Exploring Faculty Perceptions of Research Motivation in Omani Higher Education: Institutional and Individual Influences

Talal Talib Alqaraini

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Department of Educational Research
Lancaster University
UK

Abstract

This study examines faculty members' motivation to conduct research in higher education institutions (HEIs) with reference to their own experiences of varying levels of motivation in different institutional settings. Drawing on the existing literature which associates staff motivation with research production, it endeavours to determine how faculty members view key motivational forces in Omani HEIs.

The study utilized qualitative research with thematic analysis; semi-structured interviews with 30 faculty members from three departments at UTAS-A were conducted, leading to several key findings.

It was concluded that faculty members perceive individual characteristics as influential factors impacting research productivity, with personal interest and prior experience playing significant roles, especially among late-career professors. However, challenges in balancing research with other responsibilities, inadequate institutional support, and heavy teaching loads hinder research efforts. Despite positive attitudes towards research, concerns about administrative constraints and insufficient resources persist, impacting motivation and productivity. Institutional and individual factors are crucial in facilitating research activities, with research capability dependent on institutional support, self-efficacy, and self-confidence.

The case study was capable of demonstrating a dual-approach that cohesively expands the current state of research motivation and its impact on research productivity in applied science faculties in the Sultanate of Oman from both institutional and personal perspectives. The study also outlined factors prove critical for researchers at Oman's HEIs, emphasizing the need for collective efforts in establishing a supportive research environment and incentivizing high-quality research production that motivates faculty members in Oman to conduct more research and perceive the concept of research-productivity as an inseparable aspect of their academic duties within higher education.

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This thesis is dedicated to all those who supported me along this demanding path. Their belief in me has been a driving force in seeing this work through to completion, and for that, I am eternally thankful.

Author's declaration: The thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

Signature Talal Talib Alqaraini.....

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

In this thesis, I report on a project whose aims are to explore the faculty members' experiences and perceptions towards factors that motivate them to conduct research and highlight the factors that influence research productivity of the faculty members. I document work in which I conducted semi-structured interviews with faculty members from three departments at the Al Musanna College of Technology (ACT), now named University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS-A) in Oman. My findings focus on discussing issues related to the motivations of study, i.e., the relationships between individual and institutional factors that mediate faculty research and experiences of ignored factors of faculty research. Moreover, such relationships are meant to be brought to the fore pertinent to faculty researchers at the UTAS-A and other HEIs in Oman through the Academic Literacies Theory (ALT).

Accordingly, I hope that my work will contribute to the enrichment of the literature that revolves on the levels of research-oriented productivity and the issue that accompany the manner through which researchers, students, and professors are motivated to conduct more research and interpret their studies into products and innovations that can benefit their institutions and society in general, by determining the main factors that encourage faculty personnel towards enhancing their creative, research-based, and practical capacities through which they can conduct more practically-viable studies about a wide range of subjects that in turn can elevate the research-productivity levels in the Sultanate of Oman. Moreover, policy makers in Oman can also benefit from the current study in terms of developing long-term research strategies and the competitive capacities of universities.

Universities are places of both research and teaching where they contribute to the advancements of societies especially those that rely on the acquisition of new practical skills through research to facilitate economic growth. The study of Bertolin (2018) on knowledge societies showed that governments in many nations across the world have positioned higher education institutions for research and innovation rather than teaching, as a result of wanting them to contribute to the development of knowledge societies. The narrative is that, in recent years, knowledge has been maximized to solve societal issues

via sustainable structures and institutions concerning modern governance systems (Sawyer, 2004). Yet, although higher education institutions (HEIs) in the developed nations have focused on research and development, most similar institutions in the Middle East have other priorities. For instance, Saudi universities face certain challenges regarding the implementation of theoretical studies and the establishment of practical research. Such challenges include insufficient financial support to research centres and the prevalence of administrative constraints (Mohamed & Banik, 2020). Moreover, universities in the UAE also struggle with traditional advisory approaches that do not allow advisors to enhance their students' academic efforts towards meeting actual social and economic needs (Alshamsi & Mohebi, 2022). At my workplace, UTAS-A, research has recently become a main focus. However, its research productivity is limited from a global viewpoint despite its high approval in the area. Therefore, this project aims to understand the strategic measures the institution is taking to position itself for research and its contribution to the creation of a knowledge society in Oman.

Research is an essential component of both higher education and society across the globe. For instance, scientific research in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) has enhanced innovation through technology, which constitutes social and economic developments within countries (Uzoka, 2008). Governments and non-governmental organizations have invested numerous resources in the development of research in HEIs. Faculty members in HEIs are considered crucial contributors to research in different roles within their institutions (Bakker et al., 2019). The outcomes of such varying roles are reflected in different ways when addressing critical instructive tasks within their jurisdictions. Therefore, understanding their perceptions of factors that inspire academic staff to carry out exploration and enhance output is important (Denton et al., 2016). Systems and people in higher education institutions are under pressure to be more dynamic in research (Tien & Blackburn, 2016). As a result, research has become a significant subject within such institutions, especially in Oman.

In Oman, there is an increasing focus on promoting research because it is seen as a contributor towards 21stcentury economic development. In this regard, the Oman government has formed policies to intensify sponsored research within HEI contexts (Alghanim & Alhamali, 2011). Within institutions, the emphasis is put on scholarly productivity and publication output from the academic staff. This approach redirects the focus of academia from teaching and service roles towards fields of research (Alrahlah,

2016, p. 450). The underlying importance of analysis enables the production of wealth and public support required for sustainable development (Bertolin, 2018). Therefore, many developing nations, including Oman, have invested intensive resources in the development of research in HEIs. Al-Lamki (2002) understands research as a foundation for both social and economic growth that the Omani government seeks to promote.

In Oman, the integration of higher education with research and development happened more recently compared to the developed world (Al'Abri, 2019). The country's higher education sector is governed by a legal framework based on the Royal Decrees of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos. The formal higher education system began in the 1970s, and the first university institution was established in the 1980s (Al'Abri, 2019). As a result, economic dependency on oil continuously reduced in what was seen as diversification of the national economy (Al-Lamki, 2002). In the late 1980s, the country resorted to promoting transnational higher education by importing degree and diploma programs from other nations such as Germany (Fairweather, 2002). In the subsequent decades, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, and India are also featured as their sources of knowledge and expertise. Therefore, the country played host to a range of different HE traditions, and it is increasingly recognized that there is a need to contextualize them to its requirements (Fairweather, 2002). In early 2020, the country envisioned education to be its vital contributor to economic growth. As a result, the Oman Academic Council (OAC) was founded through a Royal Decree to work on a more coherent vision for the HE sector in the country.

The rise of knowledge-societies, particularly in Oman, has made research essential in higher education institutions. In this context, the development of personnel in these institutions is a crucial subject. Notably academic staff, as an element of the HEIs' financial plan, have immensely contributed in achieving institutional goals and objectives. Among numerous opportunities available, the aim is that Oman's academic staff and personnel will elevate their status to global standards as well as their institutions (Saleh et al., 2015). In its mission to enhance competitiveness, the government, through the Oman Ministry of Higher Education continues working to inspire performance in research fields within the HEIs (Monroe et al., 2011). The main aim of this intervention is to intensify research output and staff motivation.

Most research work on Oman universities, as for other similar contexts, has focused on various factors that have impacted research such as visibility, networking,

capacity, access, and funding (Al-Lamki, 2002). According to Hardre et al. (2011), personal, organizational, funding, and research cultural-related factors that influence research output are relevant areas of exploration. Practically, previous studies have comprehensively covered most of the related fields of study. However, there is insufficient research on the faculty's perceptions of factors inspiring academic staff to conduct investigations and enhance research output in HEIs in Oman. Therefore, apart from contributing to the available literature, this thesis will fill this above research gap (Shah, 2012). Also, this research will offer an understanding of why some faculty members are productive in higher education institutions, while others are less motivated.

The purpose of this research thesis is to contribute to understanding the faculty perceptions towards factors that motivate academic staff to conduct research and enhance their research productivity in HEIs in Oman.

1.2 Personal Motivation

The subtle worldview of the researcher influences research. Thus, the research will be influenced by some of the investigator's own experiences, thoughts and objectives, and beliefs about faculty members' perceptions (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008). My interest and motivation for undertaking this research stem from my passion for encouraging collective voices. Interest in motivating factors that enhance research productivity finds residency in my past, present, and future professional endeavours. From my experience, research support and motivation is crucial during most studies. In that regard, I drew the attention of my colleagues by suggesting, at my workplaces, that my institution sought to set aside resources to fund academics to conduct research and enhance productivity. I believe that resources are vital in motivating academic staff to conduct study and to improve productivity. Now, as a lecturer at UTAS-A, I work to ensure academics are encouraged when researching, for I believe it enhances productivity. I have seen changes in the institution as its focus has shifted towards research with a lot of interest. Indeed, I have observed a colleague who has become more research productive over time. Perhaps we were driven by similar factors. However, in this research, my interest would be to specifically identify these factors that contribute to the motivation or demotivation of faculty researchers.

The inspiration for this study stems from the desire to understand the perceptions of faculty members towards factors that motivate them to conduct academic research in HEIs. Through interaction with my colleagues, I have become increasingly aware of their experiences when researching HEIs. I have personally observed specific cases regarding the relationship between staff motivation and academic research output. Lack of motivation for academics was the order of the day in my previous workplace. Besides, during my experience, I realized that increased workloads and declining budgets were some of the factors that demoralized academic staff to conduct research. As a result, many academics were reluctant to conduct research. On the other hand, in my current workplace, academics seem usually more motivated to conduct research. Remarkably, research productivity has received great concern and attention. Although my current workplace is still striving to become a more conducive environment for conducting research, it is better than previous institutions where I have worked, as I explain further in section 1.3.

My inspiration for choosing this topic was also informed by reading several literature sources concerning staff motivation and research productivity. For instance, (Chmutova et al., 2022) concluded that university staff can be handled from motivational and administrational aspects in order to elevate their sense of motivation towards allowing their research-productivity levels to increase. In this sense, the authors found that the most effective methods to achieve this are inclusive of the usage of information and communication technology to help educate them and train them about the latest academic advancements in a plethora of domains, along with other administrative methods that aim to mitigate levels of demotivation by alleviating stressful working conditions, eliminating unfair pay, and eradicating bureaucracy as much as possible.

Masinde and Coetzee (2023) also conducted a study that emphasized the significance of the crowd-in motivation method as a mechanism through which university staff become intrinsically motivated to conduct more research based on the fact that they seek to fulfil psychological needs and elevate their self-esteem in order to achieve high levels of competence. So, the authors here highlighted the relationship between psychological motivation and professional competence through the establishment of academic research and enhancement of levels of research-productivity for the entire university as a whole.

Furthermore, Albert et al. (2016) indicated that determining university staff's levels of job satisfaction can reflect their motivation towards the enhancement of their respective institutions' research productivity. Accordingly, the study concluded that in order for such universities to produce more practically-viable research, their staff are required to benefit from a number of incentive systems that cohere with each academic's preferences, concerns, needs, and how he/she can be motivated. Thus, motivation and research productivity determine the level of academic staff confidence to produce more studies and enhance their professional competence.

My desire to understand faculty members' perceptions of factors that inspire staff to carry out research motivated me to read more scholarly articles on research productivity and academics' motivation. However, I was not fully satisfied with the applicability of current research in the kind of settings I was familiar with in Oman. As a result, I decided to carry out my research in UTAS-A. I was interested to learn whether the college motivates its academics in conducting research as well as the faculty members' perceptions and experiences regarding research productivity. In attempting to unearth faculty members' experiences and perceptions, I wanted to understand how they view motivating factors for researching within HEIs in Oman.

1.3 Policy Context

With the drive to enhance education policy, the government of Oman has paid attention to education since the nation's modern renaissance in the 1970s. The Ministry of Higher Education is responsible for setting up, designing, and executing education policies. HEIs in Oman are administratively, financially, and technically independent and are under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education. The ministry explored educational practices in developed nations such as the U.S., U.K., and Australia. These inspirations on education and research motivated them to form policies for the sector. Therefore, in early 1980, the Higher Education Policy in Oman was established to achieve specific objectives including (Baporikar, 2013):

- To contribute to serving society by allowing the members to continue their studies.
- To enhance national consultancies and scientific research and studies to promote them and improve their value.

- To improve students' scientific level in areas of applied and theoretical knowledge in response to their desire to pursue their studies and develop social and personal capabilities.
- To prepare national human resources and train them at the necessary technical level in the disciplines of the industry, agriculture, and services to fulfil the necessities of the local labour market and the prerequisites of development.

To date, each institution has a different method of research evaluation, which, to some extent, is designed in accordance with the Ministry's evaluation policy designed for the HEIs. Policies of the HEIs determine examinations, courses, teaching hours, and other relevant academic issues. HEIs are increasingly developing their guidelines for evaluating staff research.

The agency responsible for program accreditation and institutional accreditation is the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAA) accountable for ensuring that higher education institutes meet international standards and also inspire HEIs to enhance their internal quality (Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education, 2016).

OAAA has developed a two-stage institutional accreditation system. The first stage is Quality Audit that examines the effectiveness of the system and the processes through which HEI attains its vision and mission. Furthermore, OAAA has input into research policy accreditation. Although OAAA is still developing, to cover broader areas of research, it has continuously regulated research and education quality in Oman through quality checks (Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education, 2016).

The second stage is the Institutional Standards Assessment (ISA) that evaluates an HEI against set criteria and standards. The focus of the ISA is to examine whether HEIs have met a set of internationally benchmarked standards. The government policies are applied indiscriminately across the spectrum of HEIs. Quality Audit focuses on nine broad areas reflected in the ISA. These include: governance and management; student learning by coursework programs; student learning by research programs; and staff research and consultancy; as well as industry and community engagement; academic support services, students support services; staff support services, and general support services and facilities (Carroll, Palermo, 2006).

In recent years, the staff research and consultancy issue is being reviewed as increasingly significant. In that regard, program accreditation in research is more advanced, as opposed to research policy. And as a result, this current study provides a modest insight which outlines the nature of the relationship between universities' structures, visions, approaches, and resource-allocation and incentive systems and the academic staff's motivation and satisfaction to produce more comprehensive and practically-viable research, in order to allow Omani policymakers to utilize this project as reference material to reflect the institution-individual dynamics which lead to the enhancement of research productivity levels and overall academic efficiency towards achieving competitiveness against other universities in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region.

Accordingly, the current research is meant to provide a different insight that might help shift the focus of the OAAA policy into readjusting their criteria by placing more emphasis on a research-driven approach where producing more practical studies that can benefit the Omani society becomes an essential requirement for any institution to become accredited by the Authority.

1.4 Practice Context

Figure 1.1: UTAS-A in Oman, now named University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS-A)

The participation rate in higher-education institution in the Middle East is considered lower than that of other countries across the globe. The traditional view of many people from the Middle East has involved a focus on compulsory education to enable the majority to fill the informal sectors. In contrast, higher education was preserved for a few individuals from affluent backgrounds. According to Mercer (2006), such a notion is still influential and only slowly changing, which is mirrored in the slowly evolving higher education institutions

HEIs in Oman are divided into universities and colleges. Universities are larger institutions and may include several colleges offering different specializations in different fields of knowledge. However, colleges are smaller institutions providing a limited number of disciplines, usually in the same area of expertise. The research site for this study is UTAS-A, as shown in Figure 1.1, and will be referred to as UTAS-A from now on. The college was selected because it is positioned by the government as a knowledge-producing institute of higher education in Oman (UTAS-A, 2024). In other words, over time, it is expected that it will become one of the country's research-intensive institutions. I used the college as the primary unit of analysis because I work there, and I can take advantage of my status as an insider at the college to generate insights into how practitioners there perceive research and research productivity within the college.

As a developing nation, Oman's government is conducting a policy to expand college education after realizing that high-level intellectual and technical skills are vital to the country's knowledge-based economy (Al-Busaidi, 2020, p.696). As a result, students and government stakeholders are demanding better educational services from colleges and universities. The fundamental economic and social changes have employed expected pressure on higher education. To satisfy the wants of shifting society and times, institutes of higher education are changing their focus of work to quality research. That results in a more significant attempt to achieve this objective through effectiveness in the utilization of resources and efficient management.

Unprecedented and significant changes have occurred in UTAS-A as a result of the intense competition of economic globalization. In recent years, UTAS-A in Oman has prioritized research. The main question is: how do these academic staff conduct research – their motivations and their perceptions of the incentives and barriers they encounter? Within the institution, motivation has been suggested to be a key factor. Therefore, university management stands at the centre of *motivating* academic staff to achieve

positive results in research. As a result, the researcher decided to carry out the study in the institution to achieve his objective.

UTAS-A is an important higher education institution for technical learning nationwide in the regional area. The college publicly states a commitment to both developing learners' potential and making an essential contribution to national economic development. Its website (see Figure 1.2), says at the top "Al Mussanna College of Technology, Ministry of Manpower, Sultanate of Oman." This gives a good impression of the priorities of the college.

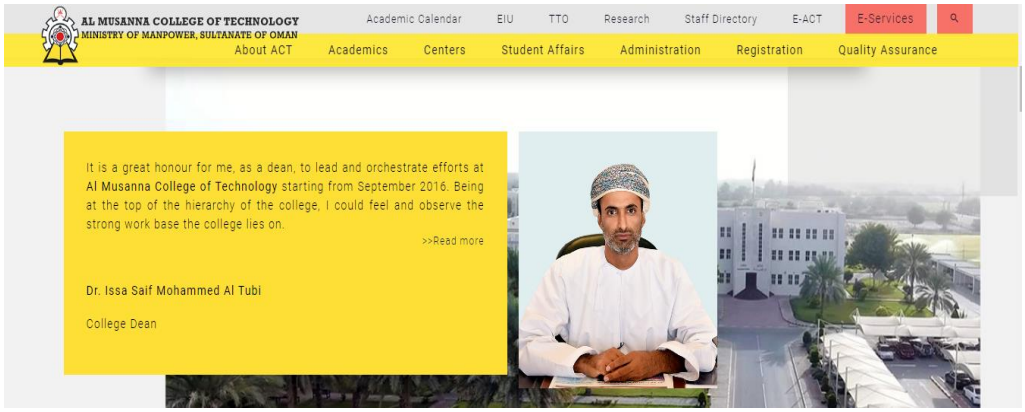

Figure 1.2: Website of Al Mussanna College of Technology, Sultanate of Oman."

1.5 Research Rationale and Context

This research seeks to explore faculty perceptions towards the aspects that inspire academic staff to carry out an investigation and enhance research output in a higher education institute in Oman. The research will centre on the faculty members' perceptions of academic staff regarding the factors that motivate them to engage in research practices. Having in mind that higher education institutions have specific goals and aspirations concerning the research output of its academic staff, it would be essential for me to observe the link between faculty perceptions and factors of inspiration towards the stimulation of research productivity (Fairweather, 2002). The investigator believes that this research would generate significant knowledge on the perceptions of faculty members towards aspects that inspire academic staff to research, by considering the case of UTAS-A in Oman. As well as making a contribution to scholarship on the topics described above, it is hoped that this information will help to curate the strategic measures required in the institution. Eventually, this would change perceptions among researchers, thus encouraging them to change their approach to research.

The selection of this topic is driven by institutional as well as personal factors. UTAS-A was chosen as a case study as its research output is increasingly taking the center stage. The college has, in the public sphere, committed itself to advancing research as a means of improving economic development, as can be seen in its mission to build infrastructure, human capital, and student capabilities. Although there is some encouragement of research by the faculty through activities such as research training, grant submissions, and research collaborations, a gap still remains in fostering an active research culture and collaboration.

Although there is some institutional incentive—such as funding external research qualifications and a minimal amount of study leave—collaborations tend to be limited to the senior members of the faculty, and institutional obstacles can deter increased participation. One of the primary drivers of this research stems from personal experience and observation. While UTAS-A has sponsored the researcher's Ph.D. studies through study leave, it does not sponsor research projects themselves, highlighting more systemic issues. Institutional arrangements, as opposed to the disposition of individuals, have the potential to influence research productivity, as previous research has suggested.

However, research on the influence of institutional and individual variables on Oman's faculty motivation is limited. Bridging this gap, this study will explore faculty attitudes towards drivers of academic research activity and productivity. Moreover, through the analysis of faculty experience, institutional policy, and structural concerns, this research aims to generate findings that can be utilized to design research culture enhancement strategies for higher education in Oman. Business, ICT, and engineering faculties are the target of this research because of operational constraints. Ultimately, this research aims for the findings to provide an understanding of how far academic institutions can go to enable research among faculties and contribute to an efficient and motivated research climate.

There are five proximate areas of scholarship in which I will locate my study to inform this project and contribute to the literature, which I will expand in Chapter 2. The first area of literature considers the history of the situation in which my study is located. Al-Lamki (2002) noted the absence of the united system of higher education in Oman. During the last 50 years, Oman has founded a comparatively vast and varied network of comprehensive education. Al-Lamki (2002) examined the system of college education in Oman, and, in his findings, he observed the challenges of privatization, equity, and access

in light of the contemporary dilemma of the difference between supply and demand in Oman. But such studies have not considered how such high-level system changes have been perceived by the members of faculty who work there, or how those perceptions relate to achieving stated goals, such as research productivity.

The second area seeks to explore the limitations of approaches to the study of research productivity. The discussion in this area covers the recognition and gratification of research, the quantity of contemporary research, and the research productivity impact metrics. Reviewing and critiquing this area of literature will clarify why this research considers the issue from the point of view of faculty, rather than by examining metrics of output.

The third area considers factors that mediate success and productivity rates of faculty research. The following section of the literature review is critical to the proposed study because it pre-empts the premise of this study, along with the fact that the section also determines the manner through which the study was approached and conceptualized. However, the area is not used to develop a deductive theoretical framework for analysis because the goal of the entire research is to unearth, directly from the lived experiences of faculty members. These factors mediate their research success or productivity rates. According to Hanafi et al. (2013), research productivity and knowledge generation in the Gulf has grown exponentially among both traditionally dominant and laggard countries despite the numerous challenges experienced by the researcher in this region. Evaluating the affordances and barriers of faculty research in countries such as Oman can assist the Gulf region in catching up with dominant research-based universities in western countries such as the U.S. and the U.K. Consequently, the preceding section evaluates the common barriers or affordances of faculty research from available and relevant literature.

The fourth section explores the barriers that individual faculty researchers experience during their research. I will discuss that the literature focuses on the extent and the manner to which negative attitudes or perceptions about research reduce the motivation of faculty to conduct research. Subjective negative perceptions are usually emphasized as opposed to any positive organizational perceptions about research because faculty-led studies occur in an inherently voluntary process that depends on intrinsic motivation. According to Nguyen (2015), negative perceptions about research reduce the productivity and resilience of faculty researchers who tend to develop a generally low self-efficacy score due to the attitudes or beliefs about research. It becomes challenging

for individuals who are not self-sufficient because of their negative perceptions to overcome environmental or institutional barriers to conducting research. The quality and volume of research output tend to decline when faculty members have negative perceptions about research. My own work will explore how faculty members deal with and perceive such issues, however, rather than providing a more extensive list of problems. That is a distinctive approach compared with most papers in this fourth area of literature.

The research is motivated by previous findings on faculty perceptions regarding factors of motivation of academic staff in Oman universities as well as the researcher's knowledge of the higher education system. Research is also motivated by several observations of the research context in Oman higher education institutions, which show that there has not been much development in the area of research productivity. People in Oman usually expect better educational services from higher education. Therefore, the improvement and effectiveness of higher education institutions have become a primary concern of people. Efficiency and quality stand at the centre of institutional efficiency and progress. To satisfy the needs of shifting society and time, higher education institutions are changing their focus of work to quality research.

The topic is significant because it will enable higher education institutions to make strategies at the institutional level to elicit the academic staffs' motivation. Currently, UTAS-A in Oman is experiencing a significant challenge in inspiring academic staff along with articulating guidelines to restrain academic staff from undesirable activities. This thesis is motivated by such interest and curiosity.

And since UTAS-A is located in the Middle East, then other Middle Eastern higher-education institutions can use the current research as reference material by using the findings to formulate strategies that are seek to achieve similar objectives to UTAS-A but by using different methods, funding mechanisms, and academic requirements that are only relevant to their unique properties. By way of faculty outlooks, university limitations, and motivational determinants, the research outcomes can guide policy changes and strategic planning in other institutions of higher learning looking to promote research engagement and productivity. This is because these other institutions across the Middle East can be characterized by similar properties and face similar challenges.

1.6 Research Questions

The following are research questions that define this study. The primary research question is:

What are the faculty perceptions towards the factors that motivate academic staff to conduct research and enhance research productivity in HEIs in Oman that is promoting an emphasis on research?

To answer the research primary questions, the research is designed to answer the following sub-questions:

1. How do faculty members perceive factors which inhibit their faculty research?
2. How do faculty members' experiences indicate the importance of both individual and institutional factors?
3. How do faculty members perceive the importance of neglected factors in their production of faculty research?
4. What are the faculty members' perceptions about the institutional support they should receive in increasing their research productivity?

1.7 Thesis Overview

Beginning with the literature review, in Chapter 2, I set out the proximate areas of literature that I will draw on and to which I will aim to contribute to the research. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) all over the world invest a considerable amount of resources in enhancing the quality and level of productivity of faculty-led research. The investment is due to the recognition of the multi-level benefits of faculty research to HEIs and researchers. Studying the perceptions of faculty can contribute to scholarship that explores different aspects of faculty-led research.

In Chapter 3, I will discuss the theoretical framework that will UTAS-A as my lens through which to view factors that motivate academic staff to enhance research productivity when conducting research. This section will discuss the academic literacies school of thought and its implications as well as the 'NLS' model that informs the study.

