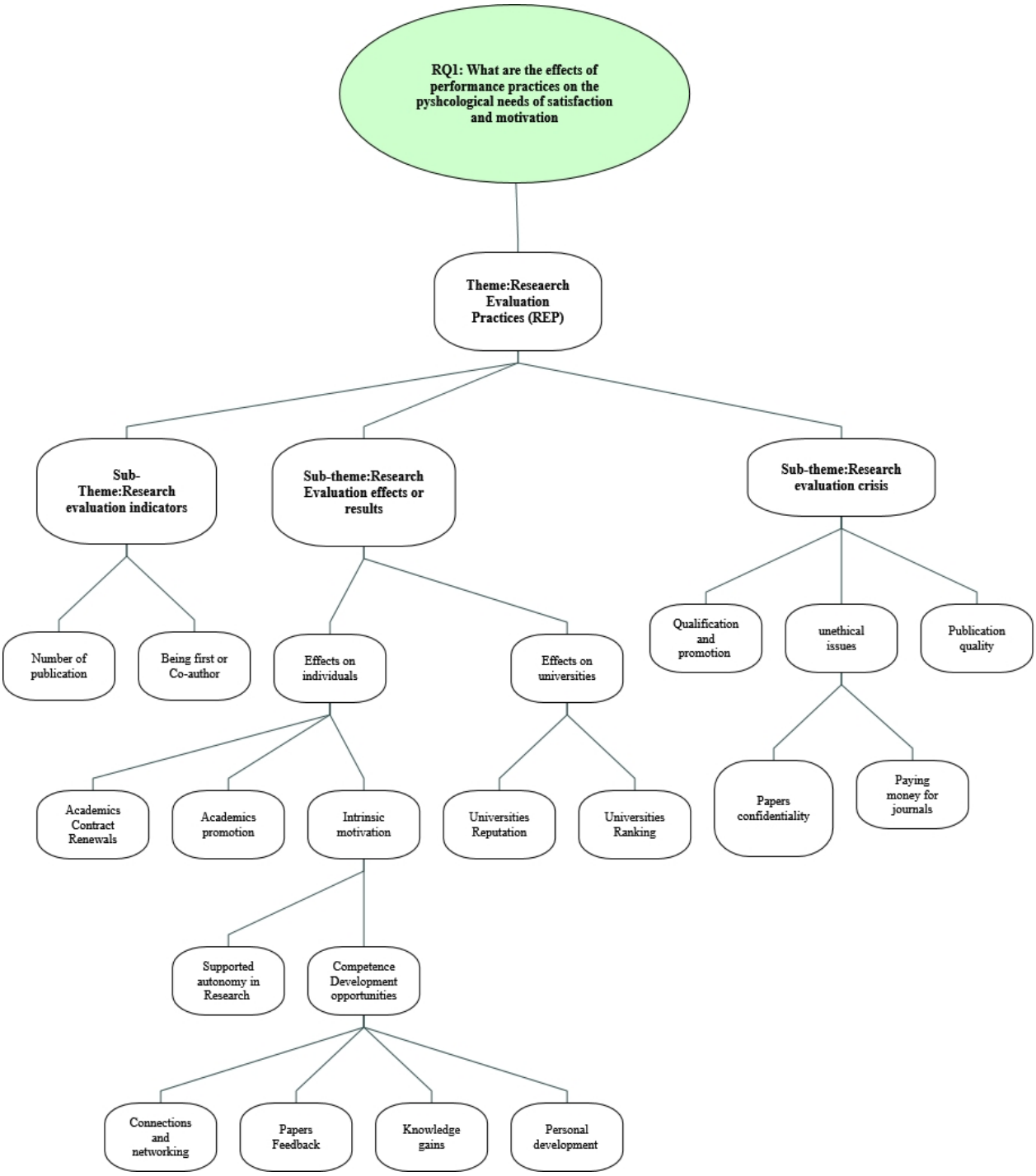
Hussein Al-Berawi

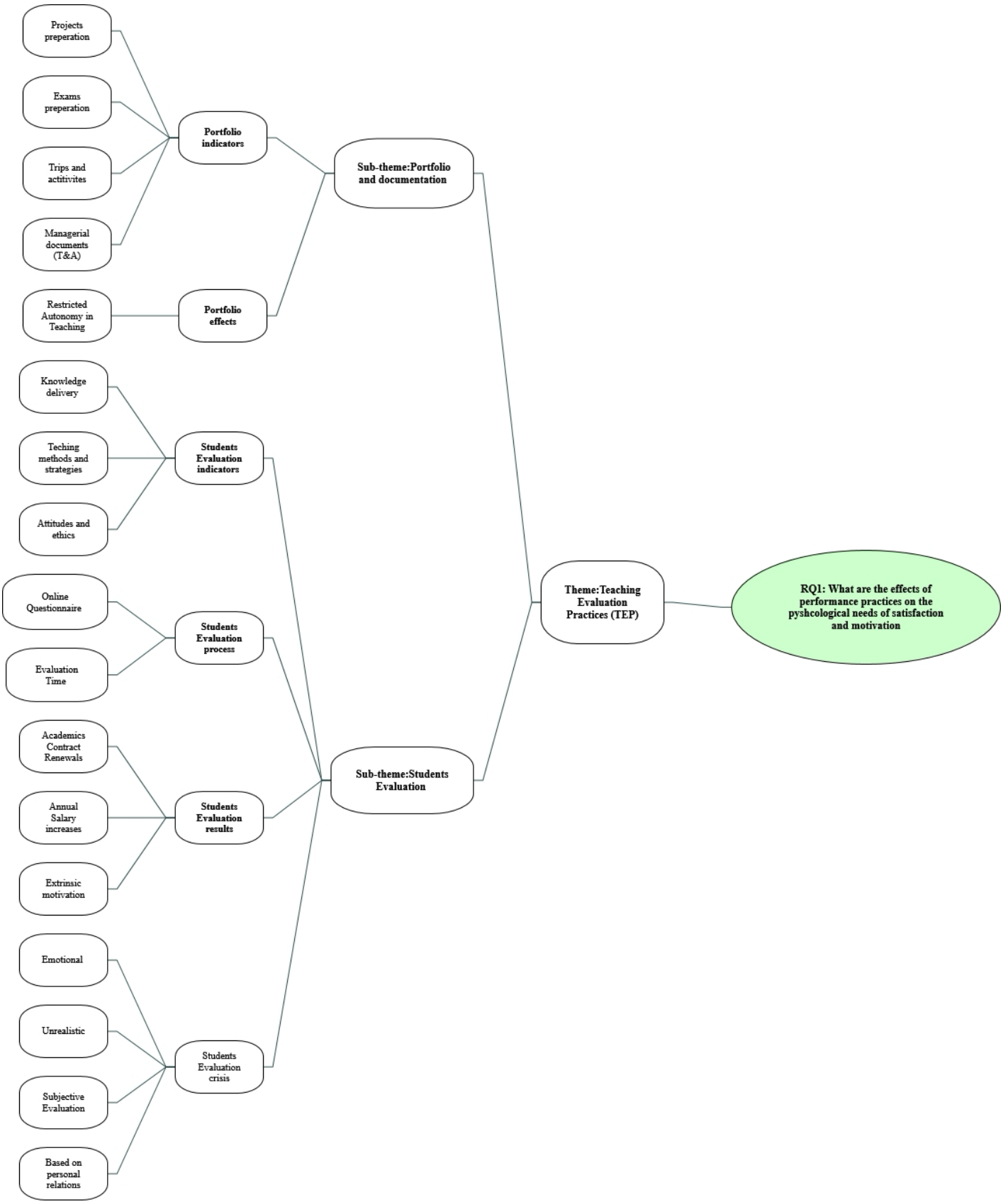
Well, what do you want to fulfil what was mentioned during the interview in the performance evaluation process for the academic or both?

Hala

As you can imagine, according to the questions, this is what I had in mind. I mean, there is nothing else but this. I wish you success, God willing.

Appendix 10: The themes that emerged from the full thesis




RQ1: What are the effects of performance practices on the pyshcological needs of satisfaction and motivation