In Chapter 4, I will discuss the methodology and research design of the study, where I will defend my reasons for selecting this approach. Specifically, the chapter places the case in the Omani context by explaining the research questions, the researchers' biases or limitations, the study or sample population, the study area, the

sampling techniques or materials, and the rigorous research procedure. The chapter also includes a description of the data processing techniques and the quality assurance procedures that the study will utilize to protect the integrity of the findings.

Through Chapter 5, I will present the findings of the research. Besides, in this chapter, the researcher will present the findings of the data analysis as a way to understand the concepts that have been discussed earlier in the literature review. The chapter will focus on particular on the semi-structured interviews used by the investigator in this research.

In Chapter 6, I will present a discussion chapter where my discussion will first bring together a short answer to each of my research sub-questions before comparing those answers to the earlier literature review. In short, I will focus on explaining and examining what I have found and how it relates to my research questions and literature review. I will also make an argument in support of my general conclusion.

Finally, I extract final conclusions and reflect on my contribution to new knowledge, discussing the research limitations, and the implication for theory, practice, policy, and future research. Moreover, the most significant intuitions will be summarized.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction and Background

The current chapter shows how the present work is built on existing knowledge from several areas of academic literature, and also seeks to extend and contribute back to that knowledge. Specifically, the purpose of the review of literature is to provide a solid foundation for a justification for this research. One of the primary or most important sections of the chapter is the gap in the literature section, which explains the role that the study intends to fulfil. According to Palfreyman and Tapper (2012), the transition from elite to mass HEI institutions globally has not translated to increased research productivity due to the uneven distribution of affordances or barriers that impact research output. The subsequent sections of the chapter advance this presupposition by exploring the state of HE in the study area, Oman, the philosophical roots of faculty research, methods of measuring research productivity, and the common factors that determine research output. The first section, section 2.2, discusses the state of higher education in Oman where it discusses the origin, history and the development of HE before discussing its development in Oman. Section 2.3 discusses the philosophical roots of faculty research in terms of history and implications. Section 2.4 illustrates the measurement techniques of research productivity and impact. After that, section 2.5, the discussion moves on with limitations of approaches to the study of research productivity. In the same respect, section 2.6 explains the factors that mediate the success and productivity rates of faculty research where additional details on facilitators and barriers to faculty research are provided. Section 2.7 discusses the individual barriers to faculty research and discusses the institutional support and research skills training as well. Finally, the chapter ends with gaps in the literature and summary.

The literature review fits into the broader goal of this project to contribute to knowledge that can help understand faculty perceptions of research. The structure of the following review aims to unpack how a range of personal, environmental, and structural factors are understood to affect faculty members, their perceptions, and their ability or willingness to conduct research.

Accordingly, as briefly mentioned in Chapter 1, the current literature review is meant to emphasize prominent facets in the literature, the first of which is the state of

higher education in the Sultanate of Oman. In this case, I realized that addressing the research-driven evolution of the Omani higher education system, from the academic staff standpoint, is essential for elucidating the actual state of research-productivity levels which pertain to the quality of UTAS-A in terms of its knowledge-production capabilities.

This is because the academic staff can be viewed as the most qualified individuals to explain the true volume of research that is published each week, month, and/or year, along with the fact that they happen to be mindful of the multifaceted nature of research-production in terms of the quality of each study and the possibility to execute it on a practical level in order to transform them into innovations that can be beneficial for the Omani society and hopefully the entire globe.

Such information and practical insights might never be extracted from mere administrative personnel or independent researchers who report their findings about the university in a precise manner. Therefore, I preferred to focus on the perspective of the academic staff of UTAS-A; and that would of course require the elucidation of the state of higher education in the Sultanate of Oman in detail first.

Accordingly, I shall also identify research-productivity levels by delving into the quality and quantity metrics of research-productivity levels in the literature, in order to highlight the philosophical foundation of the concept of research within the higher-education domain, in the sense that I would examine the manner through which the idea of conducting research evolved and became an integral aspect of any university, faculty, or higher-education establishment for that matter.

Consequently, I use the literature to reflect on the reason academic research is characterized by its integral nature, as it motivates academic personnel and staff members to utilize their conceptual knowledge on a practical level, and also elevate the university's status regionally and globally. I shall also indicate that the insight and perspective of the academic staff in any university both need to be taken into consideration in order to detect the foundation of research-productivity on historical, philosophical, and practical levels.

Then I delve into the various factors that influence the success and productivity rates of faculty research. This section is foundational to the proposed study because it establishes the underlying premise and provides the framework for how the research will be approached and conceptualized. Unlike traditional studies that might rely on a deductive theoretical framework, I shall focus here on the real-life experiences of faculty

members to uncover insights that are grounded in real-world contexts, thereby offering a richer and more nuanced understanding of the elements that contribute to faculty research productivity.

Furthermore, I focus on elucidating the barriers that individual faculty researchers encounter in their research endeavours. This part of the study is particularly concerned with how negative attitudes or perceptions about research can significantly diminish faculty motivation. This is because the literature often highlights these subjective negative perceptions more prominently than positive organizational views, reflecting the inherently voluntary nature of faculty-led research.

And since faculty research is largely driven by intrinsic motivation, negative perceptions are expected to have a profound impact on researchers' willingness and ability to conduct research. For instance, factors such as a lack of recognition, insufficient funding, heavy teaching loads, and bureaucratic hurdles can all contribute to a demotivating environment. Therefore, there are a number of paragraphs in a specified section dedicated to emphasizing the importance of addressing these negative perceptions to improve research productivity.

As a result, once universities' leaders and managers become mindful of the specific barriers that faculty members face, targeted strategies can be developed to mitigate these issues. For example, providing better support systems, recognizing and rewarding research efforts, and reducing administrative burdens can help foster a more positive research culture. Accordingly, the main objective of the current chapter is to demonstrate the studies that addressed various topics about research efforts and centres in higher education; in order to review these studies, highlight their strengths and weaknesses, and shed light upon the contribution of the current research.

2.2 The State of Higher Education in Oman

The literature notes that the Omani government, like many others in the region, has invested intensively into its HEIs, but typically argues that the persistent lack of dependable and robust leadership both in the ministry and at the institutions has stagnated their growth process (Balushi, 2012). Moreover, HE in Oman, introduced about three decades ago, is a relatively recent development, with the Ministry of Higher Education

focusing on fostering lifelong learning and self-study skills among students at Omani institutions (Saeed, 2021).

It is imperative to analyse the History of HE in Oman for the sake of understanding the critical characteristics of HEIs and their role in the country. Reviewing the literature in this area will lead to the development of an understanding of the broader context in which the current research is situated, which will inevitably influence the accounts of the academics whose experience this project seeks to understand. Reviewing this literature would help reveal the nature of the stance about taking academic staff's motivational and supporting factors to the success and productivity rates of their faculty research into consideration. Moreover, this stance could indicate that these factors are either taken into consideration or neglected.

Higher education is recognized as one of the critical pillars of Omani society. For instance, it has contributed to innovation and development in healthcare (Badry & Willoughby, 2015). Consequently, HEIs receive considerable levels of funding, technical and policy support from the Omani government. According to Badry and Willoughby (2015), enhancing higher education standards of quality and influence in the society features prominently on Oman's 2020 vision of diversifying its economy.

Moreover, HEIs in the Sultanate are expanding steadily, with universities and colleges facing rising competition both nationally and internationally. This competitive landscape is driving institutions to seek unique advantages to attract students from within and beyond Oman. Choosing a higher education institution is a crucial decision for aspiring students, influencing their commitment, motivation, and future career opportunities (Mishra & Gupta, 2021).

Faculty mentors in Oman have reported that working with academic staff to conduct research has given them personal satisfaction. The faculty mentors may experience intellectual and professional development due to experiences monitoring researchers (Tien & Blackburn, 2016). Academic staff benefit from conducting research. To further elaborate on this notion, it can be indicated that faculty members can help produce various studies that can either be utilized as (a) indicators of their universities' current and prospected status regarding their knowledge-production capabilities, and (b) sources of motivation for other newly-enrolled researchers and staff members who might only focus on the teaching aspect of the establishment or even misunderstand or underestimate the significance of research-based contributions (Siddiqui et al., 2018). In

that regard, academic staff significantly contribute to the improvement of researchers' expertise, thanks to the fact that they are mindful of the most creative and cost-effective tools and methods through which they can conduct future research. Academic staff may enable faculty members to contemplate outside the box and carry a new standpoint to study new topics (Lechuga, 2012).

This shows that a great deal of time is required to gain the advantage of research (Siddiqui et al., 2018). Due to such challenges, higher education institutions have enforced incentives to increase participation in research. For instance, in several higher education institutes in Oman, several interventions have aimed to increase research motivation. They include increased technical support for routine departmental tasks, matched funding for external grants, time restructuring, teaching credit, reduced teaching loads, and faculty stipends that have been enforced. Motivating academic staff would enable them to be more productive in the long-term. In this case, the Omani HE system can be utilized as a research-oriented sector, in order to assume its key role in shifting the economy from oil dependency to a knowledge-based model by building capacity and encouraging research and innovation (Al Muqarshi, 2024).

2.2.1 Historical Sources of Inspiration for HE in Oman

Previous literature and studies on higher education in Oman typically situate the national HE sectors against a broad historical backdrop. In this section, I am examining how the 'wider' backdrop of higher education is usually described in that literature. Additionally, it describes how Oman HE takes inspiration from two historical examples: one based on Plato and Aristotle and the other from examples in the Arab world and especially from Morocco.

From the reviewed literature on this topic, the ancient history of HEIs traces back to Greece, before it made its way to the shores of Oman (Donskikh, 2019). Therefore, outlining the historical timeline of higher education in general around the globe allows for a better understanding of the philosophical and practical foundations that inspired policymakers and educators in the Sultanate to establish a higher education system that is deemed separate from general education stages. Accordingly, one of the earliest known scholars to conceptualize higher education is immortalized in Greek mythology and history. Although the structure of Plato's concept of the *Academy* he founded in Athens

in 387 BC was informal, it is the earliest conceptualization of HEIs (Donskikh, 2019). Education existed in most societies before Plato started sharing his philosophical observations and concepts, but his concept of the *Academy* had unique features. The research on Plato's *Academy* recommends expert-led practices of generating and sharing knowledge (Segre, 2015). The academy, a term that has become synonymous with 21st-century educational institutions, initially included specialists from diverse fields such as medicine, law, and architecture.

Despite the fact that research institutions are attempting to increase their research quality by emphasizing the importance of research over teaching, the role of teaching continues to be of some significance in research universities. Despite the fact that a few scholars have concluded that academics' research does not benefit teaching quality (Thomas & Harris, 2000), many studies have found that a combination of teaching and research can improve teaching quality. This is because improving teaching quality is a desirable goal for all universities, regardless of their size (Brew, 2003). It is usually believed that there is a synergistic relationship between academics' research and the quality of their teaching, which is emphasized in university announcements on a regular basis. Teaching and research, according to Brew and Boud (1995, p. 264), are tied to one another through the process of learning from one another: "Doing research is not likely to boost pedagogical skills, but it is likely to enhance a teacher's understanding, interest in, and excitement for the subject". Furthermore, research increases the knowledge and skill of professors, which in turn allows them to more effectively supervise the research projects of students, particularly postgraduates (Lindsay et al., 2002).

Eventually, Plato's Academy enrolled multiple students, most of whom ended up shaping European and Greek history for centuries after his death. Some of the notable students of Plato's Academy, according to most historians, include Cicero, Aristotle, Parmenides, and Socrates, all of whom hold important positions in Greek and Roman history (Himanka, 2015). Even though Plato's school had many students, none of them played a more significant role in the growth and expansion of higher education than Aristotle. After being educated in the Academy, Aristotle ventured out in a bid to expand the philosophy of advanced learning proposed and implemented by Plato through the creation of his school, Lykeion (also translates to Lyceum in Greek), whose main purpose was to prepare future philosophers (Donskikh, 2019). The foundation created by both philosophers, especially Aristotle, is responsible for the current HE learning framework

practiced in Oman. The foundation created by both philosophers holds up across cultures. UTAS-A in Oman seeks to enhance a suitable environment to advance future research which states its intellectual debt to ideas similar to the two philosophers' contributions (Baporikar, 2013).

Aristotle has a special role in the history of the development of doctorate programs compared to Plato, who taught him the concept of creating and sharing knowledge. The premise of doctorate studies is the generation of new knowledge as well as the addition or contribution to existing knowledge and schools of thought across diverse fields through epistemological and epidemiological approaches (Geiger, 2017). The Lykeion school of thought shares the same premise as contemporary doctorate studies because of its focus on creating the next generation of thinkers or philosophers. Additionally, Aristotle was significant because he pioneered the concept of branching out education to multiple schools of thinking, regions, and cultures, which has influenced the wide distribution of HE studies globally (Brooke & Frazer, 2013). Research on higher education in Oman typically situates it against the backdrop of Plato's and Aristotle's concepts. Faculty members perceive conceptualization of both Plato and Aristotle philosophies within higher education institutions as a source of motivation because the two philosophers founded knowledge institutions when there were limited resources. Self-efficacy and culture appear to have motivated both Plato and Aristotle. As a result, self-efficacy and culture motivate academic staff who research Oman institutes of higher education (Baporikar, 2013). The government of Oman and several organizations have invested a lot of resources in the development of research in higher education institutions. The Omani Ministry of Education has established various projects to facilitate university teaching and research development based on subsequent advancements facilitated by Plato and Aristotle (Nasser, 2019).

Yet the historical context for Omani higher education is not only built on stated foundations from Plato and Aristotle, but also takes inspiration from the history of HE in the Arab world. The major difference between the ancient and contemporary concepts of HE is the structured nature of contemporary HEIs such as Morocco's world-renowned University of al-Qarawiyyin, which has a special place in African and HE histories (Lulat, 2005). According to Tiliouine and Estes (2016), Morocco's University of al-Qarawiyyin, 859 AD, which is based in Fez, is recognized by both the Guinness Book of World Records and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO) as the oldest HE facility in the world. Most HEIs in the world are directly based on the founding ideals of the University of al-Qarawiyyin.

The University of al-Qarawiyyin has a special status based on its relevance in higher education across the Middle East. The university benefited from the thinkers' suggestions in turning the thought into a facility where researchers can translate their assumptions into outputs. The education offered at the University was based on academic research capacity that is, to some extents, close to those suggested by Aristotle. Specifically, Aristotle believed that a good scholarship program consists of the integrity of knowledge, the imagination of wonder as the origin of knowledge, sharing knowledge through oral communication and knowledge as a necessary component of life (Donskikh, 2019). Scholarship at the University of al-Qarawiyyin was based on similar principles to Aristotelian pillars of education. The university was able to maintain high moral standards due to the reliance of its founder to turn the scientific and research fruits into real productivity and spread them to the whole society. Eventually, the framework used to establish and run the University of al-Qarawiyyin spread all over the world, including Oman (Shaw 1997). As a result, the lessons learned, and the guidelines formed ensured that Omani HEIs have an established operational framework that has continuously transformed research in the region. This rich history of teaching, developing scholars and benefiting society has continued to influence the historical development of HE in Oman over a considerable period of time.

2.2.2 Historical Development of HE in Oman

The 20th and 21st centuries are significant to the concept of HE in Oman due to the massive expansion of HEIs that has occurred recently. Most of the universities in both developed and developing countries were established in these two centuries, which can be described as the golden ages of HE (Huang & Yanan, 2024). This expansion would also be recorded in Oman. Sultan Qaboos University, officially the oldest University in Oman, was established in 1986 in line with the Omani government's goal of expanding access to higher education. In previous years, Omani citizens would travel to countries such as Canada and the U.K. for higher education (Shaw, 1997). The framework used to establish the university and other colleges in Oman was similar to the model used at the

University of al-Qarawiyyin. The framework is beneficial to society as more institutions would be encouraged to focus on research.

Sultan Qaboos University and most other Omani HEIs are based on Islamic cultural values and close government control, unlike the universities in countries such as the U.S. and the U.K., which utilize a secular framework and independent control (Wippel, 2013). Oman government supports research through collaboration with critical academics from institutions of higher education. That is done through public bodies that are semi-autonomous and lie outside the jurisdiction of higher education institutions. However, the government does not have a consistent form of appropriation towards higher education research in HEI (Al'Abri, 2020).

Most of the early years of current research activities in HE across Omani institutions were characterized by tight government controls and restrictions on their conduct and management. Research in higher education was established to fill the education gap between Oman and its neighbouring Gulf states in the 1970s (Shaw, 1997). Government and religious agencies played a dominant role in the establishment of research initiatives in HEI in Oman until the latter years of the 20th century, which was a common theme across the Arab world (ElObeidy, 2014). A decline in oil revenues in the late 1980s and early 1990s led to a reduction in government spending that induced mass privatization and internalization of HEIs to cover the fiscal deficits and the rising enrolment in public HEIs (Wippel, 2013). This approach allowed private institutions in the higher education sector to facilitate sponsored research.

Over the years, research facilities in higher education have increased considerably due to the privatization and internalization of HEIs in Oman. For example, the Sultan Qaboos University established the Omani Studies Centre (OSC) as one of Oman's university-associated centres which focus its research-based efforts on enhancing the Omani society and establish harmony amongst its citizens (Sultan Qaboos University, 2024). Moreover, the Sur University College (2024) also has its research centre (TRC) which was established to create a scientific knowledge repository and foster interdisciplinary research to address contemporary economic, social, and cultural issues in Oman. The University of Nizwa (2024) also established the Natural and Medical Sciences Research Centre (NMSRC) which provides a unique platform for interdisciplinary research in biology, chemistry, and biomedical sciences focused on Oman's natural resources, aiming to discover new drugs and develop novel therapeutic

agents for health improvement and disease management. Additionally, the Research Centre in Muscat College (2024) provides an annual operational plan which outlines the budget and activities for the next academic year, including funding for conferences, professional development, and publications. Aligned with the Muscat College Strategic Plan 2020-25, the goal is to enhance research capacity and innovation with societal impact.

Currently, there are 33,000 students undertaking research and other academic work in 27 HEIs across Oman due to the increased capacity from private institutions of higher learning (Wippel, 2013). The bid by Oman to bridge the gap between its educational system and research output has been facilitated by extensive capital and funding allocation from the government (Shah, 2012). The expansion strategy is supposed to increase the capacity of HEIs in Oman to cater to the educational needs of its 4.5 million citizens and among them the researchers in different fields (Al'Abri, 2019). Therefore, the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman is responsible for setting and maintaining the principles and practice of research in Oman across viable institutions.

The goal of the principles is to align education in Oman to diversify the economy to reduce overreliance on oil revenues, through research. According to the Ministry of Higher Education, the country strives to create and maintain a HE system that is consistent with changes and developments in today's world. Moreso, a system that generates sustainable insights in the Knowledge Era while retaining the distinct cultural identity of the Omani people (Badry & Willoughby, 2015). In addition to the goals mentioned above, Oman also aims to develop a HE system that contributes to the development, performance, or progress of humankind (Tuzlukova et al., 2019). Hence, the country would also like to create an educational system that is beneficial or enriching to students and faculty alike.

The specific problem that is being considered is raising faculty research awareness as crucial in the country, without skills to position it in the higher education system. While production of research has been the focal point of much of the extant literature despite being at a system level, the impact of the paradigm revolution from research quality to research output is overlooked at the level of individual scholars. This lacuna demands that there should be a shift in focus from institution-wide research to day-to-day experience of faculty members, studying how they cope with this change and the impact it has on research quality and productivity.

2.3 Philosophical Roots of Faculty Research

Faculty research is grounded in both the informal conceptualization of HE by Plato and Aristotle and as the westernized ideals of HE. According to Condon et al. (2016), faculty research has multidimensional roles or benefits because of its proven positive benefits that can be observed when it comes to improving learning and retention among students as well as its impact on institutional reputation. The arguments and analysis in this section are essential to the research because they show the importance of understanding the perceptions, motivations, and barriers or facilitators of faculty research. This is because faculty research plays a vital role in accreditation and impacts institutional rankings. A supportive research environment encourages faculty involvement, which in turn improves the institution's performance in accreditation evaluations (Ajotikar et al., 2023).

Additionally, the section creates a foundation for the proposed analysis by tracing the history of faculty research. Therefore, the study of history will offer discussion grounds on research foundation and practice in Oman as there is a lack in literature approaching the eastern community especially the Omani context; most of the work focuses on western settings, which is very different from those in Oman. Accordingly, this work contributes new insights from very different cultural settings.

Consequently, student participation in faculty research is increasing as it meets three main interests: students seeking to enhance their résumés and connect with faculty, faculty aiming to gain research assistance from capable students, and universities wanting to promote these opportunities to prospective students and faculty. However, faculty may sometimes view their undergraduate researchers primarily as cost-effective labour, overlooking the fact that these students are at the university to learn essential skills (Livny, 2023).

Accordingly, most universities establish their research-based activities in accordance with a development-oriented philosophy by referring to their studies as innovations that can interpret faculty members' and students' academic ideas into practical studies that can then be transferred into inventions that can then help rectify issues in the community or on a global scale (Birden et al., 2020).

2.3.1 The History of Faculty Research

Faculty research has always been conducted at various levels by students and faculty in higher education institutions, involving tasks such as publishing research papers and participating in conferences and seminars. In addition to their research duties, academic researchers must also manage numerous other responsibilities, including publishing articles, preparing teaching materials, engaging in student-related activities, conducting literature reviews, and preparing presentations (Bhatnagar & Bhatnagar, 2024).

Furthermore, faculty research describes the process of knowledge generation or addition through teaching or research staff at an academic institution of higher education (Brooke & Frazer, 2013). Aristotle and Plato pioneered the concept of faculty research through the thought experiments that they conducted using each other as test subjects to prove or disprove their philosophical presuppositions as early as 360 BC (Brooke & Frazer, 2013). Accordingly, for the past 50 years, the innovation of products and services, along with the growing significance of universities in driving innovation, has been a central focus for scholars in fields such as innovation, entrepreneurship, economics, and management (Wit et al., 2020).

For instance, HE studies focus significantly on understanding change, reflecting the historical context in which the field developed. In the mid-twentieth century, there was a practical need for an academic approach to managing increasingly large and complex higher education institutions and systems. This necessity led to the establishment of a tradition of examining change in higher education, which persists today (Brankovic & Cantwell, 2022).

Throughout the 20th and the 21st centuries, the United Kingdom and the United States dominated the world in terms of research output, especially in healthcare and technology (Bechir, 2010) Countries such as China have gradually caught up with the U.S. and the U.K. in terms of faculty research output. However, the volume and quality of research from the historically dominant U.S. and U.K. HEIs are still ahead of their competitors, such as China and Brazil (Lynn Meek et al., 2009). The U.S. and the U.K. not only pioneered the modern concept of HE, but they also played a significant part in the development of the idea of faculty research. According to Freeman et al. (2013), faculty research gained prominence in the 1920s when HEIs started training prospective

faculty members such as school administrators and graduate teaching staff to handle their roles. The roles of faculty members were transformed from a primarily teaching one to include diverse research duties because the HEIs used needs-based assessments and other research strategies to identify the skills and techniques that would make faculty effective in their roles.

However, the informal ideals they proposed were eventually replaced by the structured institutions that are associated with HE in contemporary societies. The desire of the Ministry of Higher Education-Oman to adopt westernized ideals is due to the role played by countries such as the U.S. and the U.K. in developing faculty research.

Moreover, it took almost three decades for research-oriented HE programs to be established (Condon et al., 2016). The contribution had a significant impact on faculty research in the U.S. because the institutions used the funds to train and educate doctorate students for advanced research practice. Other HEIs eventually copied the strategy that was piloted at the two universities. They established their faculty research facilities because, by the 1970s, there were 70 such research-oriented facilities in the U.S. (Condon et al., 2016). The rapid expansion of faculty research facilities and the increase in institutional support is due to the realization of multiple stakeholders of benefits associated with the practice. Consequently, almost every modern HEI has a faculty-based research program and the necessary resource allocation schedules to support research activities in every academic year.

2.3.2 The Implications of Faculty Research

Faculty research often serves as a key factor in determining pay, tenure, and promotion within universities. Additionally, the perceived quantity and quality of research produced by faculty significantly influence the reputation of departments, colleges, and the university as a whole (Krueger et al., 2021). Moreover, faculty research has multidimensional impacts that transcend national, institutional, and individual realms. Countries with a high faculty research output or productivity level are the main beneficiaries of research funding from international sponsoring bodies. From the funding, a country can substantially diversify its scope of research, while maintaining international standards and requirements. In short, countries which support research, and motivate academic staff to carry out research, produce positive outcome regarding research output.

According to Wippel (2013), the primary goal of the push to expand access to HEI and education enrichment programs such as faculty research is due to the desire of the Omani government to diversify its economy by creating innovators and thinkers who can solve 21st-century problems in the country. In countries with a high faculty research productivity rate, there is a common theme where private entities and the government work together to finance research activities (Middaugh, 2001). The two entities play a prominent role in supporting research because they are the main beneficiaries.

The resilient economies in developed countries across the E.U. and U.S. are directly associated with the extensiveness of research in their leading universities. HEIs in these countries have decades of research experience that has benefitted the growth and expansion of some of the notable companies in the technology, agriculture, public administration, and manufacturing sectors. According to Varga (1998), industry-funded research activities are beneficial because they provide rigorous empirical evidence on the forces that stimulate or inhibit economic performance. Innovation, which is a key component of Research and Development (R&D), empowers corporate organizations to deal with current and emerging challenges in their field of operation.

However, educational stakeholders, such as the faculty members and their institutions, are also beneficiaries of faculty research. Research plays a critical role in faculty development. The role of faculty research in developing faculty members to handle promotion to complex roles in HE dates back to the first reported instances when HEIs started using faculty research to prepare school administrators for their roles (Freeman et al., 2013). Contemporary HEIs have sustained this practice in the preparation of staff to handle roles such as deans or exclusive research roles at universities. HEIs use research to conduct needs-based assessments whose findings are compared against the competencies exhibited by effective faculty members in certain roles to identify the core criteria for selecting future faculty members to fill the roles.