Theme:Teaching Evaluation Practices (TEP)
Sub-theme:Portfolio and documentation
Sub-theme:Students Evaluation
Portfolio indicators
Portfolio effects
Students Evaluation indicators
Students Evaluation process
Students Evaluation results
Students Evaluation crisis
Projects preperation
Exams preperation
Trips and actitivites
Managerial documents (T&A)
Restricted Autonomy in Teaching
Knowledge delivery
Teching methods and strategies
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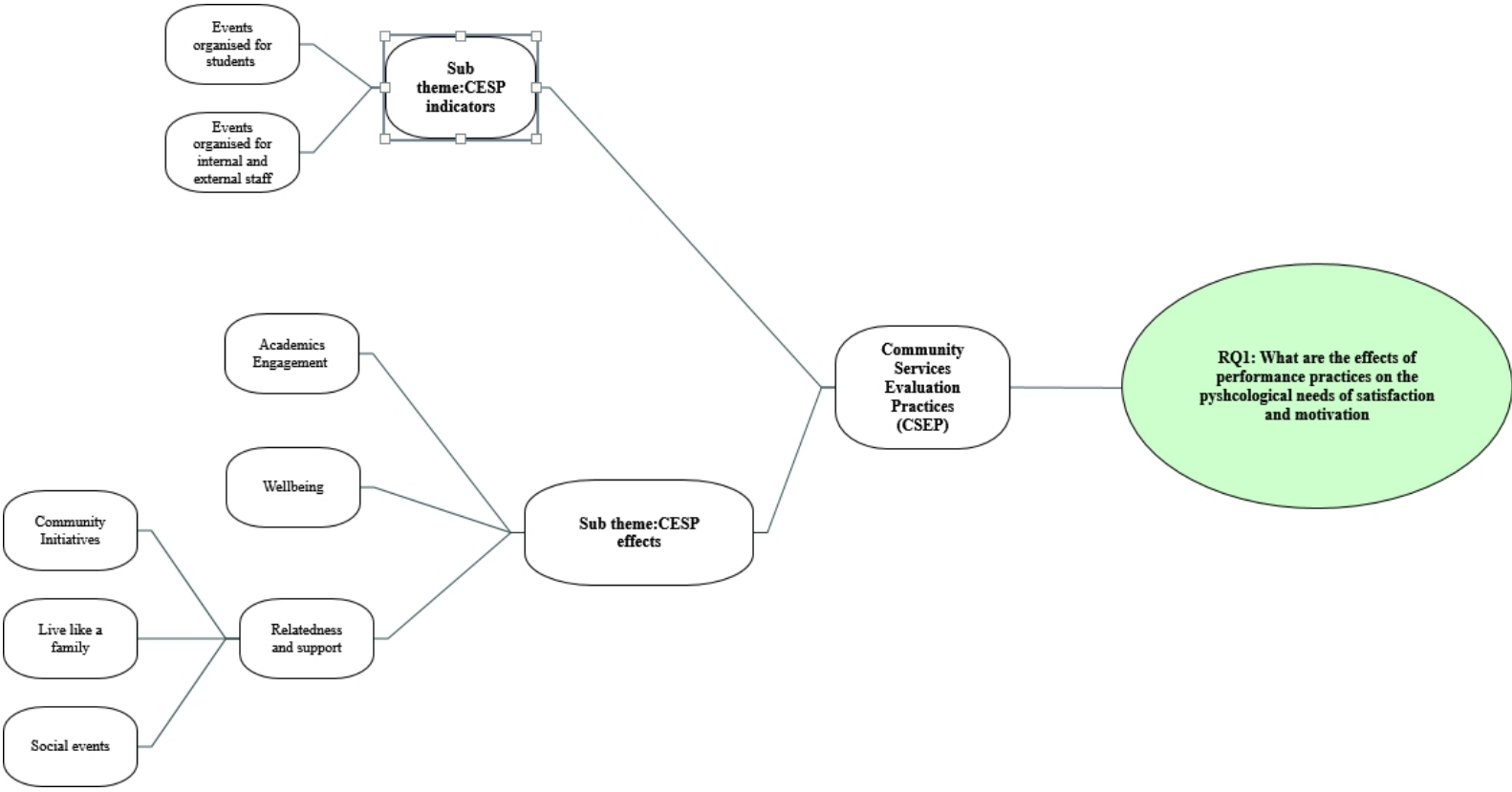
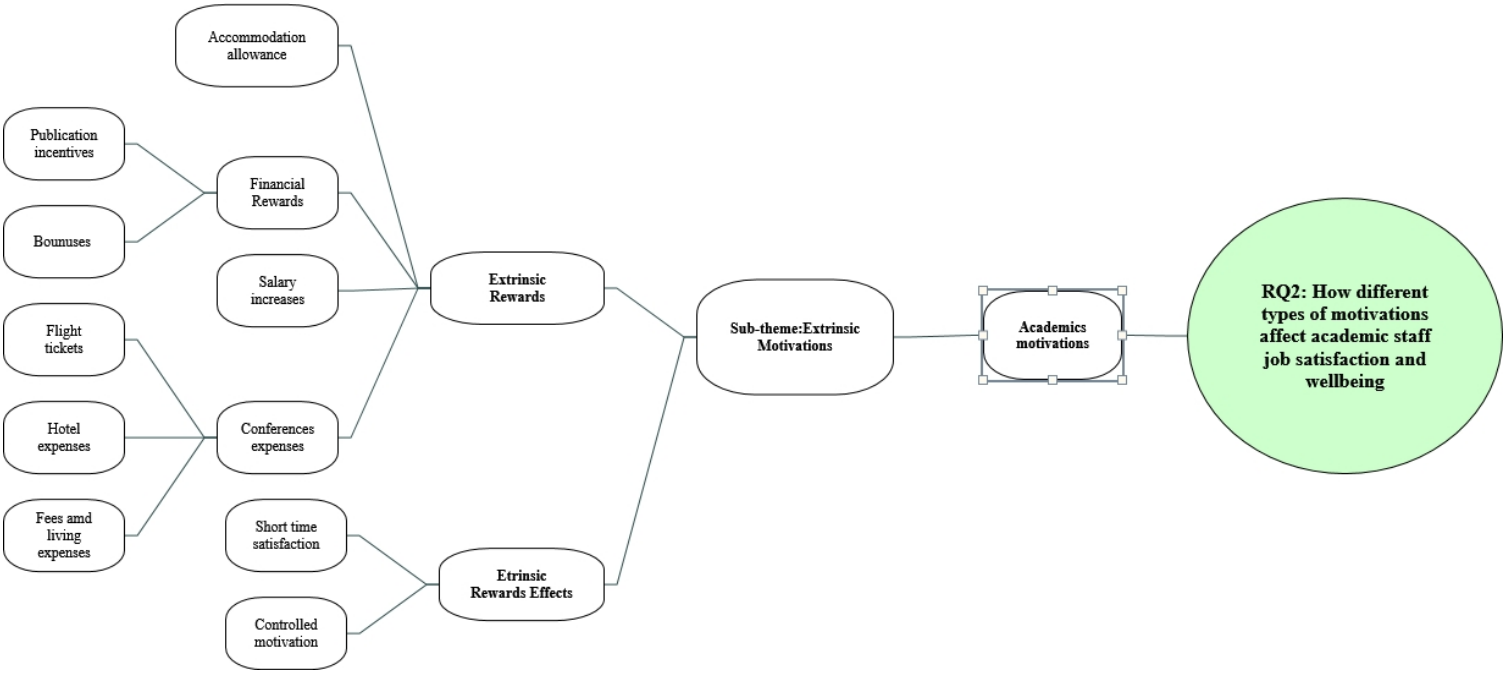
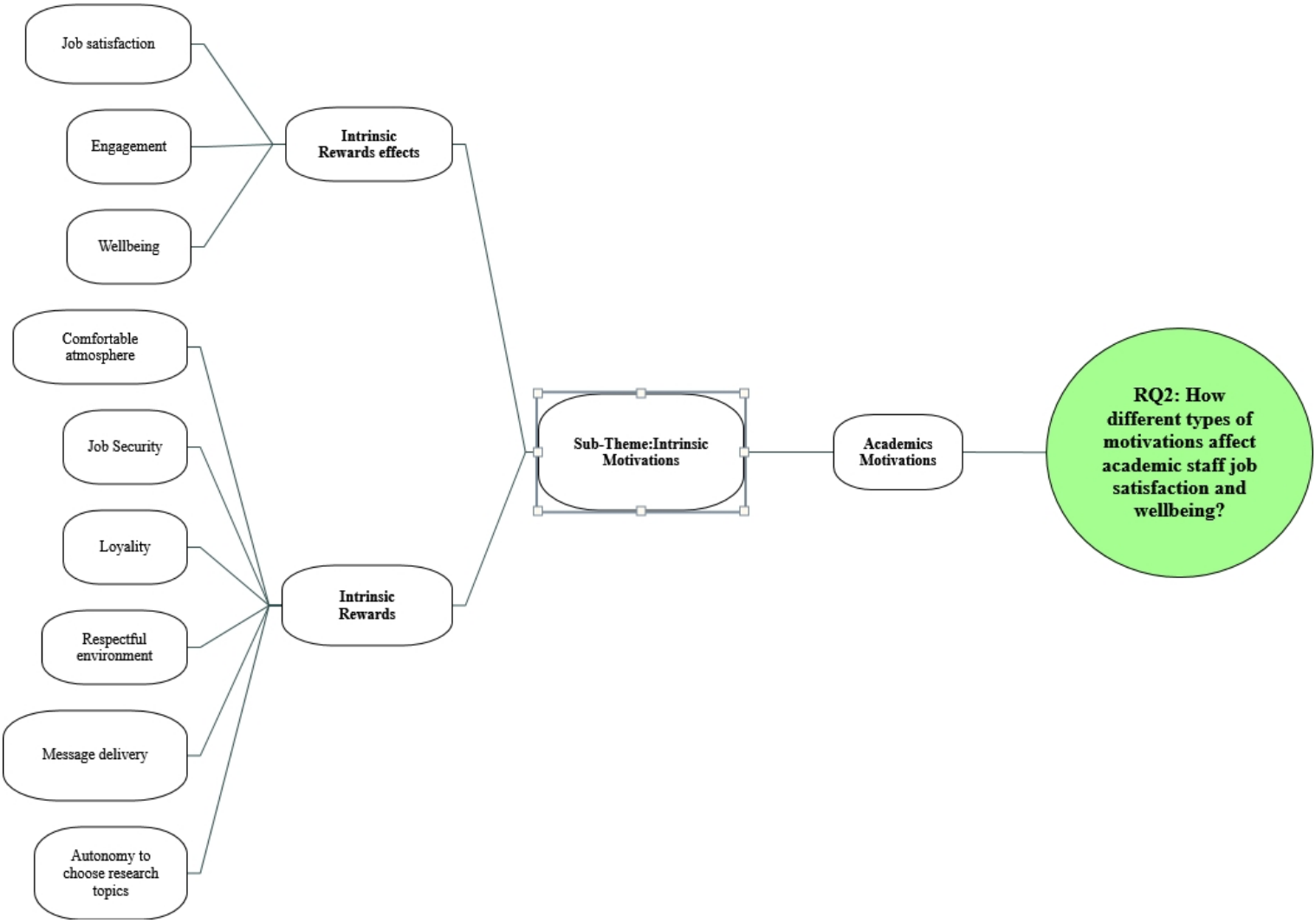
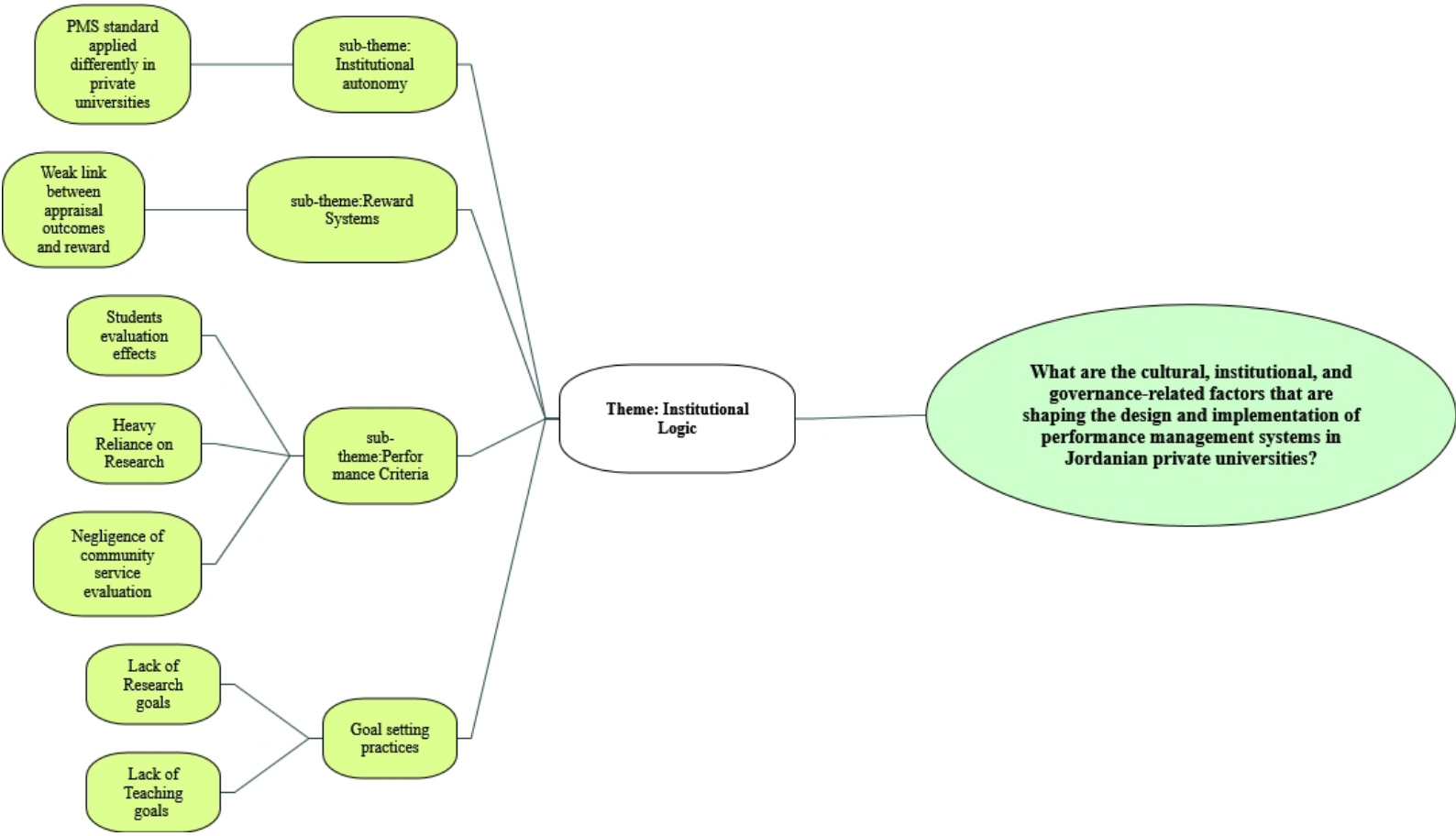
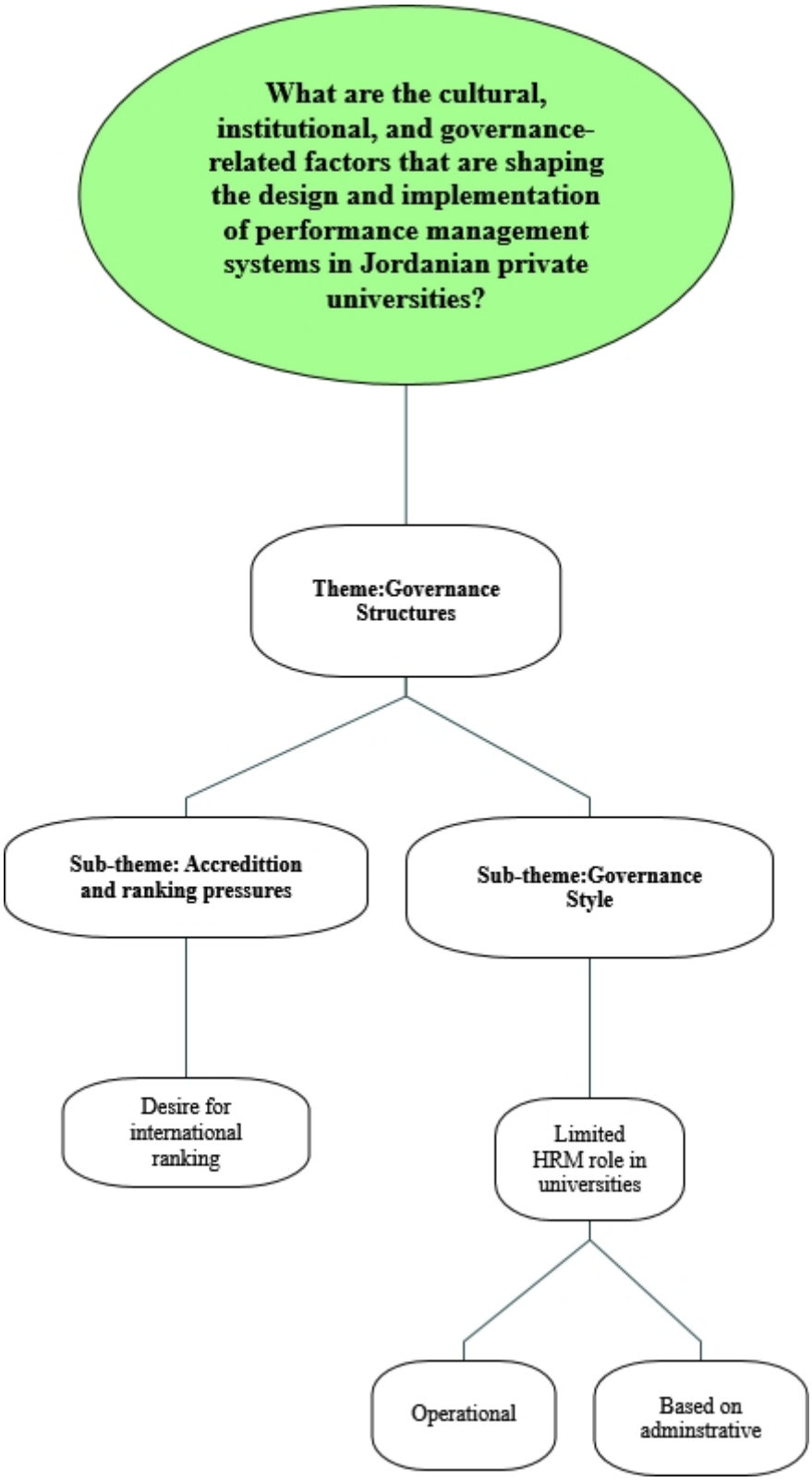
Academics Contract Renewals
Annual Salary increases
Extrinsic motivation
Emotional
Unrealistic
Subjective Evaluation
Based on personal relations

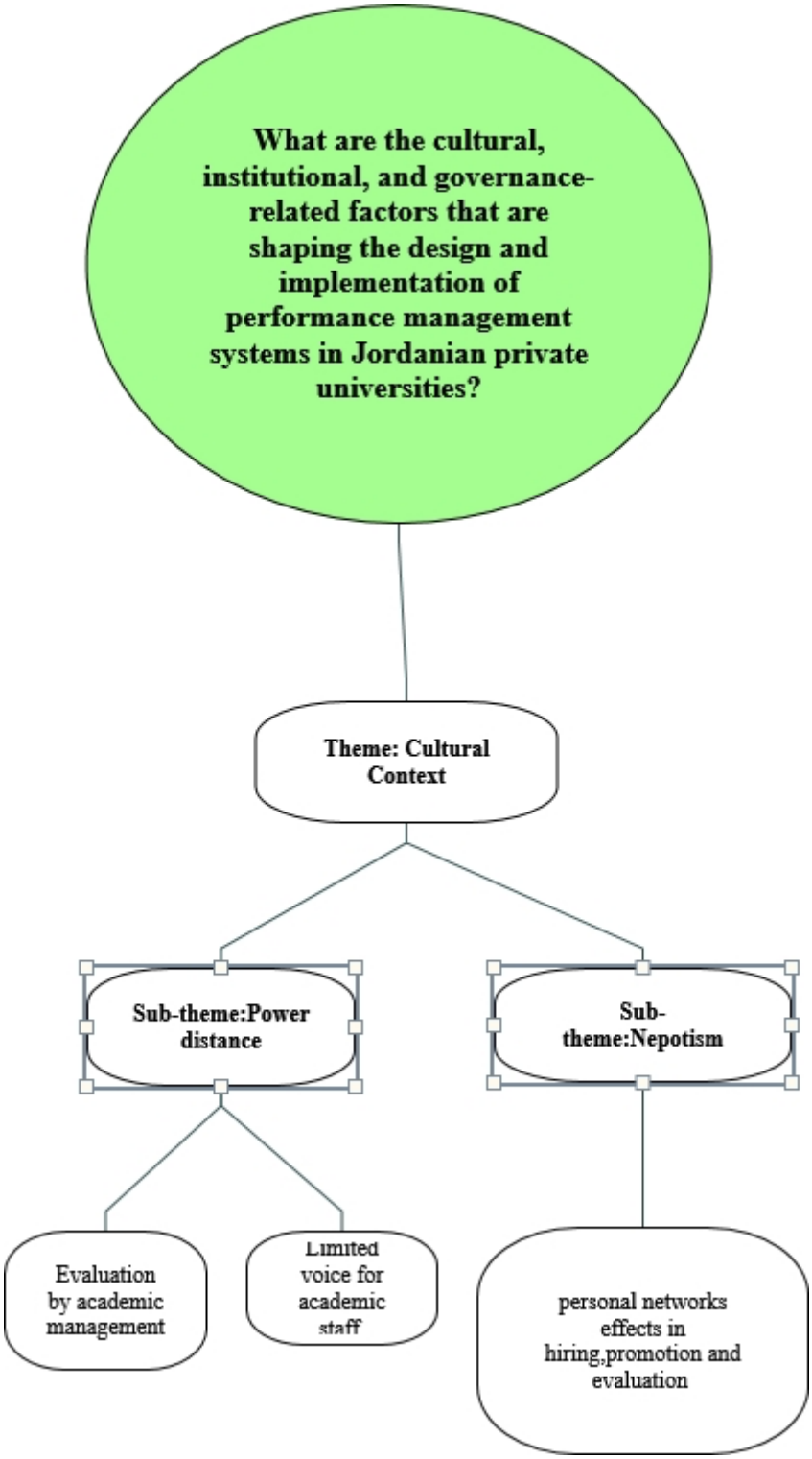

Events organised for students
Events organised for internal and external staff
Sub theme:CESP indicators
Academics Engagement
Wellbeing
Community Initiatives
Live like a family
Social events
Relatedness and support