Frequently engaging in research improves the ability of faculty members to offer timely and well-informed expert input to students, institutions, and industry leaders. Scientific inquiry is important to the education sector because it is relied on extensively for the generation of original contributions to knowledge and the preparation of independent thinkers (Bechir, 2010). The knowledge gained from faculty research has a generally positive impact on scholarship and academic achievement in HEIs. According to Wood and Breyer (2016), research-led teaching practices are usually evidence-based.

As a result, institutions with this approach offer practical knowledge, which fosters innovations in different sectors such as technology. Therefore, generally, institutions that promote or facilitate faculty research benefit from an improvement in the quality of education offered to students.

Additionally, faculty research has a positive association with institutional reputation, which is very important for relatively young or budding HEIs. Most of the universities that consistently receive high rankings in the annual classifications of top universities have a rich tradition of faculty research. According to Schimanski and Alperin (2018), American institutions spent the vast majority of the past 100 years, especially in the 21st century, building their reputations through consistently high-quality research output. Other HEIs that have been established in recent years have had to play catch-up with their American and European counterparts who have made faculty research part of their tradition and practices.

In Oman, which is the focus of the current study, the cultural and historical backgrounds are different from those usually considered in literature despite the considerable focus given by the OAAA to the development of faculty research and quality standards in education, teaching and research (Bigagli, 2020).

In an ideal situation, all HEIs in Oman would prioritize faculty research because it would improve their global reputation and help the country to achieve its immediate goals. One of the key educational and economic goals of the Sultanate of Oman is to create and maintain a HE system that inculcates industry-best practices in education (Badry & Willoughby, 2015). Faculty research can help Oman and its HEIs to satisfy both goals simultaneously. According to Schimanski and Alperin (2018), HEIs can improve their reputation by focusing on the three main dimensions of faculty roles, which include teaching, research, and service. These dimensions would also rely heavily on motivation by changing the perceptions of faculty researchers. Therefore, although the influence of perceptions on research productivity is yet to be determined, the three dimensions of faculty roles would determine the approach of research.

Furthermore, faculty research can provide solutions to the common problems that afflict the Omani society and governance institutions. Creating a HE system that works for the progress and development of humanity features prominently in the key 2020 educational and economic goals of the Sultanate of Oman (Al'Abri, 2019). In that regard, HE policy in the country has been prioritized. It continues to increase resource allocation

to research projects spearheaded by faculty due to its potential problem-solving capability for existing challenges. According to Shaw (1997), HE education has traditionally been charged with the responsibility of solving the problems of Gulf countries in a bid to create self-reliant nations. Faculty research is significant for Gulf countries because it can unearth innovative solutions to deal with both current and emerging problems.

The role of faculty research in solving social problems and enhancing self-reliance is very pertinent to the Sultanate of Oman. Local teaching and research faculty have played a minimal role in the development of HE in the country that can be enhanced through the promotion of faculty research. According to Shaw (1997), Oman has traditionally been heavily reliant on expatriate labor to sustain its HE system due to the lack of highly skilled qualified faculty in the country. The slow development of teaching faculty in most developing countries has a direct association with the low levels of faculty research productivity (Kamel, 2019). However, boosting the level of faculty research output can help the country to cut down on its dependence on expatriate faculty labor because of its impact on the positive role development of current teaching staff (Alperin et al., 2019). The evaluation of the implications of faculty research provides the background for a critical discussion about the measurement of research productivity or output in HEIs. The experience of academics in these changing circumstances is not well understood as most of the existing studies revolve around different situations without giving sufficient attention to the research perception and motivation. As a result, I am undertaking this project to cover such areas.

2.4 Research Productivity and Impact Measurement Techniques

Productivity is the most important metric of efficiency in any operational system. It appears to have become the accepted practice in bibliometrics to define research productivity as the number of publications produced by a researcher, as opposed to the number of publications produced by an institution.

In this case, motivating academic staff members and researchers, in universities and accompanying research centres, to produce high-quality and effective research must be pertinent to a comprehensive review that does not just take into consideration the literature aspect of these concepts, i.e., motivation and research productivity, but also the perspectives of these members and researchers themselves, given the fact that intrinsic

attitudes and approaches dictate the amount of motivation that is induced by them which in turn determines the quality and volume of research-productivity rates. This is where my modest contribution to the literature comes into play.

This was confirmed by Cohen and Miller (2014) who concluded that the concept of research is the foundation of scientific understanding as it provides the essential insights that drive technological and societal advancements. Moreover, conducting basic research uncovers new knowledge about natural and human-made systems, which can then be translated into practical applications. Zhou, Law and Lee (2021) also confirmed this by indicating that conducting academic and scientific research contributes to the enhancement of our society's sustainable development programs in order to protect nature and rationalize energy and resource-consumption levels.

Rafols, Noyons, Confraria and Ciarli (2021) also concluded that the impact of scientific discoveries often transcends initial expectations, as the specific needs, values, and conditions of local communities shape how new information is utilized which in turn enhance the technological and cultural aspect of society. Kunttu et al. (2021) also confirmed this notion by indicating that in the rapidly evolving landscape of innovation, the social contributions of research activities have gained increasing importance. As technological and scientific advancements accelerate, the ability of research to address societal needs and challenges becomes crucial.

Consequently, researchers engage in research as a production process in which the inputs are made up of both tangible (scientific instruments and materials, for example) and intangible (accumulated knowledge, social networks, economic rents, for example) resources and where the output, new knowledge, has a complex character consisting of both tangible (publications, patents, conference presentations and databases, for example) and intangible (accumulated knowledge, social networks, economic rents, for example) components (tacit knowledge, consulting activity, etc.). This means that there are multiple inputs and outputs for the new knowledge creation function. Productivity is the most important efficiency indicator for any production unit (individual, research group, department, institution, field, or country). To put it another way, productivity is the amount of output produced in a given period per unit of production factors used to produce that output in a given period. In order to measure research productivity, it is necessary to make a few simplifying and assuming assumptions (Abramo & D'Angelo, 2014).

Research initiatives usually involve a group of researchers, as seen by the high proportion of co-authored papers. The fractional contributions of single units to outputs must be taken into account when calculating productivity measures. When it comes to publishing a paper, not all of the co-authors make the same contribution, and in some fields, the order in which the authors appear on the page indicates the relative importance of their individual contributions to the publication. According to Fry et al. (2009), the standards for the ordering of authors in scientific articles range from field to field and the fractional contribution of the individuals must be weighted in accordance with these differences. As a result, all performance indicators based on full counting or "straight" counting (in which only the first author or the corresponding author receives full credit and all others receive none) are invalid measures of productivity, according to this line of reasoning. The same invalidity applies to all indicators based on equal fractional counting in fields where the order of co-authors is acknowledged as having significance.

HEIs all over the world invest a considerable number of resources in enhancing the quality and level of productivity of faculty-led research. The investment is due to the recognition of the multi-level benefits of faculty research to HEIs and researchers. According to Altbach and Salmi (2011), the positive contribution of faculty research to institutions and faculty members has been embraced by HEI in low-income earning, middle-income earning, and advanced countries. HEI faculty members in developed countries in the European Union (E.U.) and the U.S. have dominated faculty research in the past (Dundar & Lewis, 1998). Developing countries such as China, Brazil, and many Gulf Cooperation Council states, such as Oman, have increased their faculty research productivity in recent years. However, they still lag behind HEIs in the U.S. and the U.K.

The global increase in faculty research productivity is propitious to the development of HEI. However, most of the HEI in developing countries, as well as those in developed countries, face an impossible task in overtaking traditional research powerhouses such as Harvard University in Boston, MA, and Cambridge University in the U.K. Hesli and Lee (2011), who are affiliated to the University of Iowa, published a report that stated that there are universal differences in research productivity that are mediated by age, gender, and other factors such as institutional support. The information is significant because it shows that differences in research productivity transcend national boundaries. In the subsequent sections of the review of the literature, the paper will analyze the reasons behind the disparities in research output.

The literature suggests that the techniques or processes of measuring research output or productivity have induced a lot of conflict among instructions and faculty due to concerns about the appropriateness of commonly used practices. Most of these techniques are to quantify evidence-based practice in research. In most cases, the expected results of faithfully applying the principles of faculty research are not realized. One can argue that there seems to be more perishing than publications due to the trend in academic faculty research over the last couple of years. According to Nygaard (2017), in most of the HEIs, a small proportion of faculty researchers produce the vast majority of the research publications while their peers produce little or no research output. The unequal faculty research productivity outputs have shown discontent and finger-pointing into the possible causes of the disparity. The limitations of the publish and perish principle have been pointed out by multiple researchers.

The increased attention on questionable research practices or research fraud in HEIs and disciplines across the world has a close association with the publish or perish principle. In an attempt to meet research productivity quotas, publishers, HEIs and their faculty research have resorted to unethical practices. According to Herndon (2016), publish or perish has increased the incidences of self-plagiarism, the numbers of predatory pay-to-publish institutions, unethical authorship, data fabrication, and data falsification. All of these corrupt practices are done to satisfy the demands of quantitative research productivity metrics.

Additionally, publish or perish has gradually eroded the public's trust or reputation of most HEIs and faculty researchers, which are contrary to their expectations of increasing research output. In most academic fields and HEIs, high researcher productivity has not yielded the expected output from studies, which has ominous implications on the state of science and research findings. Grimes et al. (2018) presuppose that publish or perish and similar reward programs have given rise to a pervasive system that facilitates fraudulent or careless scholarly behaviour. Also, publishing houses that tend to value studies which are based on investigations in familiar paradigms such as hypothesis-testing are on the verge. In general, attaching too much significance on faculty research output's role in role development has had detrimental impacts on scholarship and institutional, as well as individual, reputations. The system that facilitates the introduction and implementation of quantitative evaluations of research output and

impact metrics such as bibliometric assessments shares a considerable burden of the negative impacts.

An example of outdated metrics is citation metrics, which have been used extensively for its simplicity and straightforward nature. HEIs that use these metrics rely on the data from major databases such as Google Scholar (www.scholar.google.com), which ranks top authors in terms of official citations from scholars and peers. However, Aksnes et al. (2019) stated that citation volumes from Google scholar are widely and increasingly used as indicators of research performance. However, there is no evidence to prove that they reflect another critical dimension of research quality, such as societal value, originality, and solidity or plausibility. Traditional research productivity metrics do not show or include the volumes of citations that have been generated using other platforms or databases such as PubMed and ScienceDirect (www.ScienceDirect.com) either.

Publish or perish has given new impetus to the need to document, measure, and demonstrate faculty research productivity or impact. According to Nygaard (2017), adopting an Academic Literacies Theory (ALT) or framework can remedy most of the limitations imposed by publish or perish. This is because it challenges the notion that academic writing, such as research, is about having a specific cognitive skill set that can be cross applied to multiple contexts. On the contrary, the ALT is based on the belief that academic writing is inherently a social process. HEIs and faculty researchers can benefit from a new approach because they appear more concerned with the need to attain favourable metrics rather than the need to produce relevant, impactful, or insightful research findings.

Nevertheless, certain limitations of various approaches to the study of research productivity remain evident. For instance, according to Nygaard (2017), overemphasis on faculty research for innovative development has restrained research on growth rather than diverse areas. They include all sectors of the economy, social, and cultural human endeavours. Institutions and academic faculty researchers favour the forms of research that will lead to instant recognition and gratification. Consequently, Nygaard (2017) reported that the bulk of contemporary research is quantitative and based on similar variables that researchers and their institutions associated with positive or favourable research productivity and impact metrics. Research is no longer induced by specific or unique social problems that can benefit from rigorous scientific inquiry. The bias towards

quantitative studies is influenced by the systems used to measure research productivity, such as bibliometric assessments.

Qualitative studies have been the primary victims of the bias towards quantitative analyses that are contained in research productivity metrics that Nygaard (2017) considers inadequate. In most instances, qualitative studies have to contend with the perception that they lack rigor or trustworthiness even when they are relevant due to their over-reliance on subjective and environmental factors (Krefting, 1991). The age-old misconception of qualitative studies has been factored into the parameters of bibliometric assessments and other quantitative measures of research productivity. However, Nygaard (2017) reported that reports from researchers who prioritize direct communication and applied research are not reflected in quantitative metrics of research productivity even though the target audience values the findings. The assertion put forth in the preceding statement indicates an implicit bias towards qualitative studies in productivity and impact analysis metrics.

The tendency of most faculty studies to use similar metrics reduces the variability, diversity, and uniqueness of the studies that count towards an institution's or an individual's productivity assessments. More often than not, researchers use individual traits and institutional characteristics or settings as the two main branches of variables in their studies. According to Nygaard (2017), faculty researchers tend to overlie on quantitative approaches and the explanatory capabilities of individual traits such as age, gender, rank, and discipline in their studies. The lack of variability reduces the impact of the studies on society and scholarship because of the oversupply of similarly themed studies. However, institutions have good reason to choose this commonly trodden road because author and journal metrics parameters do not discount departmental, institutional or personal lack of variability in the generation of productivity scores.

Similarly, the overreliance on institutional setting characteristics has produced extensive volumes of faculty studies that do not generate any new insights or contributions to knowledge on faculty research. National or regional policies that support faculty research are associated with a significant increase in research productivity in regions where they are formulated and implemented (Quimbo & Sulabo 2014). Despite the impact of alternative factors such as the national policy framework on research productivity, faculty researchers still prefer common and over explored variables such as institutional characteristics. According to Nygaard (2017), the lines of inquiry in

contemporary faculty studies consider similar institutional themes such as the balance of diversity and age, positive research culture, accessibility of resources, and the goals of the research. The lack of innovative approaches has stunted faculty research's impact on society and scholarship on the factors that mediate faculty research output.

Available research productivity literature suffers from limitations that compound the shortcomings that are already imposed on faculty research by the lack of depth or limited scope of researchers who use the same variables repeatedly. Herndon (2016) already pointed out that sticking to one line of inquiry or research parameters increases the chances of self-plagiarism of researchers and their departments. The limitations of available research productivity literature can be grouped into two broad categories. On the one hand, Nygaard (2017) stated that there is a lack of consistency in the measures of productivity used in available literature because some studies use vague or unreliable "self-reported" data while others fail to state the metrics that are measured. For example, there is a lack of clarity on the weight that is attached to co-authored works and the significance attached to books or articles in evaluations in researcher productivity literature. On the other hand, there is a consistent lack of a solid theoretical or epistemological framework in most studies that have investigated research productivity and impact metrics in the past. The dominant theoretical approach that is persistent in most studies is the social cognitive theory that presupposes that an individual researcher is inherently embedded into their environment, which determines their direction and scope of inquiry (Nygaard, 2017). Even though the theory is beneficial when it comes to an understanding of the behaviours and attitudes that induce research, it suffers from limitations as well. According to Nygaard (2017), the academic literacies framework recognizes that the relationship between the researcher's characteristics and the environment is not binary because competing environments might exert pressure on the researcher. Therefore, the social cognitive theory that research productivity literature tends to rely on does not adequately account for all of the factors that influence or limit faculty research productivity.

Furthermore, the available literature does not analyze the intersection or interaction between institutional and individual factors critically. More often than not, the two variables are considered mutually exclusive or distinctive schools of thought. According to Nygaard (2017, p.520), judging between the perceived significance of identifying parameters and various spheres of influence such as institutional factors

during research writing creates spheres of negotiation. The author argues that the spheres of negotiations make it almost impossible to distinguish or demarcate the imitations of the influence of individual, institutional and other factors when analyzing research productivity. Consequently, the intersection between multiple factors that determine faculty research quality and productivity justifies the use of the ALT or model in the theoretical framework proposed by Nygaard (2017), which is used in this research.

2.5 Factors that Mediate the Success and Productivity Rates of Faculty Research

This section of the literature review is essential to the research based on the evidence-based elaborations of experiences of faculty members, which contributes to their success or higher research outputs. The current project contributes to evaluating the affordances and barriers of faculty research in countries such as Oman, which are different from those already studied in western countries. This can assist the Gulf region in catching up with dominant research-based universities in western countries such as the U.S. and the U.K. Consequently, the current section evaluates the common barriers or affordances of faculty research from available and relevant literature, to contribute to the Omani context as the studies dealt with such barriers or affordances in Oman are very scarce.

2.5.1 Facilitators of Faculty Research

According to Darawad et al. (2018), numerous factors influence research productivity. They include individual characteristics, institutional support and research environments, and governmental policies. According to Darawad et al. (2018), there is a general lack of consistency in the productivity metrics of faculty research due to the limited availability of affordances that induce or support research. In an ideal situation, faculty researchers would possess the ideal personal attributes, institutional support, and environmental conditions to conduct quality and impactful research. This perspective confirms the notion of the current study as it explains the manner through which faculty members can only be allowed to conduct a sufficient body of research when the appropriate personal, institutional, and environmental attributes are provided and

fulfilled. However, this earlier study does not address how faculty members perceive these factors themselves, which is an important issue that will be addressed by the current study.

2.5.1.1 Individual Attributes

Individual attributes describe the subjective characteristics that facilitate, motivate, and influence the perceptions of a faculty member to conduct research. Researchers have traditionally placed a lot of emphasis on personal elements in their evaluation of research productivity issues. According to Dundar and Lewis (1998), age, gender, and level of expertise have a significant impact on research productivity because most faculty researchers are likely to be older men with high research skills acuity. Such insight is complementary to the approach of the current research, where the personal attributes of each member on an individualistic level can be highlighted. Accordingly, and in recent years, women, especially women in gulf countries such as Oman, have gradually caught up with their male counterparts in terms of research output (Abouchedid & Abdelnour, 2015). This finding can help confirm the need to highlight the significance of individual attributes for the production of research output especially in Oman. Younger people are also conducting more faculty-led research studies than ever in Gulf countries (Algadheeb & Almeqren, 2014). While narrowing of gender and age differences has been attributed to affirmative action from government and community leaders, these explanations are not often linked to individual perceptions.

In other work, faculty perceptions of research practices and their importance are closely linked to motivation as a critical facilitative factor of research productivity. A positive perception of research is associated with high productivity among faculty members. According to Shin et al. (2013), studies into faculty research productivity have unearthed links between positive perceptions of research and the propensity of academic staff to engage in scientific inquiry. However, although this finding aligns with the current research it does not address these perceptions of academics in places, like Oman, where university research is still emerging. The findings also indicate that faculty members who had positive attitudes towards research were likely to be highly effective in their teaching roles. Research understanding is essential because it creates stable and problem-solving individuals, which are vital attributes of effective teachers. This is

important in contexts like Oman where teaching has been seen as the primary function of universities.

Most of the studies that evaluate individual attributes are done in research-intensive universities. It is important to note that according to data generated from QS Top Universities (2025) Omani HEIs are not listed amongst the most renowned research-oriented HE institutions; as there are only two universities included in the entire world ranking list, Sultan Qaboos University and Sohar University (with an overall score of 366 and 1096, and research network score of 78.8 and 9 and a rank of 340 and 701 respectively). Furthermore, there is little or no literature in the Oman context that focuses on how individual attributes influence research productivity as, in settings like Oman, most of the literature dwells on the institutional factors that affect research productivity. Therefore, this research will seek to find out the influence of individual attributes on perceptions and motivation for research.

2.5.1.2 Environmental Factors

Environmental factors are identifiable elements in the physical, cultural, demographic, economic, political, regulatory, or technological environment that affects the survival, operations, and growth of an institution. Environmental factors such as government and institutional policies have a significant impact on other research productivity factors such as motivation and perception. Culture is also a critical component of the environmental factors that incentivize faculty research. According to Sigmund (2016), faculty researchers who live and work in open societies where there is a high tolerance for diversity and collaboration tend to have a high research productivity rate. In the 2020 economic vision of Oman, the government outlined its plan to implement research and cultural values from western universities. However, the policy had a clause that required HEIs to preserve the cultural values of the country. Nevertheless, and in comparison with the Oman-based study, which strikes the balance between the institutional and individual attitudes, the author focuses on the cultural openness and the societal tolerance as the main driving factors of research, which might lead to neglecting the internal institutional processes, which might be at work even in the less open societies. (Badry & Willoughby, 2015). Consequently, culture has contrasting impacts on research productivity, especially among Gulf countries. Still, it acts as a facilitator of faculty

research, especially in instances when the line of inquiry is consistent with cultural values. Although regionally applicable, this study puts more emphasis on policy aspects of culture preservation that perhaps oversimplifies the subtly dynamic relationship between culture and the individual drive which is better examined in this study of Oman both institutionally and individually.

Additionally, national and institutional characteristics or policies also influence research in general and research productivity. Faculty members who live in a facilitative environment that is governed by guidelines that support research tend to conduct more studies as compared to their counterparts in restrictive settings (Quimbo & Sulabo, 2014). This study focuses on favourable environments without the precise examination of motivation process, especially in constraining environments, like those in Oman, that this study explicitly examines by focusing on the perceptions of faculty operating under local constraints. One of the critical impacts of supportive environments is its effect on collaboration. According to 80.5% of the respondents in a study by Nejatizadeh et al. (2016), individual and organizational factors such as policies on international collaboration had the most significant impact on their willingness to conduct research and their research productivity. Participants in the study ranked environmental factors ahead of factors such as training and demographic data such as age. While it is useful to demonstrate such international cooperation, this study is based too much on considering environmental influences without addressing the internal cognitive and perception mechanisms of motivation, which will be a focus for this study.

From this review, it can be seen that relationships between motivation and supportive environments are not comprehensively elaborated in existing research. In that regard, this research seeks to understand the structural influence of environments on research motivations and self-driven perception.

2.5.1.3 Institutional Support

Institutional support has dual impacts on faculty research quality and productivity because it can UTAS-A as both a barrier and a facilitating factor. In some instances, institutional support acts as an affordance when it catalyzes faculty research by enhancing the provision of the resources that are necessary to conduct impactful or innovative studies. According to Nguyen (2015), the competitiveness of the global education sectors

has increased the average spending or funding levels of faculty research because HEIs recognize a lack of funding as a significant impediment to faculty research. The author has given powerful insights into the institutional support in the way of funding but has not given much specificity in terms of culture or region and hence is not as relevant to the subtle social-cultural interactions that take place in locations like Oman. The focus on funding is important in this aspect because it includes infrastructure and capital that are required to facilitate scientific inquiry such as machinery and laboratories (Welpe et al., 2014). More prestigious universities have an advantage because they have better access to funding and more established research infrastructure. The focus on access to infrastructure is pertinent but skewed too far in the direction of the resource-advantaged institutions, whereas this study provides a view of research motivation in developing or resource-challenged HEIs.

Additionally, institutional support is a broad concept that describes the roles and responsibilities of educational institutions in providing co-curricular support to faculty researchers. The support that faculty members need to excel in their roles usually exceeds the scope of practice of their supervisors or instructors. According to Jahan et al. (2018), a research study that they conducted at Oman Medical College indicated that apart from logistical and technical support, faculty researchers can benefit immensely from the provision of teamwork, collaboration and mentorship programs by their institutions. HEIs that provide this kind of help are able to increase the quality of their research output due to peer review and the level of research productivity due to their perception of support. Although contextually related (Oman Medical College), this piece of research concentrates on logistical/technical support and teamwork but does not delve much on how these variables impact on internal motivation.

The research policies at a HEI or the level of institutional policy alignment to researchers' needs through crucial infrastructure are vital determinants of research quality and productivity. In most cases for HEIs in the developing world, as indicated by Singh et al. (2024), the framework of the operation that is currently in use in HEIs is not consistent with the goals and needs of faculty researchers. The authors outlined incongruencies between operational models and research requirements without going so far as to examine how such disparities can be translated into barriers, motivations or incentives. According to Hollister and Schroeder (2015), data management support and assistance with intellectual property rights that are offered to faculty researchers by

library staff are associated with an increase in motivation and improvement in research perceptions and high research productivity. Faculty researchers can spend less time and effort navigating through these common research publication issues if there is a high level of institutional support. The paper focuses on library support and IP assistance but takes a transactional approach and lacks a focus on motivation or perception.

Institutional promotion or tenure policies have a direct impact on faculty research productivity. Long tenured faculty researchers tend to have a high degree of institutional support as compared to confirmed, official, contractual, and probationary faculty members (Tafreshi et al., 2013). Although this study relates tenure with high productivity, it does not give motivation much attention as a direct result or consequence of the institutional factors. The high level of institutional support catalyzes high productivity rates among faculty researchers who might have attained their roles for being proactive researchers in the first place. According to Manjounes (2016), the association of faculty research with tenure or institutional promotion policies incentivizes faculty members to increase their research quality and productivity. In the long term, this strategy is mutually beneficial to faculty and their institutions. However, some of the facilitating factors that have dual impacts can also act as impediments or barriers to faculty research. This earlier work connects tenure and productivity, but the investigation does not extend to determine whether the relationship between the two is because of intrinsic motivation or institutional culture.

2.6 Individual Barriers to Faculty Research

From the previous discussion on existing limitations of faculty research, the drivers of research mostly overlap the facilitating factors. Some of the main barriers or constraints to faculty research include personal or subjective factors, lack of institutional support, and environmental characteristics. According to a study by Alghanim and Alhamali (2011), only 38.6% of academic staff respondents at medical and health colleges in Saudi Arabia reported that they had undertaken a significant research study over the last two years. The low levels of faculty research at this and other HEIs in the world are associated with multiple barriers that the subsequent section intends to investigate. This study is based in Saudi Arabia and aims only to identify the barriers; it does not address how faculty perceive these barriers themselves.

Negative attitudes or perceptions about research reduce the motivation of faculty to conduct research. Subjective negative perceptions override any positive organizational perceptions about research because faculty-led studies occur in an inherently voluntary process that depends on intrinsic motivation. According to Nguyen (2015), negative perceptions about research reduce the productivity and resilience of faculty researchers who tend to develop a generally low self-efficacy score due to the attitudes or beliefs about research. It becomes challenging for individuals who are no self-sufficient because of their negative perceptions to overcome environmental or institutional barriers to conducting research. The quality and volume of research output tend to decline when faculty members have negative perceptions about research.

The level of education of faculty members can also act as a barrier to faculty research because doctorate trained faculty members tend to have a higher research output than faculty members who have attained lower levels of academic qualification. In most institutions, the length of the tenure of doctorate trained faculty members and their level of research expertise tend to be more significant as compared to their counterparts with graduate degrees or lower. According to Freeman et al. (2013), doctorate-trained faculty members have continued to produce an ever-increasing level of research output due to their ability to access institutional support or infrastructure such as funding and laboratories at ease. HEIs recognize that their highly trained faculty members offer the best chance of increasing their reputations. However, the sustained focus on these faculty members reduces the volume and quality of research output from graduate faculty members and research assistants.

Gender disparities in faculty research productivity are a persistent problem that disproportionately affects female faculty members all over the world, especially in the Middle East. Women have historically had a weaker research output compared to their male counterparts, which has created additional gender-related barriers. One of the barriers includes the general lack of information about the factors inhibiting research productivity in female faculty members (Isfandyari-Moghaddam & Hasanzadeh, 2013). In the long term, the lack of data affects female faculty researchers who want to learn about the impact of subjective or individual barriers on research output as well as any mitigation strategies of these factors. Lack of self-efficacy among female faculty members reduces their ability to transcend institutional and environmental barriers.

2.6.1 Institutional Support

Institutional support is one of the critical factors, which has dual impacts, playing a significant role in limiting faculty research productivity and impact. Faculty members mainly feel the effects of institutional limitations in terms of their workload balance. According to Fawzi and Al-Hattami (2017), the participants from a study that they conducted at the University of Bahrain indicated that an unbalanced workload that places too much emphasis on teaching reduces the time available for research activities. Most faculty members have to contend with this challenge, especially if they do not have an exclusive research role at the HEIs. Their critique of workload seems useful but also one-dimensional because it does not place workload in a wider ecosystem of motivators and institutional-cultural processes. School administrators who do not understand the complementary role of faculty research on the effectiveness of teaching methods are likely to overburden their faculty with teaching roles.

In an ideal scenario, HEIs would afford their faculty members with ample time and a flexible schedule that allows them to engage in research activities. Research and teaching are equally important, and complementary components of faculty development (Elen et al., 2007). Smaller institutions with limited resources are unlikely to support faculty research because it would interfere with their primary role as an institution of higher learning. The pointed-out complementarity of research and teaching is essential but insufficient to understand the motivational dynamics in conservative cultural settings, which this study will aim to pursue. According to Altbach and Salmi (2011), unfavourably high students faculty ratios in HEIs with limited resources and large classrooms place an undue burden on faculty members that restricts the time and energy they have left to conduct research studies. In such situations, the lack of an ideal teaching-research workload is beyond the capabilities of the HEIs. While this analysis is extensive, it seems too general to apply to localised motivational constructs, which will form the core of this research.

Faculty members who are not limited by other institutional barriers such as low productivity or personal attribute barriers such as lack of flexibility can overcome these challenges with ease. Lack of effective collaboration frameworks, especially one that has institutional support, reduces the help-seeking behaviours of faculty researchers, which can help them to navigate most of the barriers to researching innovation (Freitas &

Paredes, 2018). The frameworks of collaboration are addressed in a structural way without looking into the contribution of the perceived institutional encouragement, which may significantly contribute to the motivation of faculty. A high self-efficacy score increases the ability of faculty researchers to navigate through typical challenges that are associated with conducting research even though a rare character trait, which is exhibited infrequently by faculty members (Tiyuri et al., 2018). Therefore, institutions cannot negate their responsibility to facilitate the creation of a collaborative framework for their faculty members. However, in this work self-efficacy is considered as a personal characteristic and not a product of interaction with the institution.

2.6.2 Research Skills and Training

The quality and productivity of faculty research are highly dependent on the research capabilities or skills of faculty members. About 77.9% of respondents in a study conducted in the country to analyze the barriers to faculty research stated that the lack of needs-based research workshops was a significant barrier in their quest to conduct research (Nejatizadeh et al., 2016). This study indicates skills training deficits, but it does not investigate how these deficits impact motivation or perception. The lack of skills limited their ability to carry out complex research methods such as quantitative data analyses. An alternative study by Dundar and Lewis (1998) showed that HEIs can be oblivious to the need for promoting faculty members to research assistant roles or their potential benefits to research practices at their institutions. Experienced faculty members who have undergone previous research training are more likely to produce high volumes of quality research studies as compared to their counterparts with no prior experience (Siddiqui et al., 2018). This particular study addressed prior training and experience, but does not investigate how these influence or are influenced by institutional structures and incentives.

2.6.3 Environmental Characteristics

Faculty researchers are invariably affected by the conditions and characteristics of the environment where they are expected to teach and conduct research studies. The requirements of the environment can include multiple parameters such as the culture, the institutional or government policies, and the language used in a country. Culture is a

severe impediment to the consistent production of quality research in high volumes because of its impact on the subjective biases of the researcher and the participants (Condon et al., 2016). Condon et al.'s (2016) study is useful for focusing on cultural bias, but does not provide much information on how faculty members view those biases as either hindrances or boosters of motivation. Faculty researchers are affected by both the national and institutional culture of where they operate. According to Tafreshi et al. (2013), the lack of a research culture affects the motivation and ability of faculty members to access the resources required to access research. The results regarding marital status and productivity are of sociological interest but not integrated with an institutional or motivational understanding.

Other cultural factors, such as gender, marital status, and religion, overlap the limiting effects of individual attributes. In a study conducted in Saudi Arabia, the male respondents who reported that they were married had a lower research output as compared to their peers who were single or divorced (Algadheeb & Almeqren, 2014). Again, these findings are of sociological interest but are not integrated with institutional or motivational understandings. Women feel most of the impacts of cultural barriers because they have historically been marginalized in Asian, Middle Eastern, and African countries. According to Isfandyari-Moghaddam and Hasanzadeh (2013), women have a lower research output than men in the country and other Gulf countries because of gender stereotypes about their ability, the role of gender roles and low collaboration from their male counterparts. The paper acknowledges the existence of gender disparity yet does not suggest interventions or institutional responses. Professionals in an alternative study reported that lack of time due to cultural or gender roles limited their ability to conduct viable research (Al-Busaidi, 2010). The findings from the three studies are significant because they highlight the impact of socio-cultural factors on faculty researchers. Though culturally relevant, this research study does not explore the perceptions of faculty themselves about these issues.

Language barriers also limit the ability of HEIs in countries such as Oman. The limitations of language transcend the national borders of Oman because they are experienced uniformly across the Gulf region. That is due to the low levels of English proficiency in most Arab countries, even though instructional and publishing programs emphasize the use of English (Mahboob & Elyas, 2017). Their emphasis on English proficiency seems important yet is not linked to an understanding of culture or a

motivational perspective. The identity and social exchange of an individual are invariably tied to the language they speak because it is their primary means of sharing and acquiring new information (Sigmund, 2016). Oman, the setting for this study, has made great efforts towards enhancing the use of English as the professional language in HEIs. However, such moves are in tension with the cultural conservatism that is part of the country's official policy (Badry & Willoughby, 2015). Consequently, Oman provides an opportunity to study how a lack of a shift in cultural values operates alongside an increase in technical levels of English proficiency.

2.7 Gaps in the Literature

The premise of the literature review is to identify gaps in existing knowledge, which are very important to doctorate level researchers. Filling in the gaps in knowledge allows researchers to make a valid or viable contribution to the wealth of knowledge in a given field of study. According to Efron and Ravid (2018), a research gap is an underexplored, omitted, or contentious issue that is persistently visible in present literature, which can benefit from further scientific inquiry. Consequently, the purpose of faculty research and most other skilled studies is to generate new knowledge that can provide clarity in case there is controversy in the identified strategy. Filling in research gaps can also provide an avenue for purposeful innovation that is beneficial or impactful to society.

In most cases, gaps exist in research because the area under investigation presents unique challenges to researchers. Authors of research studies have a responsibility to not only point to gaps but also to explain how they intend to address the gaps in literature thoroughly. According to Galvan (2016), researchers should consider the obstacles or limitations associated with their identified gaps because choosing an insurmountable gap can render a study obsolete before the inquiry process begins. For example, choosing to identify gaps in the mountain climbing behaviours of mountaineers, on a peak that has never been submitted before, can create major data collection and replicability challenges. All of these factors played a role in the identification of the gaps that this dissertation aims to address.

Specifically, the subsequent sections of the thesis will attempt to address the gap or lack of clarity on the cross-departmental motivators or barriers to faculty research.

Nevertheless, multiple scientists have attempted to bridge this gap. There is a general lack of consensus about the true impact or effects of cross-departmental differences in faculty research productivity. In a study conducted to determine the factors that motivate business faculty to engage in research, the authors discovered that tenure status had the most significant impact on research output (Chen et al., 2006). The findings of the study are significant because the authors also analyzed the impact of departmental differences in research productivity. Chen et al. (2006), who are the authors of the study, reported that they did not find any proof to support the association between research productivity and academic discipline or gender. Additionally, the findings contradict the gap identified in this literature review directly.

Principally, past studies have not fully-identified the precise factors that are causally linked to faculty research output through institutional and personal attribute obstacles. Furthermore, there has been limited research concentrating on the factors that motivate academic staff to conduct research, as well as comparisons of the elements that influence the research productivities of academic staff in Omani HE institutions.

The research gap has been identified through reviewing the closest studies to the current work. For example, an alternative study that was conducted in Hong Kong with the sole aim of identifying the relationship between research productivity across different academic disciplines found a positive association. The research examined how individual and institutional factors might influence research productivity metrics. According to Jung (2012), institutional characteristics such as resource allocation and perceived research importance as well as personal attributes such as self-reported perceptions about research all mediated cross-departmental differences in research output. The findings from this study are consistent with the impact of institutional and personal attribute barriers or affordances of faculty research that were identified in the review of the literature. The findings from this study appear to offer definitive evidence on the existence of cross-disciplinary differences in research output. Therefore, this research will seek to understand the factors that directly link institutional and personal attribute barriers to faculty research productivity.

Nevertheless, the controversy over this research gap still ranges on because a third study conducted by Australian researchers contradicted the perceived association between disciplinary differences and research productivity. The research utilized a realist approach to identify the impact of specific strategies on key stakeholders in controlled

research circumstances. According to Ajjawi et al. (2018), interplays among personal attributes such as identity and institutional factors have a more significant impact on research productivity than departmental differences. The research found out that any disparities across departments in terms of research output can be bridged through effective workload management and tenure or promotion strategies.

The findings of an evaluation conducted across multiple world-class HEIs provided definitive justification for the gap identified in the initial literature review. In the analysis, the authors considered historical research productivity data from some of the leading academic institutions in the US, the UK, and other countries such as Canada. According to Altbach and Salmi (2011), institutional and individual factors such as departmental prestige, tenure of faculty members, and research attitudes mediate cross-departmental differences in research productivity. The arguments proposed in the evaluation appear sound. Still, the lack of consensus gave rise to the premise of this study due to an inherent desire to provide definitive clarification on the issue. Therefore, this research will explore and generate insightful knowledge on this gap due to its perceived significant impacts on faculty research output.

2.7.1 Summary of the Literature Review

The review of available literature gave prominence to issues or areas that are near or related to the premise and the gap that the study intends to fill. One of the prominent areas in the literature reviews is the analysis of the study area. A close examination of available literature showed the historical development of HE in Oman as well as the role that the government, culture, and expatriates have played in the development process. The standout stakeholders that have influenced HEIs in Oman are the government through policy formulation and implementation process and the culture in the sultanate, which has affected the perceptions and attitudes of faculty research. However, the study seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the issues that shape faculty research by collecting and analyzing primary data from respondents.

The current chapter approached the following subjects where it found some gaps:

- The state of higher education in Oman where it discusses the origin, history and the development of HE before discussing its development in Oman; this section showed that little attention has been given to the discussion of HE status in Oman.

- The philosophical roots of faculty research in terms of history and implications.
- The measurement techniques of research productivity and impact; this showed that the current measurement techniques need development as most of them are designed for the Western settings and unsuitable for the Eastern settings.
- The limitations of approaches to the study of research productivity, which are present in the Omani context, and almost no studies have approached/handled the current limitations.
- The factors that mediate the success and productivity rates of faculty research where additional details on facilitators and barriers to faculty research are provided to identify the precise factors that are causally linked to faculty research output through institutional and personal attribute obstacles.
- The individual barriers to faculty staff to implement research; there has been limited research concentrating on the factors that motivate academic staff to conduct research.

The current study utilized the qualitative case study approach to fill the above gaps. The next chapter shows the theoretical framework upon which the study methodology has been developed to answer the research questions.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1. Introduction

This chapter constructs the conceptual framework of the study, expressing key concepts limiting its scope and defining factors influencing research productivity. It also provides the key parameters through which the level of achievement of research productivity at UTAS-A is ascertained in light of such influencing factors. In this case, this will require the provision of a theoretical framework from the literature. Therefore, the chapter will rely heavily on the Nygaard (2017) framework of research productivity as the main theoretical framework for the study, but will also analyse some theories and models that can pertain to and define each factor/parameter that Nygaard's framework comprises from a theoretical standpoint. The main factors that will be evaluated in UTAS-A to measure the actual level of research productivity will be extracted from these parameters.

Accordingly, the structure of the current chapter will first include justification of the research approach, demonstration of Nygaard's framework, explanation of each factor, and extracting the main conceptual model based on the Nygaard theoretical model.

3.2. Justification for the Research Approach

This subsection is dedicated to outlining the meanings of the concept that the current research addresses, and the reasons that urged me as a researcher to pinpoint the relationship between faculty perceptions and research motivation and productivity. This relationship is intended to identify the factors that mediate their relationship, so I can structure them into a unified framework.

Moreover, I also intend to outline the theories that help determine the manner through which the dynamic interplay between these concepts is formulated. Such factors will be examined in terms of their types, in order to design the interview questions in a consistent manner within the scope of each concept.

Eventually, I shall identify the main assumptions of each selected theory in order to formulate a theoretical framework for the current study that specifies the scope of analysis, through which the findings can be verified. I do this so that I manage to do this so that my findings can be consistent with the theoretical facet of the literature, and to

also enhance the level of credibility and validity of the outcome of my overall methodological procedure. Therefore, the following ontological and epistemological aspects that justify the formulation of the current research based on the Nygaard perspective can be outlined.

3.2.1 Ontological Approach

Ontologically, the study aims to provide a refined insight into why faculty members feel motivated to research and produce quality work in higher education institutions' contexts of Oman. This more complex social practice does not just continue the idea of research motivation being made up by a series of uniform, separated elements, but elaborates understanding faculty research as an on-going development process shaped by idiosyncratic experiences in relation to institutional norms and scientific identity within their society. This notion was confirmed by a study of a sample of faculty members who indicated that conducting research to them is considered a social practice that allows them to get to know more colleagues and faculty members, which is an approach that further accentuates the fact that being motivated to conduct research does not only pertain to their academic attitude but it also includes multi-faceted components including social aspects (Myers et al., 2020).

This study also aims to explore how faculty perceptions and experiences shape the veracity of research productivity particularly in the Oman higher education system. The study highlights faculty at UTAS-A as not only representative but key to the exploitation of research to crucial acts they are participating in and it puts them centre stage as a way of exercising just what conditions/dynamics prevail. Just as with academic literacies theory and its focus on the social nature of writing, this ontological take means looking to faculty perspectives on capacity provides intimate knowledge into both the epistemic routines involved and their potential in research initiatives.

Their life experiences offer a more pragmatic insight into the problems and opportunities that exist in academia. Ontologically, this inquiry values the lived experiences of faculty over aggregate administrative or external sources. In a parallel way to academic literacy theory foregrounding power relations and identity in student writing, this one intends instead to change over time within the academy as research practices developed.

In order to understand this, the current study attempts to uncover how research has been normalized within faculty identities as well as subsequent impacts on both quality and outcomes of university-based research activities based in an examination of the foundational elements underlying conduct for researcher.

3.2.2 Epistemological Approach

The epistemological approach focuses on uncovering why certain factors motivate academic staff to engage in research and enhance productivity. Similar to how academic literacies theory sees writing as a socially embedded practice, this approach recognizes that faculty motivations are shaped by the communities and disciplines to which they belong. Faculty members are influenced not only by their institutional environment but also by broader professional, national, and thematic communities (Lillis & Scott, 2007).

The approach seeks to understand how these multiple spheres shape their motivations, beliefs, and the overall research culture at UTAS-A. Just as academic writers navigate competing demands from different communities, researchers must juggle personal, institutional, and disciplinary expectations. The epistemological approach explores how these competing factors, such as intrinsic motivations like intellectual curiosity and extrinsic motivations like recognition or funding, shape faculty members' behaviour and research output. It emphasizes that understanding why certain factors motivate staff provides valuable insights into fostering a more supportive research environment, where these influences are balanced effectively to enhance productivity (Nygard, 2017).

This approach also highlights those negative perceptions or conflicting expectations can hinder research efforts, while positive motivations foster a productive research culture. In the same way that academic writers navigate sites of negotiation in their work, faculty members face challenges in aligning their research goals with institutional and community demands. By analysing these perceptions, institutions can develop strategies to improve the research culture, ultimately leading to higher productivity and a stronger academic reputation.

3.2.3 Reviewed Theoretical Approaches

When constructing the theoretical framework of the study, several candidate theories were considered. The first candidate was the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) because of its heavy focus on extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, the key concepts in the understanding of the learning engagement process on the part of the students. SDT is a theory devised by Deci and Ryan (1985), according to which people are most inclined to be motivated when their lower psychological needs involving autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied. This theory has largely been used in learning settings to elaborate how learning environments may be supportive or discouraging with regard to motivation. Research on SDT offered a potentially useful perspective in examining how culturally intelligent digital storytelling could help improve the levels of engagement among learners by facilitating these three psychological needs, as the focus of the study was on student motivation especially with regards to development of reading and speaking skills.

Expectancy-Value Theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002) also came into consideration because it provides an in-depth explanation of factors determining achievement-related behaviors of students. This theory was developed by Eccles and others and it establishes that motivation is influenced by the expectation of success in a task and the importance that the individual attaches to the task. Within the context of education, the theory has been applied in explaining reasons as to why students are willing to engage in certain learning tasks as well as how their beliefs and perceptions influence their academic effort and persistence. Since the underlying research focuses on the discussion of digital storytelling as a possible tool to increase motivation by using culturally relevant content, this work seemed to be first involved in reflecting the perceptions and choices of students.

Overall, Self-Determination Theory and Expectancy-Value Theory focus more on the individual-level motivational processes and do not give full attention to the institutional and contextual factors that influence the educational practices and outcomes. As explained in Chapter 1, these are important issues for the current work. Rather, the approach developed by Nygaard (2015) was selected due to its ability to accommodate institutional consideration and contextual forces, and therefore to provide a more holistic

basis for examining these motivation and perception issues. This approach is addressed in the next section.

3.3 Nygaard's Theoretical Framework

Nygaard's (2015) integrated theoretical model for research productivity emphasizes that individual research output is not solely determined by observable characteristics, such as age, gender, or institutional factors. Instead, it highlights that productivity is deeply intertwined with a researcher's subjective understanding of their identity, their perception of institutional environments, and their sense of agency. This perspective, rooted in the academic literacies approach, suggests that how researchers view their abilities, fears, and the expectations imposed by their surroundings significantly influences their productivity.

The model recognizes that identities are multifaceted and that researchers navigate multiple institutional environments, which often have competing demands and expectations. This negotiation process, as described by the model, results in concrete practices that directly impact research productivity. For instance, decisions about when to complete a project, whether to co-author, or what goals to prioritize are all considered parts of this negotiation.

Moreover, how productivity is perceived depends on the standards of different environments a researcher belongs to, as each sphere may have different measures of what constitutes valuable research output. A key contribution of this model is the incorporation of social cognitive theory through feedback loops that show how past experiences of publishing—or failing to publish—can influence a researcher's self-perception and their view of institutional fairness.

These feedback loops create either positive reinforcement or "vicious cycles" of low productivity, affecting future output. By introducing this theoretical framework, the Nygaard model broadens the discussion on research productivity, shifting the focus from purely individual attributes to a more nuanced understanding of how identity, social power structures, and environmental influences shape academic writing and research output. This opens up new avenues for examining how pressures, such as publishing in dominant languages like English, affect researchers globally. As a result, the framework includes the components that can be defined as follows:

1. **Individual and institutional characteristics:** External factors such as age, gender, discipline, and institutional attributes influencing productivity.
2. **Understanding of identity:** Researchers' personal beliefs about their abilities, desires, fears, and academic identity.
3. **Interpretation of institutional environments:** How researchers perceive their institutional settings, including expectations, values, and constraints.
4. **Practices:** Decisions about research production, such as what to produce, co-authoring, prioritizing tasks, and knowing when a project is complete.
5. **Productivity:** The actual volume of research that is being produced.

Moreover, these components can be included and elucidated within an expressive diagram that can help illustrate the Nygaard framework of research productivity; as shown in Figure 3.1.

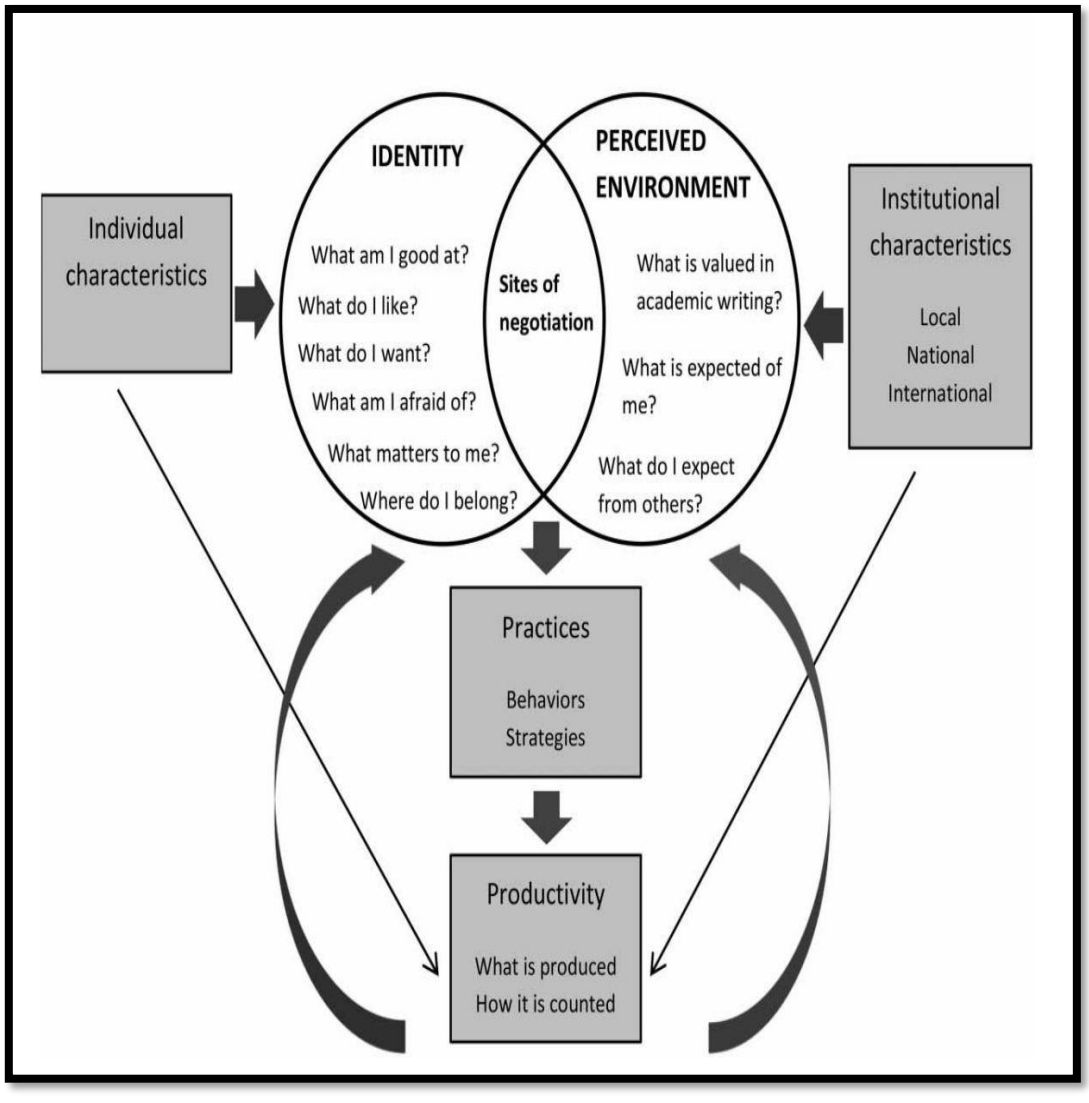

Figure 3.1: The Nygaard framework of research productivity

3.4 Development of a Conceptual Model

Based on the aforementioned, I can construct my theoretical and conceptual frameworks in accordance with the assumptions and components of the Nygaard framework for research productivity. As a result, the factors that constitute the conceptual framework which is derived from the Nygaard theoretical framework can be utilized to design the interview questions and determine the sub-factors in accordance with which participants can be selected. Accordingly, such factors can be outlined as follows:

1. **Individual Characteristics:** Highlights intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, and emphasizes personal values, goals, and abilities.
2. **Institutional Characteristics:** Stresses the importance of supportive organizational environments, and considers the alignment of institutional values and support systems.
3. **Identity:** Considers how autonomy and relatedness affect self-identity, and explores the congruence between personal and professional identities.
4. **Perceived Environment:** Looks at how contextual factors impact motivation, and focuses on the compatibility between individuals and their work environment.
5. **Productivity:** Links motivation to engagement and performance outcomes, and links person-environment fit to job satisfaction and performance.