Sub theme:CESP effects
Community Services Evaluation Practices (CSEP)
RQ1: What are the effects of performance practices on the pyshcological needs of satisfaction and motivation

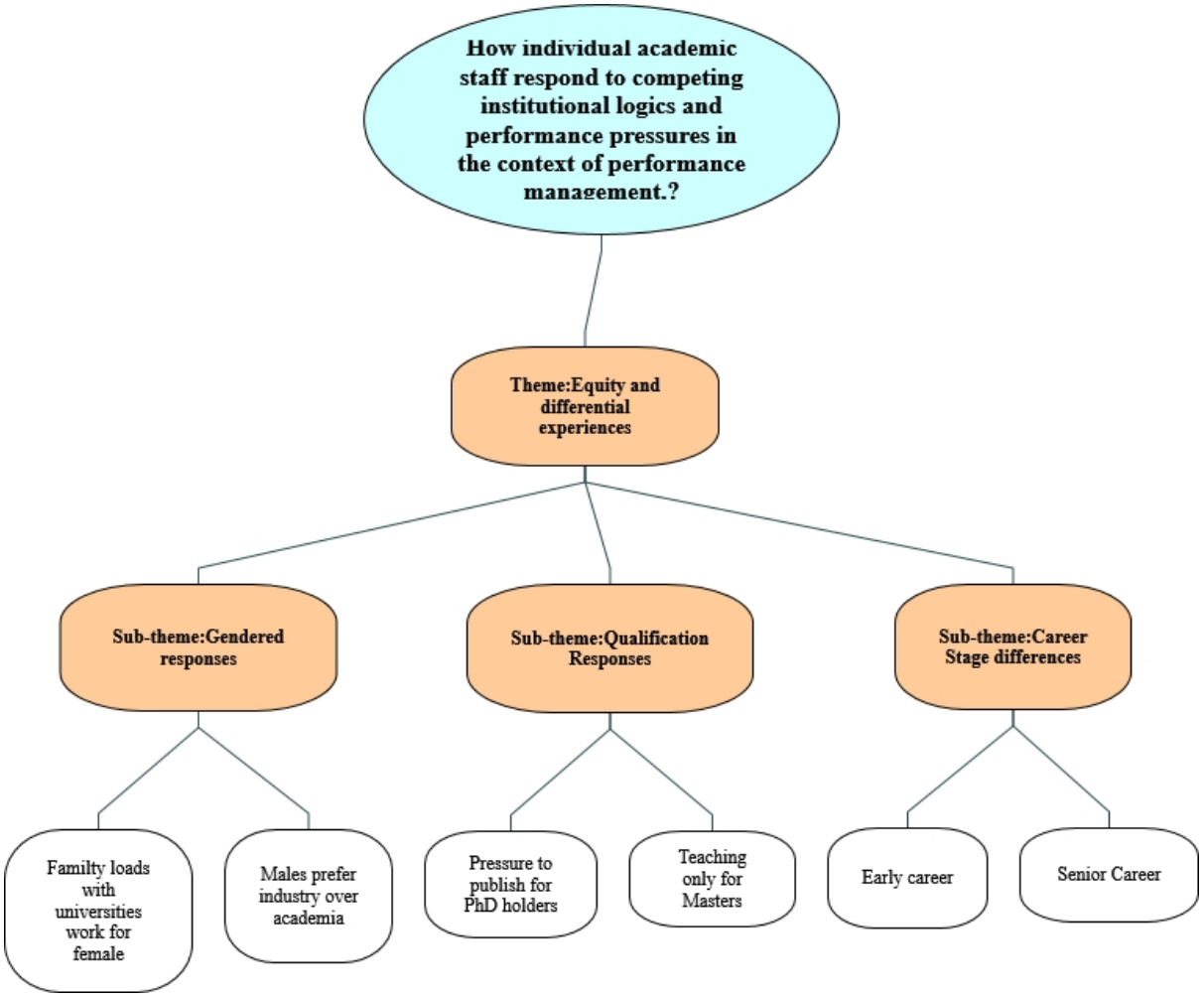

Accommodation allowance
Publication incentives
Financial Rewards
Bounuses
Salary increases
Extrinsic Rewards
Flight tickets
Hotel expenses
Conferences expenses
Fees amd living expenses
Short time satisfaction
Etrinsic Rewards Effects
Controlled motivation
Sub-theme:Extrinsic Motivations
Academics motivations