This personalized interest often stems from past interactions with institutional support systems, as seen in the case where my professional background influenced their belief in the importance of resource allocation to motivate academics. Thus, the researcher's personal experiences and professional roles, such as being a lecturer, shape their commitment to fostering a supportive research environment, which in turn informs their inquiry into motivational factors.

1. **Institutional Characteristics:** Institutional characteristics play a pivotal role in shaping the research productivity of academics. Factors such as resource allocation, research support, and administrative policies directly influence faculty motivation and output. For example, the researcher's experiences highlight the importance of institutions setting aside resources to fund research initiatives.

In environments where support is present, like the current institution, there is a notable increase in interest and focus on research productivity. However, in institutions where motivation is lacking, due to factors such as increased workloads or declining

budgets, academics may become demoralized, leading to lower research output. These observations suggest that institutional environments must provide the necessary tools, resources, and be conducive to the conditions for academics to thrive in their research endeavours.

2. **Identity:** Identity plays a crucial role in shaping how researchers approach their work and perceive their productivity. The researcher's personal worldview, including their experiences, thoughts, and objectives, significantly influences their research practices and motivations. For instance, a researcher's passion for collective voices and their belief in the importance of research support are deeply rooted in their own experiences and professional goals.

This personal connection often drives them to advocate for resources and support within their institutions, reflecting their commitment to enhancing research productivity. As seen in the researcher's transition from one institution to another, their evolving perceptions of support and motivation have directly impacted their approach to fostering a research-focused environment.

3. **Perceived Environment:** The researcher's insights into faculty members' motivations and experiences reflect how the perceived environment can either bolster or hinder research efforts. Observations of previous workplaces reveal that factors such as increased workloads and budget constraints can demoralize academic staff, leading to reduced research activity.

In contrast, a more supportive environment at their current institution has fostered increased motivation and productivity among colleagues. Findings from the literature that I reviewed and extracted support this view, indicating that effective motivational and administrative strategies, including alleviating stressful conditions and providing targeted incentives, can significantly impact faculty members' research productivity.

Thus, the perceived environment, shaped by institutional policies and support systems, plays a crucial role in determining the level of research engagement and output among academics.

4. **Productivity:** Furthermore, literature on staff motivation underscores the importance of addressing motivational and administrative factors to enhance research productivity. Studies suggest that intrinsic motivation, psychological needs, and job satisfaction are key determinants of academic research output.

For example, providing effective training, reducing bureaucratic barriers, and offering tailored incentives are all strategies that can alleviate demotivation and encourage higher levels of research activity. My decision to investigate these factors within the context of HEIs in Oman is driven by a recognition that local conditions and institutional environments can vary significantly, impacting how motivation and productivity are experienced by faculty members. Through this research, they aim to identify specific factors that influence research productivity and to apply these insights to improve academic research practices in their institution.

Chapter 4: Research Design

4.1 Introduction

A qualitative case study approach was selected and deemed the most appropriate for this thesis study to answer the research question and objectives effectively. This approach uses a rich in-depth investigation. In this case, this chapter is dedicated to demonstrating the research instrument in detail, which is represented by semi-structured interview questions, and the manner through which the study participants were selected. The research question and sub-objectives were developed to explore this insider's perspective, and were used to report on the applicability of the adapted conceptual framework within the context of the study.

Consequently, this chapter demonstrates various essential elements that can help specify and outline the manner through which the semi-structured interview questions are meant to be designed. Elements include (a) the unit of analysis from which the research sample is selected, and (b) the criteria for interpreting the findings.

4.2 Research Design Procedure

4.2.1 Case Study Approach

In earlier chapters of the thesis, I have already considered the Sultanate of Oman as the country where this project took place, and I have provided some information to make the reader, to some extent, aware of the nature of the country and the people living there. In this section, I will build on that information by considering, more specifically, the research site that was selected for this research project. I will cover information related to UTAS-A where this research was conducted.

UTAS-A was officially established in 1982-1983 as a vocational training institute before its mandate was expanded in 2001 after its leadership or administration was handed over to the Ministry of Manpower (UTAS-A, 2019, par. 1). This will have implications for the present project because historically those staff members did not conduct much research perhaps. The expansion of the mandate empowered the facility to play a critical role in enhancing access to technical education in the Sultanate of Oman (See Figure 1). One of the main missions of UTAS-A is to provide quality technical

education. This will have implications for the present project because certain disciplines are very prominent in the institution especially in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) without any bias or discrimination (UTAS-A, 2019, par. 1). All of the participants in the current study are drawn from the UTAS-A.

UTAS-A is located in Oman. The college is considered one of the technical colleges in Oman that are mandated to carry out a substantial percentage of applied research in Oman. UTAS-A offers an appropriate setting to study how researchers process contending sets of goals that may influence output. As an independent study institution, the college offers applied, policy-relevant investigation to a wider audience. This will have implications for the present project because the kind of research the institute seeks to promote their staff to undertake is of a certain kind. Output in the institution is conceptualized completely in terms of published academic productivity. The funding from the college is low and the workload is high.

4.2.2 Unit of Analysis

The participants for the study were all active members of the academic staff at UTAS-A. As of 2019, UTAS-A had a total of 178 staff, 96 of whom are academic staff while the rest are support or non-academic staff. The rigorous process of inquiry used in this study was conducted to understand faculty perceptions towards the factors that motivate academic staff to conduct research and enhance research productivity.

The case study sample of UTAS-A was selected from three separate departments. Specifically, the project investigates the factors that motivate academics to undertake research in higher education institutions in Oman and the impediments that prevent their participation. The study utilizes 30 faculty members from UTAS-A who are drawn from the Engineering Department, Business Department and the Information Technology Department as the main unit of analysis.

These three departments were selected because as sites, they are easier to access and they have sufficient population to potentially enrol in the research. Accordingly, I will provide an overall case report of these three departments within UTAS-A, in accordance with the responses of these members who represent the research sample for the current study.

Accordingly, the profile and reason for selecting each one of these departments can be outlined as follows:

1. **The Engineering Department:** The Department of Engineering at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS-A) is dedicated to producing skilled technicians, technologists, and professionals across various engineering disciplines to aid in the development of the Sultanate of Oman. It integrates research and technology transfer, fostering innovation and the creation of new ideas and inventions. An interdisciplinary environment has been established, allowing faculty, staff, and students to collaborate in key research areas. The Department's graduates are well-prepared to become future leaders in technology and engineering. The Department is divided into three main sections: Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, and Civil and Architectural Engineering.

It offers Bachelor of Technology degrees in Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Power Engineering, Electronics and Communications Engineering, and Computer Engineering, as well as Diplomas in Architectural Engineering and Quantity Surveying. As the largest academic department in the college, it boasts extensive facilities, modern laboratories, and workshops, staffed by highly qualified faculty with significant academic and industrial experience.

Regarding the reason that urged me to select this Department, it can be indicated that the Engineering Department at (UTAS-A) serves as an ideal unit of analysis for interviewing faculty members about their motivation to increase research productivity due to its strong emphasis on integrating research and technology transfer, fostering innovation, and its interdisciplinary environment.

As the largest academic department with diverse sections and extensive facilities, it is equipped with modern laboratories and workshops that support advanced research activities. Additionally, the high standards of academic and industrial experience among faculty members ensure a rich pool of insights into the strategies and motivations that drive research productivity within a dynamic and resource-rich setting.

2. **The Business Department:** The Department of Business Studies has demonstrated significant achievements in academic performance, research contributions, and student placements. Its growth is evident through the enhancement of academic programs, rising student enrolment, and a dedicated

faculty with extensive experience. The curricula are continuously updated to align with industry demands, fulfilling the needs and expectations of key stakeholders and advancing the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

Offering specializations in Accounting, Human Resource Management, and Marketing, the Department aims to prepare students for successful careers. Curricula are tailored to ensure competitiveness in the job market, with feedback from industry professionals ensuring relevance.

A team of teachers collaborates with other UTAS branches to design and refine course delivery plans, guided by a strong pedagogical framework. The Department also supports students' academic needs, training requirements, personal development plans, and career aspirations. With a robust on-the-job training program and a notable alumni network in both the private and public sectors, the Department facilitates opportunities for students to engage in managerial, business, and leadership activities, thereby enhancing their self-confidence and career development. Students develop crucial skills such as entrepreneurship and lifelong learning, positioning them for success in both their professional and personal lives.

Regarding the reason that urged me to select this Department, it can be indicated that this Department is an ideal unit of analysis for interviewing faculty members about their motivation to increase research productivity due to its demonstrated success in academic performance, research contributions, and dynamic curricula that align with industry needs. The Department's commitment to continuous improvement and stakeholder engagement, along with a highly experienced and dedicated teaching staff, provides a rich environment for exploring effective motivation strategies. Additionally, the Department's interdisciplinary approach, integration of industry feedback, and support for student development through various academic and professional activities offer valuable insights into how faculty members are inspired to enhance their research productivity within a supportive and evolving academic framework.

3. **The Information Technology Department:** The Information Technology Department is committed to delivering quality education and research in alignment with its vision. In response to the rapidly evolving nature of IT, the Department regularly updates its course offerings to reflect current industry requirements. Faculty members stay informed about technological advancements and integrate these developments into their research and teaching practices.

The shift to online course delivery has been successfully adopted by both students and faculty without compromising the quality of education. The Department fosters an environment conducive to students acquiring the necessary skills to become responsible citizens and societal contributors. Faculty members are actively engaged in research, contributing to various projects and publications across IT, Networking, and Mathematics sections.

Therefore, the aforementioned departments were selected due to their high levels of research activity, accessibility, and participation of academic staff in scholarly research. The Engineering Department, the largest department, emphasizes research and technology transfer, and it has an interdisciplinary culture that supports innovation. The Business Faculty organizes its research and academic activities based on the needs of the industry, including stakeholder feedback to enable research to be more productive. The Information Technology Faculty, meanwhile, continues to cope with the evolving technological landscape, actively engaging the faculty in IT, networking, and mathematics-based research.

Male and female faculties are both included in the sample to ensure a fair cross-section of opinions regarding research motivation and productivity. Faculty members are both Omani and non-Omani because it reflects the multiculturalism within higher education institutions in Oman. This guarantees that there is knowledge of various academic and cultural backgrounds on how faculties are motivated towards research work. The study further considers instructional faculty of various ages from 30 years to 50-above years of age, welcoming perspectives of the newly appointed research scientists to seasoned scholars who might have disparate motivations and degrees of support within the institution.

Purposive sampling was employed in selecting the participants who were actively engaged in teaching and research. The method ensures the selected participants are faculty members exposed to research activity experience and can reveal fully the determinants of their research productivity. Three departments were chosen on the basis that they are influential in UTAS-A in research activity and the availability of the faculty members to take part. By targeting these departments, the study aims to have an overall perspective of the challenges and incentives that affect faculty research at Omani higher education institutions.

The aim in this case was to select 10 participants in each of the three core academic departments, including, engineering, business, and information technology, so that a reasonable distribution of viewpoints across the disciplines could be obtained. This would give a total of 30 participants, or just under a third of the academic staff at UTAS-A and a sufficient and diverse sample size with which to conduct an in-depth qualitative case study. This sample size is large enough to enable analysis of faculty perceptions to be meaningful, and at the same time, it is manageable by detailed, rigorous investigation of motivational and institutional factors affecting research engagement. Moreover, the sampling approach aimed to recruit participants with a variety of demographic characteristics from across these three departments.

Table 4.1 illustrates the demographic distribution of the participants of the study (the 30 academic staff members), by department. It contains data about gender, nationality and the distribution of age groups in each of the three departments, namely, Engineering, Business and Information Technology.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Demographic Data

Engineering Department	**Total**	**10**
Gender	Male	7
	Female	3
Nationality	Omani	2
	Non-Omani	8
Age group	61 years and over	1
	51-60 years	2
	41-50 years	3
	31-40 years	1
	30 years and under	3
Business Department	**Total**	**10**
Gender	Male	6
	Female	4
Nationality	Omani	5
	Non-Omani	5
Age group	61 years and over	1
	51-60 years	2
	41-50 years	2
	31-40 years	1
	30 years and under	4
Information Technology Department	**Total**	**10**
Gender	Male	8
	Female	2
Nationality	Omani	6
	Non-Omani	4
Age group	61 years and over	-
	51-60 years	1
	41-50 years	3
	31-40 years	1
	30 years and under	5

This demographic distribution assists in giving a background to the variety and embodiment of views that were recorded through the research.

4.2.3 Insider Research

Being an insider researcher at UTAS-A significantly enhances my ability to include and implement responses from participants in my study. As a lecturer within the institution, I have direct access to valuable resources, such as institutional documents, faculty experiences, and internal processes that are crucial for understanding research productivity among academic staff.

This unique position enables me to engage in meaningful conversations with colleagues and observe their interactions and challenges related to research firsthand. My familiarity with the institutional environment allows me to tailor interview questions and data collection methods in a way that resonates with the participants' actual experiences and perceptions. Despite these advantages, my insider status also necessitates vigilant management of potential biases (Mercer, 2007).

To ensure that my research remains unbiased and objective, I have adopted several strategies. Firstly, I make it a priority to communicate transparently with participants about my role and the purpose of the study. By clarifying that my intention is not to skew the results towards a positive or negative portrayal of the institution, I aim to foster an open and honest dialogue (Merriam et al., 2001)

The data gathered from my insider perspective are instrumental in addressing the research problem. They provide a nuanced understanding of the factors that influence faculty research productivity and motivation. My observations and interactions with colleagues reveal patterns and insights that might not be apparent to external researchers (Taylor, 2011).

These insights are essential for identifying both motivational drivers and barriers faced by faculty members, thus directly contributing to the overarching goal of enhancing research productivity at UTAS-A. My personal motivation for this research is rooted in my commitment to amplifying staff perceptions and understanding the factors that drive academic research from staff perspectives. My previous experiences, including advocating for research support at prior institutions and observing shifts in research culture at UTAS-A, have fuelled my interest in exploring these dynamics further. By

investigating faculty perceptions and the institutional factors that impact research motivation, I aim to contribute valuable knowledge that can inform strategies to foster a more supportive research environment (Mercer, 2007; Merriam et al., 2001).

Despite this, insider research is a category of research which poses certain challenges which should be handled with care in order to uphold the integrity and credibility of the findings. Firstly, it is important to consider the possibility of implicit coercion, as the participants might experience pressure to participate or provide a positive response because of their professional association with the researcher. The aspect of privacy and confidentiality is also sensitive, where the researcher is at a bigger risk of unintentionally exposing an identity or confidential information due to their familiarity with the environment and the people.

In addition, insider researchers have to address their own biases, both conscious and unconscious, such as their wishes and hopes for good results and their acceptance of institutional norms and practices as self-evident. Being transparent, rigorous and trustworthy demands conscious action, as well as playing the dual roles of a colleague and a researcher, which can cause professional or ethical dilemmas. Such dilemmas require remaining constantly reflexive and devoted to methodical rigor during the research (Fleming, 2018).

In order to handle these issues, there are various measures that I took in my project. First, I made it clear to staff that participation was strictly voluntary and that the participants needed to be fully aware of the objectives of the study, their freedom to withdraw at any point and what was being done to ensure that their anonymity was preserved.

At the time of interviews, I stressed out that there are no correct or incorrect answers and that I am open and appreciate honest and critical experiences. This was a strategy to lower any apparent feeling of coercion to comply with institutional discourses or impress me as a workmate. To attempt to protect the identity of participants, I also made all responses anonymous and applied pseudonyms in transcripts and reporting in a community as small as this, where people are easily recognizable.

Along with the above, I kept a reflective research journal during the study, to try to monitor my own assumptions and emotional reactions. This assisted me to look critically at my interpretations and also made sure that I did not allow data analysis to be based on my expectation or prior knowledge but on the actual experiences of the

participants. I also performed peer debriefing about my early findings with other colleagues within Oman but who were not from UTAS-A. Their comments served as a valuable balance on my analytical work and the interpretation of the facts.

Furthermore, as a reflexive action of doubting the institutional norms and practices that could be taken for granted because of their familiarity, I sought to explicitly reflect on tacit patterns and add richness to the study by considering different perspectives. All these measures aimed to increase the credibility and reliability of my insider research to guarantee that it would add value and ethically to the knowledge of the research motivation in UTAS-A.

4.2.4 Criteria for Interpreting the Findings

This sub-section outlines the factors that have an effective impact on academics' participation in conducting research in higher education institutions in Oman from the faculty's perspectives in three departments at UTAS-A: Engineering Department, Business Department and the Information Technology Department as participants. These three departments were selected because as sites, they are easier to access and they have sufficient population to potentially enrol in the research. The findings presented in this chapter are based on five parameters: individual characteristics, identity, perceived environment, productivity, and institutional characteristics which also represent the predetermined themes for the deductive thematic analysis procedure.

4.3 Research Instrument: Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews

Semi-structured in-depth interviews can be effectively used to explore the impact of motivation on research productivity by providing a flexible yet focused framework for discussions with faculty members from the Engineering, Business Studies, and Information Technology Departments at UTAS-A. This interview method allows for the exploration of specific themes such as institutional support, personal and professional goals, and the influence of departmental culture on research activities.

The semi-structured interview questions were designed in accordance with the following aspects:

- Each department knowledge and attitudes were observed.
- Questions were written in an initial form based on the observations.

- Initial questions were refined based and transformed into finalized questions.
- Questions were adjusted in order to be inclusive of prompting information that allows each participant to expand on his/her answer but without drifting away from the main gist of each question.
- The Nygaard framework components were used to design the questions asked for all participants.

This approach can reveal how tailored support mechanisms, interdisciplinary collaboration, and evolving curricula contribute to enhancing research output. Moreover, semi-structured interviews facilitate the comparison of motivational factors across different academic disciplines.

In the Engineering Department, interviews might uncover how access to cutting-edge facilities and industry partnerships drives innovation. In the Business Studies Department, discussions could reveal the role of industry feedback and student engagement in motivating faculty to pursue relevant research. For the Information Technology Department, interviews might highlight how staying abreast of rapid technological changes and adapting to online teaching methods fuels research productivity. This comparative analysis can help identify common motivators and unique departmental influences, providing a holistic understanding of how motivation impacts research productivity across varied academic contexts.

It is worth mentioning that interviews were conducted with each participant by setting up an appointment where they can be interviewed in their own offices. Participants were sectioned into groups in each department, and asked for their consent to use recording devices to record the interviews. Furthermore, I had to make sure that the interviews were being conducted during times where they did not have to teach or give lectures.

4.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data of this study takes up the thematic analysis approach laid down by Braun and Clarke (2006) and integrated with the Nygaard model as the model of guidance for theory. Thematic analysis was used due to its adaptability in identifying qualitative data patterns but being suitable for deductive and inductive investigation. Given that interviews were held and transcribed in Arabic, chief points of the theoretical

framework were translated in a bid to equate coding phases to responses gathered, guaranteeing both linguistic quality and methodological correctness.

4.4.1 Coding Frame

The Nygaard framework has been initially utilized in the current study through the utilization of its main components as main underpinnings through which the data can be coded in a deductive manner. This was guided by the six core themes derived from the model of Nygaard, which gave a unifying structure to the interpretation:

- **Individual Characteristics:** Documents the qualification of the academic, previous research experience and the individual abilities that influence the engagement in research.
- **Identity:** Indicates the extent to which an academic considers himself or herself a researcher, and has this identity (or undermines it) through institutional and peer acknowledgement.
- **Institutional Characteristics:** Investigates institutional factors such as research policies, administrative structures, funds availability and support to scholarly activity.
- **Perceived Environment:** Concentrates on the more global work environment, such as interdepartmental cooperation, the attitude of leadership, and unofficial networks of assistance.
- **Productivity:** Has both quantifiable delivery aspects (publications, presentation at conferences, fundable projects) and perceptions of quality and relevance of output.

These themes combined created a multidimensional, vivid picture of the research landscape of UTAS-A. It is worth mentioning that upon coding the data, each component *within* the Nygaard framework has been explored from an inductive standpoint, in order to reach a specified number of patterns which can reflect faculty members' causes of their motivation to conduct research and the persisting factors which influence their research-based productivity levels. In analytical process, instead of fitting the framework to the data, the fluid interplay between theory and lived experience was honoured and the themes emerged with both theoretical integrity and contextual realism.

4.4.2 Transcription and Familiarisation

I first transcribed the interviews and thoroughly read through the transcripts to become familiar with the content. Based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) format of thematic analysis, the data were initially transcribed and immersed to become sensitive to both its linguistic nuance and depth of content as initial patterns on interview transcripts were examined on several different readthroughs.

All the audio-taped semi-structured interviews were typed and the data were imported into MAXQDA, a qualitative analysis program that enables one to analyse Arabic data: a factor that increased the methodological rigor and quality of analysis. Since the interviews were both conducted and transcribed in Arabic, MAXQDA was chosen due to the compatibility with the language.

The most common coded items of the theoretical framework were translated into Arabic to support the process of coding. All coding was done in Arabic. At a later stage relevant excerpts for each theme were translated into English for the purposes of reporting, which was cross-checked by a bilingual researcher for precision.

The analysis of data started with transcribing and coding answers from the interviews that were organized in the MAXQDA program. The original code was a direct transformation to the raw answers according to which certain details were pronounced by the participants. As an example, coding such a statement as, having a PhD makes a difference in productivity of research, was taken as the PhD as a productivity factor and a research skill. These were then categorized under core codes like higher education as a research enabler, which were further affiliated to such broad thematic heads like Individual characteristics; see Appendix Four. This stage was crucial for gaining an initial understanding of the responses and beginning to identify preliminary patterns and insights. Notes were taken on initial impressions and recurring ideas or concepts.

4.4.3 Systematic Coding

Systematic coding came next, whereby coded text segments were given codes through pre-decided themes of the Nygaard framework. With Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis and Nygaard's approach, the research was able to systematically examine UTAS-A faculty members' perception of the driving forces of research productivity. Through this approach, there was a structured yet flexible way of examining

qualitative data in a manner that yielded rich understanding of both institution-level challenges as well as individuals' motivations under Oman's higher education system.

At first, deductive coding was employed to correspond with the theoretical framework, but inductive coding was also utilized to provide space for unanticipated themes of faculty comments. After the codes were set, data within each category were analyzed and sorted into overall themes inductively to correspond with the research questions and the central concepts of the Nygaard framework with regards to research motivation and productivity.

In this step, data were tabulated with respect to the main parameters identified in the theoretical framework, thus enabling the responses to be categorized with respect to the important variables. Thematic analysis was performed as a deductive analysis of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns in the data in a well-formed, theory-guided approach. This made the Nygaard framework useful in determining the scope of each interview response, where participants were prompted to respond to their perception about the impact of each factor on the enhancement of research productivity levels.

After this, inductive coding was deployed within each of the components of the framework being used, to note patterns within each area of the framework. The themes were adjusted to improve coherence and validity against participants' descriptions of influencing research productivity factors. Each theme was targeted from an inductive standpoint, remaining in parallel with the main components of the Nygaard framework.

All transcripts were thoroughly analysed, and extracts were labeled with one or several of the essential elements of Nygaard. Through the process of coding, both the established categories that were being filled with the corresponding data and emergent, organically developed subthemes were being identified and inductively included. This method assisted in identifying how, precisely, the individual and institutional contexts influenced the experiences of the participants and illuminated the patterns that were not obvious in the theoretical framework by itself.

4.4.4 Refinement and Reporting

The refinement process involved a check and definition of themes to achieve cohesion and validity throughout the dataset. Themes were double-checked against coded extracts as well as the complete dataset, in an effort to ensure their consistency and

applicability. Detailed descriptions were developed for each theme, outlining clearly how they related to faculty members' experiences and perceptions of research motivation.

The themes used in the findings chapter emerged at this stage; they were gradually revised by checking and rechecking them, not only with coded passages but also with the entire data set. It is through this process that the emerging insights were not only descriptive, but analytically thick and theoretically aware. As an example, under the general heading of Institutional Characteristics, the stories of the faculty unexpectedly showed a complexity, e.g., differing research support among departments, or conflicting administrative demands and workload reality. In a similar vein, Identity was not merely a question of whether one considers oneself to be a researcher or not, but of how this identity is developed with regard to the recognition of peers, promotion structure and cultural norms. Such layers could not have been seen without a close reading that was attentive to the contextual realities of being a worker in an institution of higher learning in Oman.

Institutional dimensions were highly present in data. The impressions that emphasized aspects of university ranking, the availability of funding, and importance that institutions placed on research have been coded and formulated into specific codes like the impact of institutional reputation on its research productivity and funding as an enabler of research. These targeted codes brought into the categories of Institutional characteristics and Institutional support and research productivity indicating the structural and policy-related circumstances, affecting the academic output in terms of research, as presented in Appendix Four.

Faculty research productivity was also determined by personal and social aspects. Expressions related to the issue of balancing between teaching, research, and family life were initially categorized into the code of these variables, such as Family Responsibilities and Time Constraints, and then were further elaborated into the variable of Work-life Balance Challenges. These contributed into the developing theme of Perceived Environment that focuses on the contextual realities that work on the academic positions. It is possible to observe this element of the data analysis procedure in Appendix Four in which the codes involving time management and other competing priorities are converted to wider thematic categories.

Finally, there existed as well motivational and identity-based influences in the data. Comments related to incentives on career and cooperation with peers as well as to

attitude to research to such things as My Incentives are Grounded in Career Development or Some Faculty do not see Research as their Primary Job, were categorized into subject oriented codes such as Career Progression as Research Motivation or Attitude to Research as Side Responsibility. These have informed such themes as Identity and Productivity whereby individual perception, institutional reward structures, and collegial environments have emerged as significant influences of research engagement as illustrated in Appendix Four.

As already mentioned, the analysis was conducted in Arabic. At the final stage for reporting, relevant excerpts for each theme were translated into English. These excerpts are the ones which are used in the findings chapter.

4.5 Validity of Data

In order for me to verify the relevance of the data, which included all participants' responses, to the current research approach and theoretical framework, and in order to validate the conceptual framework's factors' significance to the segmentation of data into groups before coding them and generating themes out of these codes, I had to review the interview questions and place each group of questions into a category that coheres with one of the conceptual frameworks' factors.

Moreover, the factors that are established in accordance with the conceptual and theoretical frameworks shall also reflect the predetermined themes based on which the thematic analysis procedure shall be conducted, in order to target findings that can coincide with the research approach and factors in the frameworks that affect faculty members' motivation to produce more research.

This way, I could easily organize the responses that are extracted from each question into similar groups that also cohere to the same respective factors. This procedure can help confirm that the raw dataset is relevant to my theoretical, conceptual frameworks, and my current case study. Additionally, it also means that the data are valid enough and can be confidently used to extract findings that respond to the research questions.

Thirty academics participated in the study from UTAS-A's three core faculties: Engineering, Business Studies, and Information Technology. Male and female and Omani and non-Omani nationalities among the male and female academics were covered

by the participants. They were of different age groups ranging from early-age scholars in their 30s to older-generation scholars in their 30s and/or their 50s or 60s even. Pseudonyms were employed to name all the participants in a way that confidentiality was maintained but some organization could be facilitated in how they reacted. Demographic representativeness enabled a comprehensive variety of thoughts about faculty research productivity and motivation.

For the assurance of the applicability of the data to the research design and conceptual model, the interview questions were categorized under specific factors of the conceptual model before coding and theme analysis. This segmentation made it possible to categorize the responses into meaningful sections that were aligned with the theoretical underpinnings of the study. By making sure that all of the responses could be categorized within the given framework, the integrity of the dataset was fostered, allowing findings to be extracted that directly responded to the research questions. This framework also helped to assure consistency in investigating faculty experiences in order to allow the themes revealed to best portray the variables influencing research productivity.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Anonymity and confidentiality are important considerations in this research as they are in other studies, and they are particularly important concerns in this research. For the purpose of avoiding plagiarism, the works of other scholars and researchers were correctly credited in accordance with the American Psychological Association's referencing style. In the case of interviews, there may be no distinguishing characteristic that can be used to identify any particular participant. Before performing the interviews, it was first determined whether or not the participants are willing to participate. The socially acceptable responses of participants, as well as the participants' limited time, were two more key factors that may cause data to be manipulated. As a result, in order to avoid all of the ethical issues that have been raised, great care was taken at every stage of this research endeavour, and all restrictions, faults, and errors will be documented in the final dissertation.

Confidentiality of the participants, informed consent, and data protection were assured at all stages during the research. To prevent identifiability, no features identifiable to participants were recorded during interviews, hence completely

eliminating the risk of tracing back responses to individual participants. Participants were also provided with pseudonyms to help enhance their identity security, whereby the entire data obtained were secured as confidential. Also, all of the data obtained were stored safely and only reached authorized personnel engaged in the study. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Lancaster University Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, institution, and fulfilled the ethics requirement.

Informed consent from the participants was obtained before proceeding with the interviews. A lucid explanation of the research purpose, procedures, and potential consequences was given to them. Voluntary participation was described, and participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Written permission was taken to make sure that every participant was well informed about rights, such as how data would be used and stored. Participants were also assured that answers would be for research purposes only and not revealed outside the context of the study.

To ensure the safety of data, rigorous procedures of dealing with and data-management were implemented. Interviewed data were recorded and transcript copies stored on safe encrypted files to which the researcher had sole access. In case of being written out, such records were stored in a secure repository, while electronically stored files were anonymized and could not be traced back to original participants. Any direct quotation used in the final research report was carefully screened to avoid subconsciously revealing personal or professional information. Data were also treated with regard to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and institute data handling guidelines.

Throughout research process, there were efforts towards minimizing bias as well as sustaining ethical integrity. The researcher remained transparent and answerable, with no data tampered with or fabricated. Results were based on the raw data gathered, without authenticity or credibility being lost. Ethical considerations were continually reflected on to establish whether they reached the required ethics standards and research principles of the academic and the surrounding social community in which research was being carried out. All these precautions together protected participants' rights and the integrity of the study.

Chapter 5: Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings that were extracted upon analyzing the participants' responses. Accordingly, Chapter 5 is dedicated to outline the finalized, defined, and named themes that were extracted from the deductive thematic analysis procedure in order to understand the aspects through which motivation affects levels of research productivity for faculty members in UTAS-A.

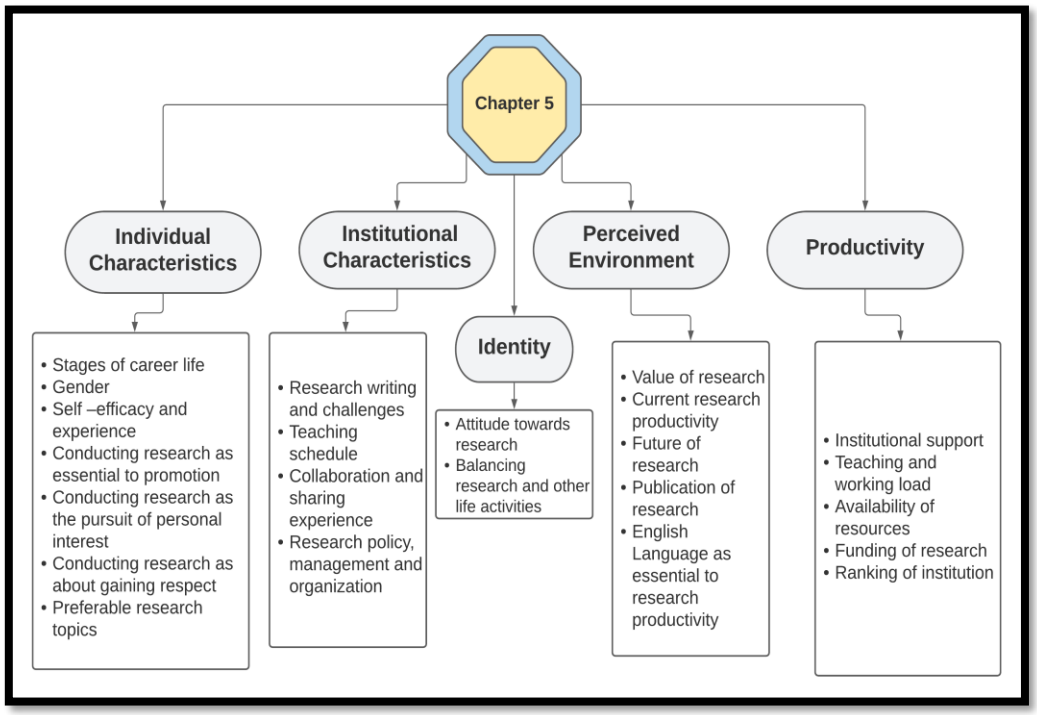

Figure 5.1: Chapter Outline

5.2 Individual Characteristics

Individual characteristics highlighted in this research include stages of career life, gender, self-efficacy and experience, conducting research as essential to promotion, conducting research as the pursuit of personal interest, conducting research as about gaining respect and preferable research topics. These characteristics were highlighted during the deductive thematic analysis process. Furthermore participants discussed how a range of individual characteristics related to their research work and productivity. The following aspects of those individual characteristics are elaborated and discussed in

greater depth, with some quotations from the interviews included where relevant to illustrate the points.

5.2.1 Stages of Career Life

Regarding the stages of career life, participants highlighted the changes that have occurred in their academic careers as a result of changes in skill, worth and performance over the course of their lives. Research productivity varies with different stages of promotion, decreases as academics progress regarding their careers, and is affected by age. Additionally, there is a difference in productivity between tenured and untenured positions. Participants also stated that success in the initial stages of the career produces success in the later stages, and scholars become more accustomed to publishing their articles in different journals. In this respect, one of the participants, Mr H, a full professor from the Business Department stressed that productivity changes during different stages of the career. He stated:

> *"Between 5 and 10 years of my career age, I used to publish many article publications. However, between 20 and 25 years of my career age, productivity declined. However, productivity peaked again when I became a full professor."*

Other respondents from the same department mentioned that the relationship between research productivity and career stage is influenced by changes in the environment, focus, and interest. Mr J, the associate professor in the Engineering Department, said in this regard:

> *"Academics in the mature stage (5-10 years of experience) are most productive in various types of publications, and this is an important period of job tenure and promotion. However, from maturing age to the patriarchs, the relationship between career age and research productivity decreases with longer experience, except academics for book publication."*

In the relationship between age and research productivity, different conclusions were discovered, with the research output of academics in the university increasing dramatically to a high point in their early careers and then progressively declining. The participants unanimously agreed that the greatest boost in research production occurred during the early stages of academic careers, when they were still in untenured or contract posts. Mr J explained:

"Research productivity abruptly increases to a peak point in early career, and then it declines bit by bit…Research productivity increases to a peak point at the initial stages of academics when people are holding untenured positions. However, when scholars get older or have a tenured position, they may have other administrative responsibilities that occupy their time."

In the same vein, there are only a couple of tenure-track instructors in the Department of business administration at the university level. As a result, there is no indirect force that stimulates lecturers to conduct research in order to maintain their positions. Mr S thought on the situation as follows:

> *"We have additional options for receiving promotions that do not need us to conduct research, such as teaching and administration, which are areas in which professors are more interested."*

5.2.2 Gender

Few respondents believed that gender has no impact on their research productivity during their work in higher education institutions in Oman. In other words, most participants from the three departments stated that both male and female staff conduct research in equal measure. For instance, Mr A from the Engineering Department opined that:

> *"In recent years, contribution by female researchers is equivalent to that of their male counterparts. It is unfair to suggest that men are more productive than women in terms of article publication. Women have the same number of refereed journal articles, conference presentations, textbooks, and books as males".*

Adopting the same point of view, Mr N from the Information Technology Department clarified further explained

"In my view, male and female academics are equal in terms of their opportunities

in research writing and publication. They are both exposed to the same circumstances either at work or home."

One participant from the Business Department expressed a different viewpoint. He claimed that gender plays an important role in research productivity and women are less productive than men. Mr R stated:

"Throughout my career, I have observed that the number of papers submitted for publication, grant proposals submitted, and refereed journal articles published or approved for publication by women is lower than that of men. I think this is due to the stress experienced by women due to family responsibilities."

5.2.3 Influence of Prior Experience

The participants believed that academics achieve research writing within their daily professional lives at UTAS-A. The majority of participants from the three departments expressed similar opinions concerning the achievement of success in research writing. In their views, prior experience plays a key role in determining an individual's ability to attain success in research productivity. They believed that academics with low experience fail in their quest to achieve success in research writing because they lack patience, resilience, and perseverance. Moreover, the participants think that members of academic staff with high experience are more likely to attain success in research productivity because they use their expertise to engage in professional collaboration and multi-disciplinary reading lists. In general, individual capability determines one's success, depending on the modifiability and nature of the perceived environment.

One of the participants thought that academics with high expertise are more likely to create the conditions that enhance research writing. Mr J from the Business Department said:

"In this institution setting, when you are engaged professionally, you won't experience difficulties in achieving research writing. Having a high self-efficacy belief about your expertise enables you to overcome the challenges of research writing. I understand that people with low self-efficacy don't use their expertise to engage professionally, leading to failure in achieving research writing."

Around 21 respondents from the three departments revealed that the college rarely provides them with a chance to attend research seminars and workshops to enhance their experience, research abilities and skills. Therefore, some academics might lack the minimum level of experience to do research. Ms M from the Information Technology said:

> *"I do not have experience in research writing, and I expect my college to organize for professional workshops and research seminars. I have ongoing research, but I'm unable to complete it because there are some areas I need to know. However, senior faculty members are very busy. Most of them are busy with post-graduate supervision, managerial tasks, and teaching load."*

Few participants from the Information Technology Department believed that having a PhD influenced academics' research productivity. For example, Mr R declared:

> *"Having a Ph.D. means that one has the skills and capabilities of carrying out research."*

Some other members like Mr C, from the Engineering Department, said that professional meetings such as work-in-progress seminars, research seminars, and workshops enable them to gain experience, develop ideas, hence, motivating them to research further:

> *"Researchers require study workshops and seminars to be organized professionally so that each opportunity gives benefits for participants. I have attended some workshops and seminars, and I can say that the experienced researchers from research institutes encourage us to conduct more researches. Therefore, we need to attend more of such workshops and seminars because they are designed to share research experiences and skills."*

5.2.4 Conducting Research as the Pursuit of Personal Interest

According to the results of this research, some respondents from the three departments, particularly professors who are in late careers, quoted that their personal interest is the inner drive force that urges them to conduct research more than any other factors. For example, Mr M, a full professor from the Business Department, wisely said:

> *"As a full professor, I don't need to be promoted anymore. Most of my motivation comes from my personal interest and student respect. I believe I can publish more*

research papers and transfer my knowledge to students."

Another participant from the same department agreed with the above statement:

"I believe interest satisfaction, the sense of achievement….and appreciation count more compared to the promotion and tenure".

Similarly, some informants from the Engineering Department stated that they are motivated by the inner driving force and the confidence in their abilities. For instance, Mr D explained:

"I'm interested in doing research because I feel the urge to conducting it. I have conducted several research writings, and I believe that my confidence in my abilities is what motivates me. I find myself motivated by the inner drive force. I feel elated when I convert my ideas into research topics. Therefore, the sense of achievement enables me to carry out research writing."

In addition, Mr M from the Information Technology Department supported this opinion saying that:

"I try my best to enhance research productivity due to the gratification I get from scholarly pursuit, stimulation from colleagues and students… I'm motivated by self-determination and self-efficacy to enhance productivity."

5.2.5 Conducting Research is about Gaining Respect

Participants from the three departments stated that conducting research is essential to gaining respect in the higher education institution. For example, Mr C from the Engineering Department commented:

"I need to be respected and appreciated by students and colleagues. As well, I want to publish more journals to be recognized internationally."

Another participant from the Business Department supported the above opinion:

"I try my best to enhance my research productivity due to the gratification I get from scholarly pursuit, stimulation from colleagues and students, as well as the satisfaction of being respected and appreciated by others."

Ms R, an academic in the Information Technology Department also supported this claim:

"I want to enhance my social status through publishing high-quality journals…that will earn me much respect within my institution. My motivation to

conduct research comes from respect and a sense of responsibility."

5.2.6 Preferable Research Topics

Interviewees from the three departments declared that they have genres of academic writing that are most important for them to produce research and feel more motivated to write about. Most of them seem to prefer to produce the genres of writing which are related to their specializations. For example, most of the participants form the Business Department stated that they prefer to write about concepts related to business like marketing. In addition, Mr R from the Information Technology Department mentioned that:

> *"Journal articles are important to produce and publishing refereed journals is valued. In fact, if we write about issues concerning what we encounter in our college every day, this will make our writing more valued and more authentic. Writing about issues related to our students' problems are of high importance as well."*

In addition, all the informants from the Engineering Department stated that the content of subjects supports research productivity. In other words, they claimed that when they are provided with an opportunity to choose the topics of writing, they will be more motivated to get involved in research writing. Mr D from this department explained:

> *"As teachers, we have many problems related to students' discipline and their performance. I think if we conduct research on issues similar to that, it will be more useful and helpful to us and that will enrich our knowledge and help us to deal with our work problems in a more effective way."*

Similarly, Mr C from the same department expressed:

> *"Writing about how to motivate our students to be good in writing and reading is an interesting topic to most of us."*

5.2.7 Summary of Findings on Individual Characteristics

The findings shown above demonstrate how individual attributes can have an impact on research productivity at UTAS-A. It is undeniable that academic staff members are confronted with forces that both encourage and demoralize them in their pursuit of

research. According to the responses demonstrated above, some academics possess research skills and competences that are required for doing research, but others do not.

Participants noted that changes in their academic careers are influenced by evolving skills, worth, and performance over time. They observed that productivity varies at different promotion stages and tends to decline as one ascends the career ladder, with age being a significant factor. Additionally, there is a distinct difference in productivity between those in tenured and untenured positions. Most of them also reported that gender does not impact research productivity in higher education institutions in Oman. Both male and female academics are perceived to conduct research equally, according to the majority of respondents.

Additionally, they emphasized the importance of prior experience in achieving research writing success. Academics with low experience often struggle due to a lack of patience, resilience, and perseverance. In contrast, experienced academics are more successful, leveraging their expertise for professional collaboration and extensive reading. Overall, individual capability and environmental factors significantly influence research productivity. However, some respondents, particularly late-career professors, indicated that personal interest is a major motivating factor for conducting research. This inner drive surpasses other motivating factors in their academic pursuits.

Nevertheless, participants from all three departments stated that conducting research is crucial for gaining respect within higher education institutions. Research output is seen as a key factor in earning professional respect and recognition, as they also expressed a preference for writing about topics related to their specializations. They find these genres of academic writing most important and motivating, indicating a strong inclination to produce research in areas they are most familiar with.

5.3 Identity

Based on the literature, such as (Marques et al., 2024), (Erdem, 2023), and (Carter, 2020), the concept of academic identity must be differentiated from the traditional conceptualization of personal or individual identity. This is because academic identity denotes a holistic and multidimensional construct that involves qualities and characteristics that should be found in academicians who conduct their research according to scientific methods. Consequently, the participants' opinions showed that

involvement in researching is influenced by issues related to their identity especially the academics' attitude towards research and their way to balance their research duty with their other duties.

5.3.1 Attitude towards Research

Participants' attitudes towards research depict a nuanced appreciation of academic identity as a multifaceted concept shaped by institutional expectations, involvement in research, and personal conceptualization of scholarly work. Participants generally perceived research as a necessary component of professional identity, varying in how they positioned themselves in the academic sphere. For instance, Engineering Department respondents regarded research as not only a professional responsibility but also the main impeller that supplemented their pedagogic mandate. Even when they had heavy workloads, they held steadfast to their research identities, dictating that scholarly pursuits drive their intellectual interests and result in institutional success. Expressing that opinion, Mr A clarified:

> *"Research inspires me to teach and keeps my intellectual interest alive. It should be taken as a part of my career. It is indeed very essential for the development of my profession. Therefore, I think every academic must take researching more seriously."*

Business Department faculty members further possessed a strong research-focused academic identity that underscored the personal fulfillment that comes with scholarly work. They indicated that research is essential to their career development and personal growth, reaffirming their academic interest. For instance, Mr M stated that:

> *"I think conducting research is very self-satisfying. Research plays a significant role in academics' personal lives as well as their working lives."*

This means that research cannot be considered a mere institutional requirement in a given HEI but something that is rewarding as part of a scholar identity. Self-gratification through research work means that those faculty with a strong research identity derive intrinsic value from their research work and, therefore, reaffirm commitment to scholarship.

On the other hand, faculty members in Information Technology Department experienced a more restrictive research identity with structural constraints such as heavy

course loads, lack of adequate funds, and few institutional resources. These constraints allowed for little of their attempt to integrate research entirely into their professional identity, and therefore some regarded it as a secondary or discretionary activity. Clarifying this idea, Mr A stated that:

> *"Researching cannot be considered as a part of our job since we are not provided with adequate support like availability of resources, less teaching load and financial grants and incentives."*

5.3.2 Balancing Research and Other Life Activities

Understanding the importance of life balance is critical in determining a faculty member's ability to persevere and succeed under the pressure of difficult academic obligations. In general, the participants indicated a variety of viewpoints on how they should balance their work with one another. In other words, faculty members from each department expressed concern that duties like educating students, conducting research, and dealing with family obligations would limit the ability of academics to devote sufficient time to needs that they consider critical to their own development.

The struggle of reconciling research and other areas of life emerged as a strong predictor of academic identity. The majority of participants expressed worry that academic responsibilities, particularly the demands of research, seemed to conflict with personal and family obligations. Members of the Engineering Department attributed the conflict between work and personal life, with others experiencing emotional dissonance caused by work stress. Explaining this point, Mr E stated:

> *"I have a difficult time managing pressure from the competitive work environment with family, therefore, lessening the capacity to attain life balance. Many are the times when I experience high levels of emotional dissonance resulting in dissatisfaction with work and interfering with family relationships."*

Faculty members in the Business Department discussed work-life balance as an individual audit of academic identity, recognising that they needed to manage external pressures if they were to have a successful academic career. Women academics, in particular, reported greater challenge in maintaining a research identity because they were likely to encounter additional expectations around family responsibilities. Ms B from this department stated that:

"I'm unable to achieve a healthy work-life balance due to work and family responsibilities. I love doing research, but I have no time to conduct it since I'm required by the institution to each and, at the same time, my husband is expecting me to take care of my young children. I always experience burnout because I'm required to spend more hours in teaching compared to decreased hours that I spend with my family. As a result of these demands, I don't have time for leisure activities, and also I don't get enough sleep."

Furthermore, some participants from the Information Technology Department expressed similar concerns highlighted by academics from both the Engineering Department and the Business Department. However, informants from this department were more flexible compared to academics from the other departments. All male members from the Information Technology Department reported having a positive and collegial environment. Two female members noted that open communication and mutual respect had helped them in discovering an ideal balance in their work and life roles. Three informants from this department claimed that they had their mentors who helped them in career guidance and support where they stated that:

"Mentors are important because they offer advice on scholarly dissemination, guidance for enhancing research trajectory and providing networking opportunities."

Stressing the same idea, Mr O said:

"I understand the challenges that come with balancing work and family roles. However, I have committed to self-care and work-place strategies that reinforce strain resilience and enhance satisfaction and the capacity to achieve work-life balance. I find time to exercise and sleep well. That enhances my emotional well-being and flexibility. I have sought out senior faculty members to guide me on how to improve my work-life balance."

4.3.3 Summary of Findings on Identity

Generally speaking, the studies reflect that academic identity is negotiated not fixed and determined by institutional sponsorship, allocation of workload, and coping ability of individuals. The research scholars with strong research identities weave scholarship into professional endeavour and regard it as integral to their professional as

well as personal lives. Those experiencing structural demands or multiple demands, however, may be lacking a cohesive academic identity and will place research on the periphery or consider research unlikely. The presence of mentorship and strategic self-care habits can also serve as critical mechanisms for the sustenance of academic engagement, evidencing that faculty are indeed negotiating their identities against institutional and individual demands.

5.4 Institutional Characteristics

According to the findings, faculty members were equally motivated and demotivated by their perception of the ACT's environment. It was because of their own behaviour or activities that faculty members preferred the perceived atmosphere. Members of the ACT's personnel have formed social and learning interactions with one another and with other members of the institution. Individuals create social institutions that allow them to exert control over their own lives, on a broad level. Believers in their own ability to succeed play an important part in the creation, organization, and management of the environment, which has an impact on developmental paths. During an interview about how they achieve research writing within this environment in their daily professional lives, the participants discussed issues such as the current research writing activities and the challenges they face, academics' teaching schedule, collaboration and sharing experience at their HEI, research policy and management, and organization implemented in their HEI, and the research writing policy, management, and organization implemented in their HEI.

5.4.1 Research Writing and Challenges

Participants from ACT's three departments said that academics who are actively involved in their job bring a broader knowledge base from their professional contacts into the perceived environment, which is beneficial to all. Based on the results, the majority of participants claimed that the institution's administration was preventing them from pursuing their objectives to use their talents to engage in professional research writing. For instance, Ms H from the Information Technology Department directed this idea with her statement:

"The conditions at this institution are not favourable to achieve quality research. Our college does not encourage or equip faculty members to conduct research. We always experience heavy working load and never get any support from the institution."

However, two participants from the same department have a different view. These members seemed to look for opportunities to overcome challenges within their surrounding environment. They seem to use their skills to engage in professional collaboration leading to success. Mr J suggested:

"I have achieved success in quality research by committing myself to question and exploring the wider accepted beliefs and ideas. I have collaborated with other professionals to develop strategies and expectations on how to enhance research productivity. Besides, I read across multiple disciplines to gain a deep understanding of research productivity."

Faculty members from the Business Department shared their strategies for dealing with the issue and overcoming obstacles, as well as the steps they have done to improve their chances of success in research writing. Participants from the Engineering Department, for example, identified several issues that prompted them to conduct their own investigation. In this department, the vast majority of respondents stated that their department gave them little support when they began interested in research. Full professors and associate professors worked in this department, according to the informants. As a result, they had previous expertise in research-related tasks. While studying in Europe, two of the respondents became active in research projects of their own. The two participants talked about their experiences and expressed gratitude to their respective departments for being supportive. For example, Ms H explained:

"I was working abroad before I came to this institution. Our department there was supportive. Every researcher was provided with every facility required to conduct research. Teaching load was low. The university funded the Research Department organized many professional meetings and research seminars to enhance research productivity. We were given enough time for research activities. Here, researchers are not motivated enough to carry out research."

Nonetheless, the responders who have been conducting their study locally have shared their experiences, with many of them condemning local higher education institutions for doing too little in the way of research. Academics complained that they

were under-trained, under-funded, and put to an excessive teaching load, which resulted in them being demotivated in their work. Seminars and workshops to increase the quality of research output were rarely organized by departments. The majority of the participants found it difficult to gain access to scholarly resources. Mr A argued:

> *"I experienced many challenges when I became involved in researching. Nobody in the department bothered to motivate me. I spend many hours preparing lessons, lectures, and marking papers. As a result, I had little time for reading material and writing. Senior faculty members never organized research training. Scholarly resources were insufficient, and the institution provided no funds for research. The library lacked good and updated academic journal articles. The institution has started acknowledging research activities and productivity to stimulate research."*

In addition, participants from all three departments provided examples of times when they worked on research writing that they felt were particularly stressful or difficult to perform successfully. A number of obstacles were identified as causing difficulty in the delivery of research writing assignments. Some of the problems that have made it difficult for academics to perform high-quality research include a lack of training, financing, and resources, a severe workload, a lack of research self-efficacy, and a lack of teamwork in research.