RQ2: How different types of motivations affect academic staff job satisfaction and wellbeing


Job satisfaction
Engagement
Wellbeing
Intrinsic Rewards effects
Comfortable atmosphere
Job Security
Loyality
Respectful environment
Message delivery
Autonomy to choose research topics
Intrinsic Rewards
Sub-Theme:Intrinsic Motivations
Academics Motivations
RQ2: How different types of motivations affect academic staff job satisfaction and wellbeing?


What are the cultural, institutional, and governance-related factors that are shaping the design and implementation of performance management systems in Jordanian private universities?
Theme: Institutional Logic
sub-theme: Institutional autonomy
PMS standard applied differently in private universities
sub-theme:Reward Systems
Weak link between appraisal outcomes and reward
sub-theme:Performance Criteria
Students evaluation effects
Heavy Reliance on Research
Negligence of community service evaluation
Goal setting practices
Lack of Research goals
Lack of Teaching goals


What are the cultural, institutional, and governance-related factors that are shaping the design and implementation of performance management systems in Jordanian private universities?
Theme:Governance Structures
Sub-theme: Accredittion and ranking pressures
Sub-theme:Governance Style
Desire for international ranking
Limited HRM role in universities
Operational
Based on adminstrative


What are the cultural, institutional, and governance-related factors that are shaping the design and implementation of performance management systems in Jordanian private universities?
Theme: Cultural Context
Sub-theme:Power distance
Sub-theme:Nepotism
Evaluation by academic management
Limited voice for academic staff
personal networks effects in hiring,promotion and evaluation


How individual academic staff respond to competing institutional logics and performance pressures in the context of performance management.?
Theme:Equity and differential experiences
Sub-theme:Gendered responses
Sub-theme:Qualification Responses
Sub-theme:Career Stage differences
Familty loads with universities work for female
Males prefer industry over academia
Pressure to publish for PhD holders
Teaching only for Masters
Early career
Senior Career