Furthermore, the responders from the Business Department expressed their own personal experiences with the problems they had when delivering research writing assignments. According to an example from one of the interviews, the majority of the participants in this department also identified problems such as funding and teaching workload as some of the concerns that stood out as stressful or difficult to perform excellent research as being among the most challenging:

> *"ACT has faced a shortage of funding from the government, leading to its academic staff feeling a state of despair in conducting quality research."*

According to the statistics, the issue of money was indicated as the most difficult challenge in doing research by six respondents from the same department. They asserted that UTAS-A had not provided them with funding for research purposes. Mr H stated:

> *"Our institution has an insufficient income to fund research activities. The little amount offered by the college, sometimes, is not enough to complete a research project. That has demotivated me and other academics who are willing to conduct*

research and enhance productivity. For instance, last year, I started working on some research writing. I asked the college to fund my research. However, the college did not provide any financial support. As a result, it was difficult to deliver the work. That stressed me a lot. Luckily, I applied for a grant and won it. The grant helped me in completing my research writing. Therefore, I cannot start conducting research, depending on the funds from this college."

Other respondents stated that the most significant obstacle to conducting research and increasing productivity is a lack of time. They claimed that the college was putting them under pressure to increase the amount of research they were doing. In other words, they admitted that they spend a significant amount of time teaching. This results in a lack of available time for study. For example, Mr B clarified:

"I have to teach many courses per semester. Therefore, I spend most of the time preparing lesson plans, teaching, and assessing assignments. As a result, I can't find time for research activities. I have seen my colleagues giving up their research writing before completing them due to pressure and immense workload. Doing research requires time for reading material and writing. In this environment, it is difficult to teach and, at the same time, conduct research."

Furthermore, the informants from the Engineering Department identified a number of obstacles that hindered their ability to boost their research output in the future. They also asserted that finance, teaching load, self-efficacy, and scholarly resources all played a greater influence in diminishing their incentive to increase research productivity than any other factor. Mr M explained:

"The libraries in this college do not have enough resources that are decent and updated for research writing. Most of the time, I have an idea, but I can't make it a research topic due to the unavailability of research material. There are inadequate reference books in the libraries. Sometimes back, I started to research, but I was stressed out and demotivated due to the shortage of reference books in our library. I was forced to borrow reference books from another institution to complete my research writing."

Furthermore, the vast majority of respondents from the Department of Information Technology say that they encountered a number of difficulties when they were tasked with the task of producing a research paper. Members mentioned a lack of funding and training as well as a lack of scholarly resources and a hefty teaching load as

some of the difficulties they were dealing with at the time. An example of this belief is clear in this excerpt from Mr N:

> *"I became involved in researching at the institution and the department where members of staff don't share ideas and knowledge to increase research motivation. Senior faculty members do not motivate their juniors to increase research productivity. Instead, they pressurize researchers to deliver quality work without motivating them. No financial and administrative support and researchers feel drained at the end of the day. I hope that the institution and the department are creating policies that will solve problems that may face researchers."*

The respondents who became interested in research at local HEIs reported that their experience was devastating since the institutions and departments are solely focused on teaching, while research at local HEIs is not prioritized, as inferred from the study's findings. It was also mentioned that professors have a hefty teaching load and that research is funded on a case-by-case basis by their respective institutions. There are no professional meetings held, and there are no research workshops held as a result of this. Mr A expressed:

> *"I experienced many difficulties when I became involved in researching. The institution and the department have organized a few workshops and seminars. I never got an opportunity to meet experienced researchers to share my knowledge and ideas with them. I had a heavy teaching load. Despite these difficulties, senior faculty members put us under pressure to deliver quality research. The scholarly articles were inadequate, and no one bothered about them."*

Some respondents also quoted several setbacks that have hindered them from enhancing research productivity. For instance, the research climate was one of the factors that the respondents said to increase their motivation. Mr R stated:

> *"I have talked to some of my colleagues working at HEIs in the UK who have told me that they are motivated to conduct research by their respective institutions. However, UTAS-A is different. The teaching load is heavier, no sufficient funds, and no one seems to care whether we conduct research or not. We cannot hold a discussion with experienced academic researchers because we have no time. All the time, we are busy teaching. Therefore, improving research skills become a challenge."*

5.4.2 Teaching Schedule

Most participants from the three departments claimed that they suffer from a heavy teaching schedule and consider that as a serious challenge. For example, Mr J from the Engineering Department stated:

> *"My timetable is not organized. It always starts at 8 am and sometimes continues until 6pm. That is a problem that I have to encounter most of the academic year. Such an inflexible timetable prevent me from involving in any research activity."*

Furthermore, the majority of faculty members from the Department of Information Technology stated that the perceived environment had affected their self-efficacy beliefs in research writing as a result of the tight academic calendar and timetable, which limited their ability to be flexible. They all agreed that changing the instructional schedule reduces their confidence in their ability to be adaptable. Supporting this claim, Mr O:

> *"ACT regularly changes their teaching schedule, and that does not favour members of staff at the business department."*

Furthermore, a faculty member from the Business Department expressed his disappointment that UTAS-A has failed to fully capitalize on the expertise of faculty members across the department. She observed that using faculty expertise was a good fit with self-efficacy views, which she shared. The Business Department's faculty members, according to J, were feeling helpless because the perceived environment never provided them with an opportunity to contribute their experience in research writing. Ms H:

> *"Most of the time, the college imposes policies that make it difficult to achieve research writing. Changing the working schedule, for instance, hinders our flexibility leading to low self-efficacy in research writing."*

In addition, Ms E from the same department stated that:

> *"The difficult thing that I experience in changing the schedule is trying to be flexible. When the schedule is changed, it affects preparation, facilitator credibility, and the achievement of research productivity."*

5.4.3 Collaboration and Sharing Experience

All of the participants from the three departments agreed on the importance of a positive research environment as a means of transmitting research motivation to all of the scholars in the department. It is also of great value to them to collaborate and share research writing experience with one another. Mr J. from the Business Department, for example, claimed that:

> *"I usually enjoy a positive research climate when conducting research. A good research climate within a department is necessary. When I was studying for my master's degree, my supervisor organized a good collaboration among the student community. Actually, he developed an association between academics, post-doctorates, and postgraduate students. We worked well in such a supportive community, and this increased our research motivation. I wish all academics in my department had the same opportunity to share ideas."*

Ms H declared:

> *"I believe the institution should give us an opportunity to showcase our expertise in research writing."*

Furthermore, one of the participants from the Engineering Department stated that research collaboration is what encourages her to carry out her own investigation. Mr M noted:

> *"I love working with others to explore new knowledge and ideas. Therefore, I was motivated by collaborating with other colleagues from Europe to conduct research and publish peer-reviewed articles. I have published several journals, and that has enabled me to conduct more research with my colleagues from other institutions across the globe. Networking and collaboration are key to my quest to carry out research and enhance productivity. Partnership increases the experience, and this drives one to increase research output."*

Supporting the same viewpoint, Mr A from the Information Technology Department insisted:

> *"When a group of academics work as one team sharing the same objective, they feel more secure, more motivated and more competent to produce a good piece of research writing. Cooperation is a key to success in research writing and this is what we lack here in my institution."*

5.4.4 Research Policy, Management and Organization

All participants from the three departments at the UTAS-A tended to be unsatisfied with their institution's research policy, according to the findings of the research study. They argued that the UTAS-A needed a robust research policy, as well as a strong incentive system, to be successful. They also insisted that research productivity at UTAS-A must be improved through the implementation of effective research leadership and management, the development of a research collaboration system, the identification of appropriate sources of research funding, and the availability of sufficient and easily accessible information sources.

When asked about research in particular, the majority of Business Department personnel responded by stating that the school does not have a designated research unit, but rather that some faculty members are occasionally active in the organization of research activities. For example, Mr J provided an explanation:

> *"Currently, only voluntary academics sometimes manage research writing and related events. If there is a special committee with less working load organizing research activities, my institution will be more productive."*

In addition, Mr N from the Information Technology Department expressed concern about the lack of a clear policy that organizes research at UTAS-A:

> *"The coordination between the leadership and the management in the institution and the department is weak. The institution lacks policies to inspire the development of the research activities at the faculty level. As a result, the heads of department are powerless despite them sitting on the institutional research committee."*

Furthermore, Ms J from the same department expressed the same sentiments and expressed dissatisfaction with the availability of research resources in the department. For instance, she pointed:

> *"We have a shortage of research books in our institution and reference books and academic journal articles are not easily accessible."*

In a similar vein, the majority of respondents from the Engineering Department indicated that the institution does not have a clear policy regarding research development, either at the institutional level or at the departmental level. In their responses, it appears that the respondents believe that the absence of research groups and professional

meetings at the departmental level is a shred of clear evidence that the leadership and administration at the institution are inadequate. For instance, Mr H conferred with her statement:

> *"This institution and the department have not developed a research policy that motivates academic staff to conduct research. At the departmental level, no research groups or professional meetings conducted regarding research productivity. Therefore, the leadership at the institutional and departmental levels is poor."*

Few participants from this department, on the other hand, noted that the institution, in collaboration with the department, had concentrated its efforts on developing a research agenda and an innovation policy. These initiatives are intended to improve the research capabilities of the UTAS-A. In order to increase productivity, the department intends to host more research seminars and professional gatherings in the future. Supporting this idea, Mr R said:

> *"Despite the current dissatisfying situation of research in my institution, it seems that a lot of hard work is being done to make a clear research system to organize researching process in the near future. However, the research leadership and management is still positioned at the centre of institutional governance."*

On the other hand, one participant from the Business Department expressed the opinion that the institution and the department had implemented institutional research and innovation strategies focused at solidifying the quality and quantity of the research output. Explaining that, Mr A said:

> *"The intuition has a research policy urging academics to conduct research in a more organized way. However, this policy is not seriously implemented."*

The perspectives expressed in this sub-section by three departments express concern regarding the levels of research motivation that UTAS-A's academics are able to attain. While some faculty members reported their happiness with the research they were performing, others stated their dissatisfaction with the research they were undertaking. Researchers found that if there was sufficient research motivation, academics would be inspired to carry out their own investigations.

5.4.5 Summary of Findings on Institutional Characteristics

Participants from ACT's three departments indicated that active academic engagement brings valuable knowledge from professional contacts into the institution. However, many participants reported that the institution's administration hinders their ability to pursue professional research writing, preventing them from fully utilizing their talents. Moreover, most participants from the three departments reported that they face a heavy teaching schedule, which they consider a significant challenge to their professional responsibilities and research productivity.

Additionally, all participants expressed dissatisfaction with ACT's current research policy. They argued for the necessity of a robust research policy and a strong incentive system to boost research productivity. They called for improved research leadership and management, a collaboration system, better funding sources, and accessible information resources to enhance research outcomes at UTAS-A, and they also unanimously agreed on the importance of a positive research environment to inspire motivation among scholars. They emphasized the value of collaboration and sharing research writing experiences with colleagues to enhance their research efforts.

5.5 Perceived Environment

As previously stated, higher education institutions and academics are under increasing pressure to be more productive in their research endeavours, particularly in the social sciences. As a result, the importance of scholarly productivity and the publication output of academic personnel should be highlighted.

5.5.1 Value of Research

In accordance with accounts provided by informants from the three departments, research does not receive high priority in the UTAS-A, and career aspirations are not connected with research production. Mr A from the Engineering Department provided an explanation:

> *"In my opinion, both institutions and departments emphasize teaching more than research. If the research was emphasized in this institution, I would spend more*

time participating in research activities. The goals of career progression in this college do not incentivize research."

In the same respect, Mr M from the Information Technology Department stated:

In my view, I do not feel that research is being focused on in my department as it is supposed to. My employer is not asking me about my research production as he does with my teaching and my working hours."

Furthermore, similarly, Mr E from the Business Department expressed:

"I believe that my institution does not value researching. Indeed, other duties such as teaching and performance evaluation are emphasized more than research."

As a result, the vast majority of the participants in this study, when asked about the importance of research and the support provided in UTAS-A, felt that their institution does not place a high priority on or support research in the manner that it should.

A few participants, on the other hand, were keen to point out that their department is a little more accommodating. The majority of those who responded agreed that the institution provides little support for research activities. For example, Mr F from the Engineering Department pointed out that:

"My department is more supportive because senior faculty members share knowledge and discuss research ideas with their juniors. Seniors from this department have always been motivating fellow faculty members to engage in research activities. To be fair and transparent, the faculty use research productivity as a criterion for academic promotion."

Mr H from the same department agreed with this assertion, stating that both the institution and the department place a high importance on research. This respondent said that his colleagues had high expectations of what the institution could provide. He asserted that the organization places a high priority on research and that it provides non-financial incentives such as attendance at professional conferences and subscriptions to relevant publications to encourage researchers to pursue their interests. To be more specific, he shared his thoughts:

"I think that both the institution and department value research. The institution offers support to productive researchers. I have done research, and the institution provided me with an opportunity to attend a research seminar and also subscribed to relevant journals. My colleagues expect financial incentives from

the institution, which is difficult to get. Productive researchers are always rewarded within the institution and department."

5.5.2 Current Research Productivity

The responses to the semi-structured interview questions revealed that all participants from the three departments at UTAS-A were extremely dissatisfied with the current level of research production at UTAS-A, according to the results of the analysis. Mr R from the Engineering Department, for example, claimed that:

"I think the level of productivity at this institution is very low. I hope the institution will understand the importance of research productivity and allocate more funds to research activities."

Explaining the same view, Mr K from the Business Department declared:

"Unfortunately, the current level of research productivity in this institution is dissatisfying. Most people seem to focus on teaching and testing and they rarely discuss research production. To me, academics are not seriously encouraged to conduct research."

5.5.3 Future of Research

However, despite all of the difficulties they described, the respondents insisted that they wanted to be more productive in the future, according to the findings of this study. Some of the participants stated that they would like to become more active in research writing in the coming years, and that they hoped to publish in some journals and gain international recognition as a result. For example, Mr J from the Engineering Department made the following observation:

"Although our institution prefers teaching to research writing and I find it difficult to increase research output due to a heavy teaching load, I'm aiming to be more productive in the future. Over the next 2-3 years, I want to carry out more research to meet my expectations."

Emphasizing the same point, Mr M from the Business Department announced:

"I hope the institution will value research more in the future. Besides, I think the management will organize research seminars and professional meetings to enhance productivity in the future."

Furthermore, Ms G from the Information Technology Department stated:

"The current level of productivity is low due to several challenges faced by this institution. The aspiration for future productivity is to improve research output. I'm aiming to be research productive in the future. Over the next 2-3 years, I want to get a job promotion and seek more recognition."

Mr L from this department commented, in a similar vein, that the future of research at this university is good:

"I'm aiming to be more productive in the future. Over the next 2-3 years, I want to enhance my social status through publishing high-quality journals."

5.5.4 Publication of Research

It has been discovered that local resources such as community resources, policy papers published at conferences and technical reports published at universities and colleges, and scholarly articles published in scholarly journals typically disseminate regionally relevant information that should be of interest to institutional and government leaders. Providing additional technical assistance and financing is necessary so that local journals can be more effective in informing policy decisions.

Mr H from the Business Department reflected upon the role played by internal journals to advance research, as:

"Producing internal journals play an important role because they disseminate regionally relevant data which requires further research. Producing a local journal is a step in which one asserts whether he has the capability of pursuing international journals."

Some participants, on the other hand, indicated that the field of publication and perceptibility of Oman academic works in international journals is hampered by obstacles such as bias in regard to Oman research productivity and high subscription rates, among others. Furthermore, low-quality internal journals have been attacked for their publication. Several participants stated that low-quality journals are the most difficult obstacle to overcome in order to be recognized by the appointments board during the promotion process, which was supported by one response from the Business Department. That has been a source of concern because they are demotivated as a result of their publication. The production of internal diaries, according to some sources, is a waste of

time because they are not recognized by anybody else. Mr E from the Engineering Department explained:

> *"Producing local journals is a waste of time because no one values them. Some individuals claim that publishing local journals is essential, but when we face appointments board, they tell us that they recognize external journals and not local ones. Local journals are usually not valued because boards allege that they do not meet the minimum requirements."*

In addition, faculty members from the Department of Information Technology appeared to prefer the publication of books over other forms of publication. Mr B from this department clarified:

> *"Producing books is essential because books give detailed content, unlike articles."*

They also submitted study topics that they believe are essential and should be pursued further in the future. These include technology and innovation management, resource management, and sustainable development, as well as corporate responsibility, ethics, and accountability, to name a few topics. Ms D from this department expressed:

> *"Publication of books among members was important since books give information that builds corporate enthusiasm and supports ongoing education."*

However, although faculty members agreed that the publication of books is important, they blamed the poor quality of local books on funding. Ms C stated:

> *"Producing local books is important, but what is happening here now is that individuals run out of funds and UTAS-A still grapples with financial challenges."*

Faculty members from the Department of Information Technology expressed a preference for the production of e-journals or e-books, according to their opinions. The members praised this publication mostly because they believed it provided a simple approach for all users, regardless of their geographic location, to be able to obtain the information. A more diverse audience is resulting, according to the participants, from the release of electronic journals and electronic books around the world. Authors and readers benefit from improved communication and collaboration as a result of electronic publication. Scientific visualization, data mining and knowledge discovery, big data analysis, health information systems, multimedia and gaming technology, biomedical applications, and bioinformatics and computational biology were among the research

themes that academics were interested in. However, although praising the release of e-books and e-journals, other respondents attributed the difficulties in publishing to the internet and energy, rather than to the books themselves.

Mr J thought that:

> *"The challenge is the internet, though the university has connectivity, it is slow and sometimes off. Besides, funding is another challenge because, at some point, a person is required to purchase equipment that requires a lot of money. A researcher can take long getting such equipment, yet the time designed for the project is running out."*

5.5.5 English Language is Essential to Research Productivity

In the fields of science and technology, English has long been recognized as a critical tool for research and international publication. However, even though English is the language of teaching at UTAS-A, Ms E from the Information Technology Department stated that certain academics' level of English language proficiency is not as high as that required for research writing in some cases. She noted:

> *"I think that a language can be a barrier to research productivity. I mean some of the staff's English language in my department is not good enough to be a researcher and I think if research is written in Arabic or any other languages, it might not be recognized in the international arena. To me, conducting research in a language other than English may prevent the work from being published. Therefore, in my view, research productivity in my department is influenced by low level of English."*

5.5.6 Summary of Findings on Perceived Environment

Based on the aforementioned, it can be concluded that participants from the three departments indicated that research is not a high priority at UTAS-A, and career aspirations are generally not linked to research production. Moreover, all participants expressed extreme dissatisfaction with the current level of research production at UTAS-A, highlighting a significant area of concern. On the other hand, despite the challenges, respondents expressed a desire to be more productive in research in the future. Some

participants mentioned aspirations to increase their research activities, publish in journals, and gain international recognition.

Consequently, local resources such as community resources, policy papers, technical reports, and scholarly articles are valuable for disseminating regionally relevant information. There is a need for additional technical assistance and funding to make local journals more effective in informing policy decisions.

However, when it comes to linguistic resources and skills, it can be concluded that although English is the language of instruction at UTAS-A, one participant from the Information Technology Department noted that some academics lack the necessary proficiency in English for effective research writing.

5.6 Productivity

According to the findings of this study, all of the respondents from the three departments discussed their experiences with regard to the type of assistance they have received from their department, as well as what the institution and their specific department are doing to encourage research. They also stated that if their university provides them with the necessary support, academics would be more active and motivated to do their jobs and other extra-curricular activities, and vice versa. Accordingly, the respondents claimed that factors such as institutional support, teaching load, availability of resources, and research funding had an impact on research output at their institution.

5.6.1 Institutional Support

The thirty academics who took part in the study expressed a variety of opinions about the support for research that they received from their institutions and departments. According to certain members, both the institution and the faculty provide an adequate level of support for research efforts. The vast majority of participants, on the other hand, consider that neither the institution nor the department provide enough financial support for research. Mr A from the Information Technology Department expressed his support for this point of view:

"Here, the institution and the department do not place emphasis on research. The emphasis is to make sure a member of staff is subjected to a heavy teaching load.

Failing to attend a class constitutes a penalty, but failing to do research amounts to nothing. No senior member from our department will encourage you to engage in research."

In addition, some Business Department respondents stated that the absence of institutional support is the most difficult obstacle they face in their efforts to increase research writing. For example, Ms G clarified:

"I have tried my best to increase research productivity, but the institution has been doing little to motivate academic staff who want to conduct research...I can't undertake any research writing in this institution because the leadership is not motivating me."

Only Mr H from the Engineering Department, on the other hand, indicated that both the institution and the department provided research support. He made the following statement:

"We receive some institutional and departmental support when doing research. The institution has emphasized research, thus, leading to motivation in carrying out research. The department and the institution have acknowledged research activities and productivity because productive researchers are always rewarded. I was given a study leave for one year to do my MA studies."

The perspectives of academics about institutional support for research are reflected in the notions presented above. The majority of participants stated that the UTAS-A does not place a strong focus on research and, as a result, does not give academics with the resources they need to carry out their research. The majority of those who answered the survey said they felt that both their institution and their department occasionally rewarded productive researchers to some level.

5.6.2 Teaching and Working Load

The majority of participants from the three departments, particularly those from the Business Department and the Engineering Department, thought that their institution does not support them in conducting research because of the heavy teaching load they are expected to bear. Faculty members from the Engineering Department, for example, have stated that their work and teaching loads are a factor that puts them under strain and prevents them from undertaking research. They said that they did not have enough time

to devote to research because they had to work seven hours a day to support their families. Mr M clarified his position in support of this:

> *"I have to lecture on many courses per semester. As a result, I have to spend so many hours preparing lectures, planning lessons, and marking papers. I know the significance of the research, but I can't find enough time to conduct it as expected. In my department, every member is overworked since we have to lecture English to all learners of this college. Conducting research requires a lot of time for writing and reading materials. Nevertheless, it is hard to teach and conduct research at the same time."*

In accordance with the data, other faculty members agreed with Mr M's assertion that they are overworked and, as a result, find it difficult to complete research projects.

5.6.3 Availability of Resources

According to the findings of the research, all of the respondents stated that the institution only has a limited number of academic publications and reference books that are necessary for researchers, and that the sources of information are not freely available to the public. As a result, they stated that a scarcity of academic materials has a negative impact on their research motivation. According to informants from the Information Technology Department, the UTAS-A library is unable to meet research demands due to the restricted number of scholarly resources available. As a result, their research passion and research output were reduced as a result of this. Expressing that Mr A stated:

> *"Our college does not have many good and updated resources for research. Many are the times I have an idea but can't develop it into a research topic due to the lack of academic materials. There are few reference books in the libraries. If the college had put a lot of research resources in the library, more academics and I would be motivated to conduct research."*

According to this statement, it can be indicated that there is a lack of up-to-date and diversified academic material to facilitate research activities. This implies availability of up-to-date journal articles, academic texts, research databases, and electronic libraries with extensive literature to help in topic development. Further, sophisticated software, research allowances, and university support facilities can be considered essential resources facilitating high-quality research.

Mr J from the Business Department declared:

> *"The sources of information are academic journal articles and reference books. These sources of information are not easily accessible because our library has limited sources."*

In addition, Mr Z from the Engineering Department offered:

> *"The sources of information are scholarly articles but are limited in this institution. It is difficult to access them. The institution has not done enough to subscribe researchers to relevant articles."*

As a result, the participants stressed the importance of having access to scientific journals in order to stay abreast of new study findings. The importance of research databases and foreign publications, in particular, was highlighted by those who responded to the survey.

5.6.4 Funding of Research

The findings of the semi-structured interviews revealed that one of the elements that motivated respondents to engage in research was the availability of research funding sources. To put it another way, all participants from the three departments insisted that a lack of cash was the most significant obstacle they faced. Some have even stated that obtaining financial assistance to attend a conference is quite difficult. As a result, the difficulties in obtaining financing support demotivate them from continuing their research efforts.

Participants from the Business Department, for example, stated that research money adds to both the quality and the quantity of research productivity, and they stated that the research funds provided by the college were insufficient to stimulate them to do more research. Mr A was of view that:

> *"Research funding usually contributes to research motivation. In fact, if our researches are funded, we will be certainly motivated to continue carrying out research. However, our college, at least, as far as I know, does not provide any financial support to research projects. This usually discourages us to conduct research."*

In addition, some respondents from the Information Technology Department stated that their colleagues are also experiencing challenges in obtaining research funding for their projects. Mr B said:

> *"I used to spend my funds on attending conferences. But since I engaged in other personal activities, I can't afford the expenses for conferences anymore. The college is not willing to fund such beneficial conferences. Whenever any member asks for funding support, the college's management promises to consider them for future funding. Unfortunately, our pleas are not considered."*

All respondents responded that the government does provide financing for research on occasion, but that it is not easily available to the public. Mr R, a member of the Engineering Department, made the offer:

> *"The department has a research group that motivate its members to carry out research and help them get governmental financial support. Although the internal grants are very limited, personally, I have benefited from a grant from the government."*

In addition, some participants highlighted financial incentives as motivators that have assisted them in improving their research writing and obtaining research funding for their projects. To put it another way, financial support from grants encourages academics to conduct original research. Mr N clarified her point of view by saying:

> *"I have worked on a research project where I was funded by a research organization. I received a grant, and I felt motivated because everything was catered for financially. That experience helped me to be research productive. Grants are crucial because they motivate a researcher to conduct high-quality research in her area of interest."*

5.6.5 Ranking of Institution

In the Business Department, just two participants responded that the ranking of their school has an impact on the amount of research produced. For instance, Mr D commented:

> *"I have the skills and capability to conduct research. However, due to the low ranking of the institution, publishing your work is difficult. I could not carry out research so long as I am working in this institution." Another informant*

supported that idea and stated, The ranking of this college affects research productivity. You cannot compare this college with other international colleges like Oxford. A fully domesticated academic staff from this college runs a risk of not publishing his or her work. Academic staff from this college have stagnated in lower ranks, but people who have gone overseas have been giving more opportunities to publish their work."

The statement indicates the impact of ranking and institution reputation on productivity and identity as scholars, and the research was able to substantiate. The faculty responded with fear that a low rank in their institution prevents them from being published in their research, sustaining a bounded academic identity in which scholarly engagement depends on outside evaluation. The findings indicate that researchers who view themselves as researchers struggle to transfer their expertise to successful publications due to institutional aspects, such as the lack of global fame and lesser chances for collaboration. This means that the ability of faculty members to conduct research depends not only on their capabilities but also heavily on their institution and the world academic order.

Further, the study finds that the staff view international experience as a fundamental element in constructing their research career. The contrast between the university of the informants and reputed international universities like Oxford by the informants reveals the disparity in research opportunities such that academics working in lower-ranking universities feel they are at a disadvantage in publication and professional advancement. The research suggests institutional standing has an impact on mobility among scholars with those attaining international affiliations being more likely to gain access to opportunities for research and promotion more effectively. This makes the possibility of faculty members experiencing rank stagnation in lower-ranked institutions such that some are inclined to disregard conducting research as career progression appears a mirage. The research highlights the importance of institutional reputation as a primary driver in influencing research involvement and academic identity, determining whether professors see themselves as active participants in international scholarship.

5.6.6 Summary of Findings on Productivity

Upon analyzing the previously-outlined findings, it can be concluded that opinions on institutional support for research varied among the thirty academics in the study. While some members felt that both the institution and faculty provided adequate support, the majority believed that financial support for research from both the institution and department was insufficient.

Moreover, most participants, particularly those from the Business and Information Technology Departments, felt unsupported in their research efforts due to heavy teaching loads. Faculty members highlighted that the demands of their teaching and work schedules left them with insufficient time for research, as they had to work long hours to support their families.

Accordingly, all respondents indicated that the institution had a limited number of academic publications and reference books necessary for research, and these resources were not freely available. This scarcity negatively impacted their research motivation. Specifically, informants from the Information Technology Department mentioned that the UTAS-A library's limited scholarly resources hindered their research output and enthusiasm.

In terms of the availability of research funding, it can be indicated that this sub-factor was identified as a key motivator for engaging in research. However, participants from all three departments insisted that a lack of funding was a significant obstacle. Difficulty in obtaining financial assistance for conferences and research activities demotivated them. Participants from the Business Department emphasized that sufficient research funds are crucial for enhancing both the quality and quantity of research productivity, and they found the current funding inadequate.

5.7 Summary of Research Findings

The research findings from respondents indicate that research is not a priority at UTAS-A, and that academics are not provided with the necessary resources to do research. As a result, academic researchers face numerous obstacles to increasing productivity, and as a result, the current level of research output at UTAS-A is dissatisfactory. Additionally, the findings indicate that some motivators, such as promotion, obtaining respect, and personal interest, have a significant effect on

academics' motivation to conduct research. On the other hand, academics are prevented from undertaking research by barriers such as a lack of resources and money, a large teaching load, and a lack of self-efficacy and abilities.

Additionally, this research reveals that highly driven academics exhibit superior performance in terms of research productivity. Thus, the future of research at UTAS-A appears to be bright if an effective motivating policy is adopted, further assistance is supplied, all required research facilities are made available, and academic demands and interests are successfully satisfied. Accordingly, the following conclusions help expand on and summarize the previously-extracted findings in a more compendious manner.

5.7.1 Individual Characteristics

The findings highlight how individual attributes affect research productivity at UTAS-A. Academics face both encouraging and discouraging forces in their research pursuits. It is also worth noting that the more skills individuals gain within their professional lane, the more they will have a tendency to make the transition from one career stage to another, in order to adjust their professional path in accordance with the new sets of skills they gained. Accordingly, a clear distinction exists between the productivity of tenured and untenured positions.

Moreover, gender was reported by the majority to have no impact on research productivity, with both male and female academics conducting research equally. Prior experience was crucial for research success, with experienced academics being more successful due to their expertise and collaboration skills. Personal interest, especially among late-career professors, emerged as a major motivating factor for conducting research. Participants also stressed that conducting research is essential for gaining respect within higher education institutions, and they prefer writing on topics related to their specializations, which they find most motivating.

5.7.2 Identity

Participants generally had a positive attitude towards research, viewing themselves as researchers and deriving professional satisfaction from it. Respondents from the Information Technology and Engineering Departments considered research crucial for their institute's mission and supportive of teaching roles. Despite heavy

teaching loads, they maintained a positive outlook on research, considering it an integral part of their job.

I also concluded that balancing research with other life activities was seen as crucial for academic success and personal well-being. Participants expressed concerns about the challenges of balancing teaching, research, and family obligations, which often lead to stress and emotional dissonance, negatively impacting family relationships and work-life balance. The complex expectations and demands, especially on female academics, result in burnout and require support in teaching techniques and mentorship for balancing job and family responsibilities.

5.7.3 Institutional Characteristics

Participants from ACT's three departments reported that active academic engagement brings valuable knowledge into the institution. However, they felt that the administration hindered their ability to pursue professional research writing. The heavy teaching schedule was cited as a significant challenge to research productivity.

Additionally, participants expressed dissatisfaction with ACT's current research policy, calling for a robust policy and strong incentive system to boost productivity. They emphasized the need for improved research leadership and management, collaboration systems, better funding sources, and accessible information resources. A positive research environment and the sharing of research experiences among colleagues were deemed essential for inspiring motivation and enhancing research efforts.

5.7.4 Perceived Environment

Upon analyzing the findings, it seems to me that research does not seem to be a high priority at UTAS-A, and career aspirations are generally not linked to research production. Participants expressed extreme dissatisfaction with the current level of research production at UTAS-A. Despite these challenges, they expressed a desire to be more productive in the future, aiming to increase research activities, publish in journals, and gain international recognition. Furthermore, local resources such as community resources, policy papers, technical reports, and scholarly articles are valuable for disseminating regionally relevant information, but there is a need for more technical assistance and funding to make local journals effective in informing policy decisions.

Linguistic proficiency in English was noted as a barrier for some academics, hindering effective research writing.

5.7.5 Productivity

Opinions on institutional support for research varied, with some members feeling adequately supported while the majority believed financial support was insufficient. Most participants, particularly from the Business and Information Technology Departments, felt unsupported due to heavy teaching loads, which left insufficient time for research. I concluded also that the limited number of academic publications and reference books, and restricted access to these resources, negatively impacted research motivation.

Similarly, the lack of funding was identified as a significant obstacle, demotivating participants from continuing their research efforts. Participants from the Business Department emphasized the importance of sufficient research funds for enhancing research quality and quantity, finding current funding inadequate.

Respondents indicated that they would use research funds to increase the quality and volume of their research by financing essential expenditures such as data gathering, access to scholarly literature, conference attendance, and publication charges. They emphasized that a lack of funding hinders their ability to create in-depth investigations, access necessary resources, and share their research with the scholarly community, which ultimately brings research work and professional growth to a halt.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to ascertain faculty perspectives of the elements that encourage academic staff to do research and increase productivity at Oman's higher education institutions. I was curious as to how academics in Oman assess the variables that encourage them to conduct research and boost productivity in HEIs. For researchers, academic staff, students, and government officials, the research provides contextual knowledge. My study's objective was to expand information about the elements that motivate academics to conduct research and increase productivity. The lived experiences of thirty faculty members from the Engineering Department, the Business Department, and the Information Technology Department at UTAS-Ain Oman were collected through face-to-face interviews and classified into six emergent themes. This chapter synthesizes the literature and findings, discusses inferences drawn by experts, and presents a case for additional research.

6.2 Addressing Research Sub-Questions

6.2.1 How do Faculty Members perceive Factors which inhibit their Faculty Research?

Faculty members at UTAS-A identified a number of problems that limit their ability to do expansive and productive research (Figure 6.1). Academics' motivation to perform research was stated by respondents to be harmed by a heavy teaching load, a lack of funds and resources, a lack of collaboration, and a lack of well-organized seminars and workshops. Numerous participants in my survey stated that they were burdened with a large teaching load, making it difficult to do research and increase production. UTAS-A is not equipped to support academics' research endeavours. Academics' research capacity is also limited as a result of a lack of appropriate research training.

If HEIs in Oman, specifically UTAS-A, are to foster high-quality research, faculty members perceived that staff workers must receive training on research-related topics. Additionally, institutions' policies should be strengthened to better align research creation and publication with promotion. Institutions and specific departments should

encourage staff members to participate in research seminars and training. HEIs should provide administrative and financial support to their staff in order to increase productivity.

Neither extreme has been easy on faculty at UTAS-A, but teaching overload, limited sources of funds, scanty collaboration, and inadequate research training all have a direct connection with the framework elaborated by Nygaard (2015), which suggests that research productivity depends, as much as on personal characteristics, on how scholars perceive and adapt to their institutional context. This means reforms in our institutions are necessary so that policies, resources and support systems are aligned to help create a productive research culture.

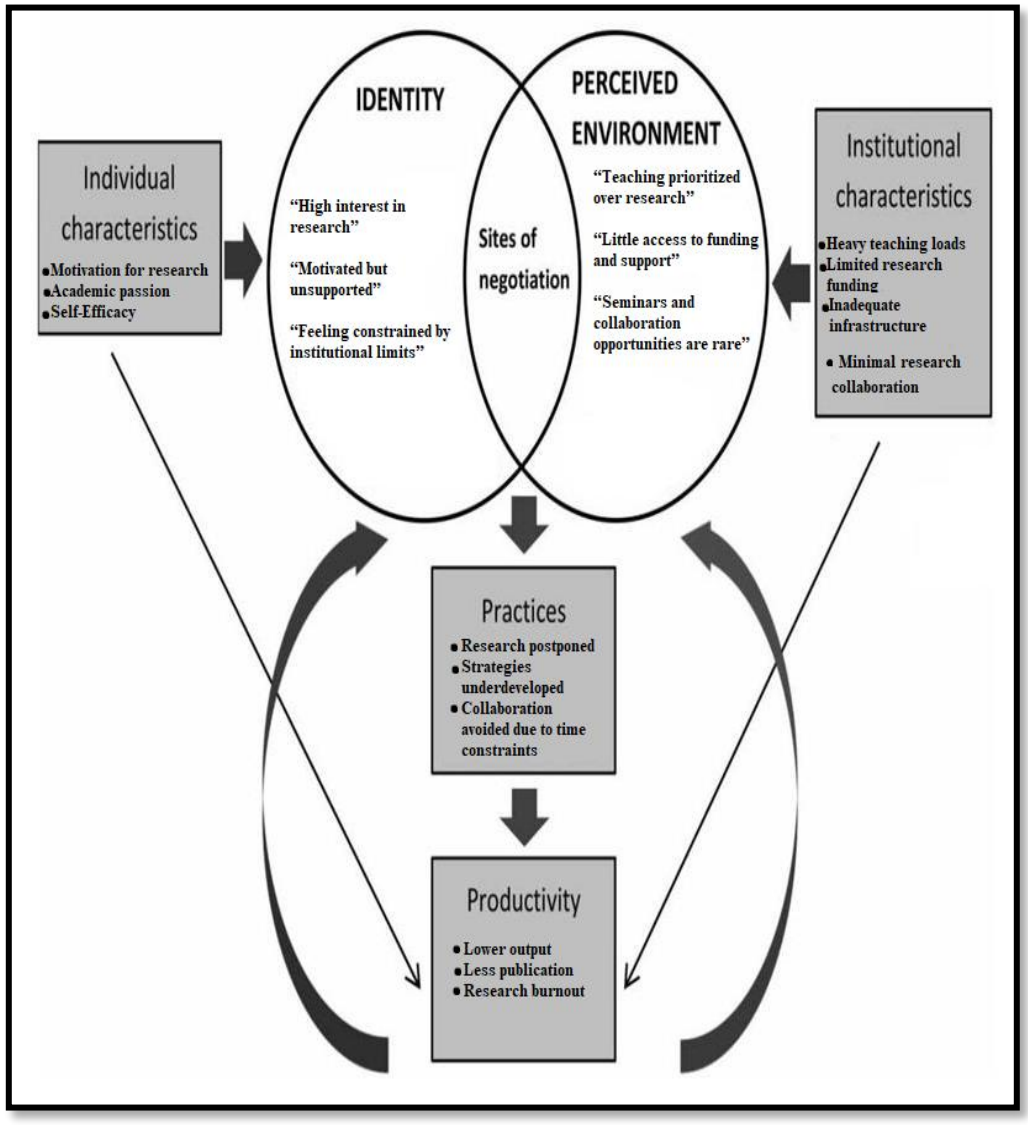

Figure 6.1: Barriers to Faculty Research

6.2.2 How do Faculty Members' Experiences indicate the Importance of both Individual and Institutional Factors?

Both institutional and individual factors were experienced as important in facilitating research activities. A summary is provided in Figure 6.2. Participants suggested that research capability requires institutional support, self-efficacy, and self-confidence to improve output. They recognized that research knowledge and skills go hand in hand with both individual and institutional support. Institutional support without self-efficacy and self-confidence cannot make faculty members research effective and vice-versa. Researchers should have a passion for researching to produce good outcomes. However, HEIs should motivate faculty members to conduct research.

HEIs in Oman have retained a strong teaching function and developed in a practice, until recently, of not emphasizing the research function. Such behaviors have historically demotivated academics from conducting research. Even though research is now discussed as a higher priority, several participants in my study noted that UTAS-A continues to encourage them to spend more time teaching rather than carrying out research. They felt that this is because the institution values teaching and expanding infrastructure to accommodate more students. As a result, the college has a low research capability compared to big HEIs in the Middle East. Funding for research activities is low, which prompts academics to seek grants from external organizations. These challenges experienced at the college makes it difficult for academics with low self-efficacy to conduct research.

The given finding conforms to the framework presented by Nygaard (2015) who focuses on the correlation of institutional support and apparent identity on research productivity. In UTAS-A, the members of the faculty observed that when without institutional support and individual self-efficacy, the research engagement is minimal. Historically teaching-oriented and low funding have discouraged scholars and diluted research culture, particularly among academics with lesser confidence, in line with the Nygaard idea about negative-feedback loops and institutional priorities and productiveness.

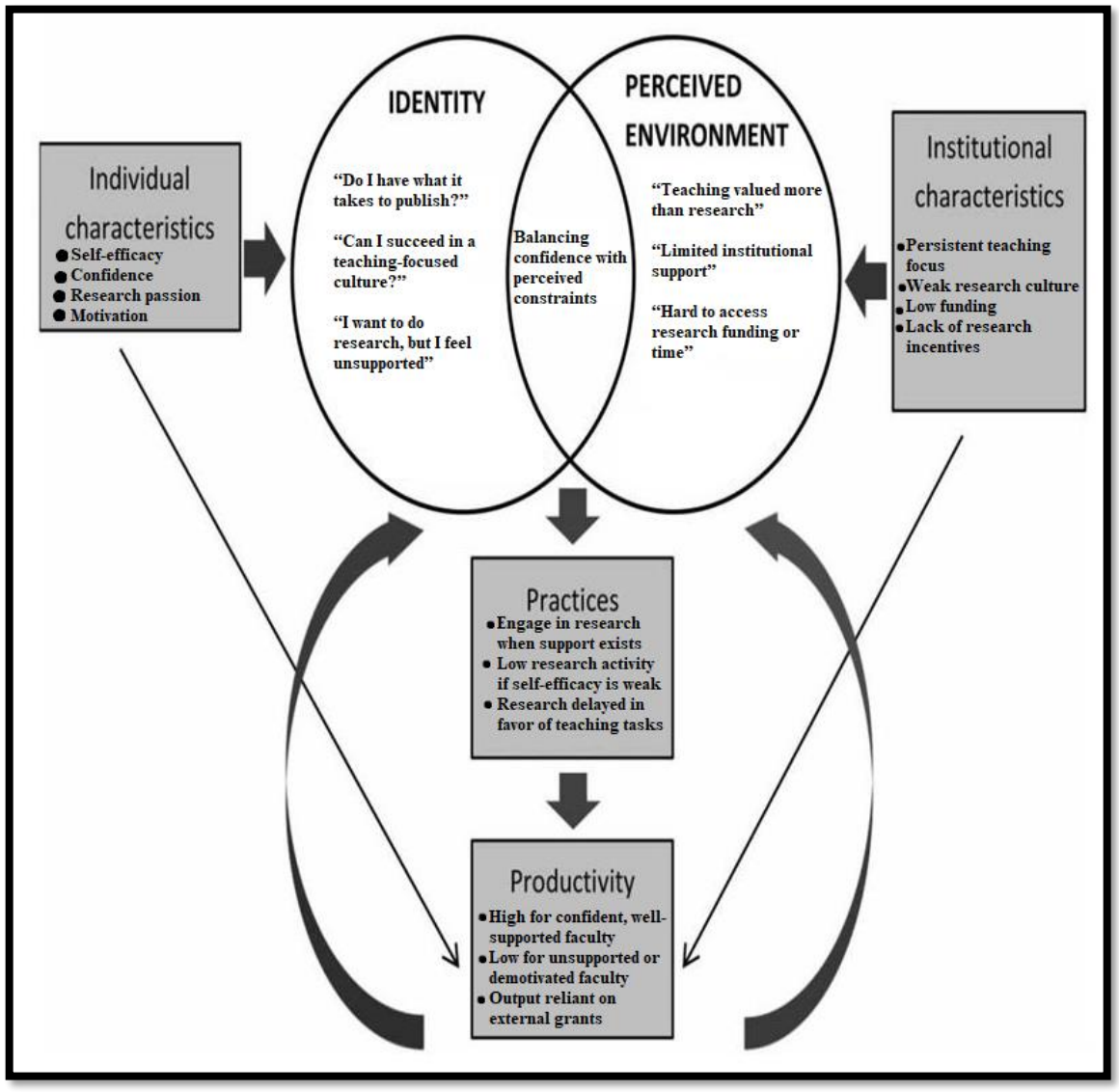

Figure 6.2: Research-Performance Dynamics

6.2.3 How do Faculty Members perceive the Importance of Neglected Factors in their Production of Faculty Research?

The findings suggest that the experiences of neglected factors are critical for researchers at Oman's higher education institutions (Figure 6.3). Faculty members at UTAS-A view research as an integral element of their responsibility. Numerous academics have a high sense of self-efficacy, but a dearth of scholarly resources and well-organized research workshops demotivates them. Faculty members' enthusiasm for research as well as their productivity are highly dependent on institutional support.

Participants were aware of the difference between the official situation and their own experiences. For example, HEIs in Oman are meant to give faculty members sufficient time, resources, and funding to engage in research activities towards achieving the objectives that are stated in Article 3 Paragraph 3 within the Royal Decree No. 27/2023, which was enacted by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation (2023). Additionally, they felt that UTAS-A should alleviate faculty members' teaching loads.

Professional gatherings are critical for conducting research. Participants perceived that institutions and departments must incentivize faculty members to attend research conferences in order to hone their skills and capacities. Also, they wished to attend research activities to enable them to get experience doing research and writing articles from more experienced researchers.

Participants noticed that experience has to be gained by direct participation in research activities, for example, attending conferences, seminars, and workshops where researchers can engage with experienced researchers. They perceived that research projects, mentorship, and co-authors of publications with experienced researchers help refine research skills, writing skills, and learning about publication processes. Exposing them to these can equip them to perform quality research and make contributions to their field of study.

The findings indicate the importance of research in the Sultanate of Oman which should be receiving equal level of attention along with teaching, especially knowing that the majority of higher education institutions in Oman place a higher emphasis on teaching than on research, as indicated by Nawaz et al. (2024) and Hammad & Al-Ani (2021). As a result, the factors that contribute to motivation at UTAS-A also apply to other HEIs in Oman. Participants in my study indicated that their colleagues at other higher education institutions in Oman face similar difficulties. As a result, departments and institutions as a whole must cultivate a strong culture of research excellence in order to generate more publications and advance research careers.

This discovery is supported by the concept proposed by Nygaard (2015), as it demonstrates how the inability to match promises made by the institution with the support provided damages the productivity of research. Although there is high self-efficacy of the faculty of UTAS-A, there exist low levels of resources, high workload on teaching, and opportunities to engage in research which is weakening the motivation.

Nygaard emphasizes the impact of the individual agency and impressions of institutional conditions on productivity. The necessity of mentorship, conferences, and direct research signify identity and practice are formed by an institutional reinforcement with disruptions that violate the agreement, creating vulnerabilities in the way identity and practice are constructed, risk persisting in lower research output within HEIs of Oman.

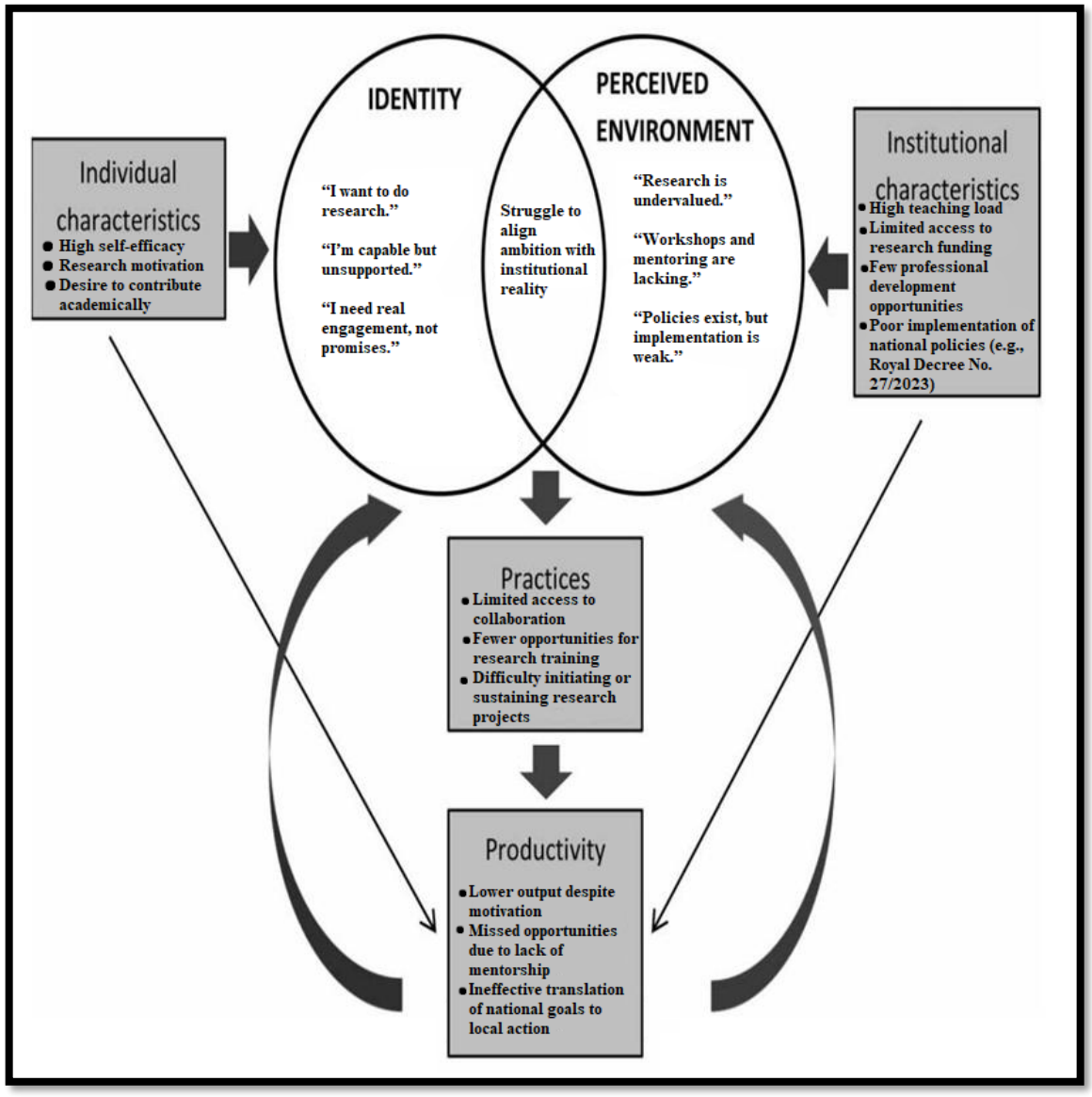

Figure 6.3: Overlooked Factors Affecting Research Productivity

6.2.4 What are the Faculty Members' Perceptions about the Institutional Support they should receive in Increasing their Research Productivity?

Faculty members made many suggestions to improve the quality of research in Oman (Figure 6.4). They suggested that the teaching burden of faculty members must be lowered to provide for time for research. Additionally, HEIs should prioritize research over teaching. Faculty members should receive training in research methods. Universities should establish regulations and link career advancement to research production and publishing. To drive academics, institutions should cultivate a strong research culture within their environments. Professional meetings such as research seminars and workshops should be held on a regular basis to help academics improve their research capabilities.

Department heads should encourage research collaboration between senior and junior faculty members. This way, it was believed, junior members will gain the necessary skills, knowledge, and capabilities for doing research. In brief, HEIs in Oman should foster a positive research climate conducive to meeting, discussing, and exchanging views about research issues. HEIs must support academics in order to conduct research and increase production. According to respondents in my research, HEIs in Oman should adopt research policies that incentivize and assist staff members to conduct good research.

Based on this finding, it would be relevant to say that it validates the framework developed by Nygaard (2015), which states that research productivity relies on institutional support and individual development. Trainee faculty of UTAS-A petitioned a lighter teaching load, to train in research, unambiguous promotion policy, and development of a better research culture. As Nygaard claims, these strengthenings of institutions define the identity and agency of researchers and help them to achieve significant engagement and long-term production.

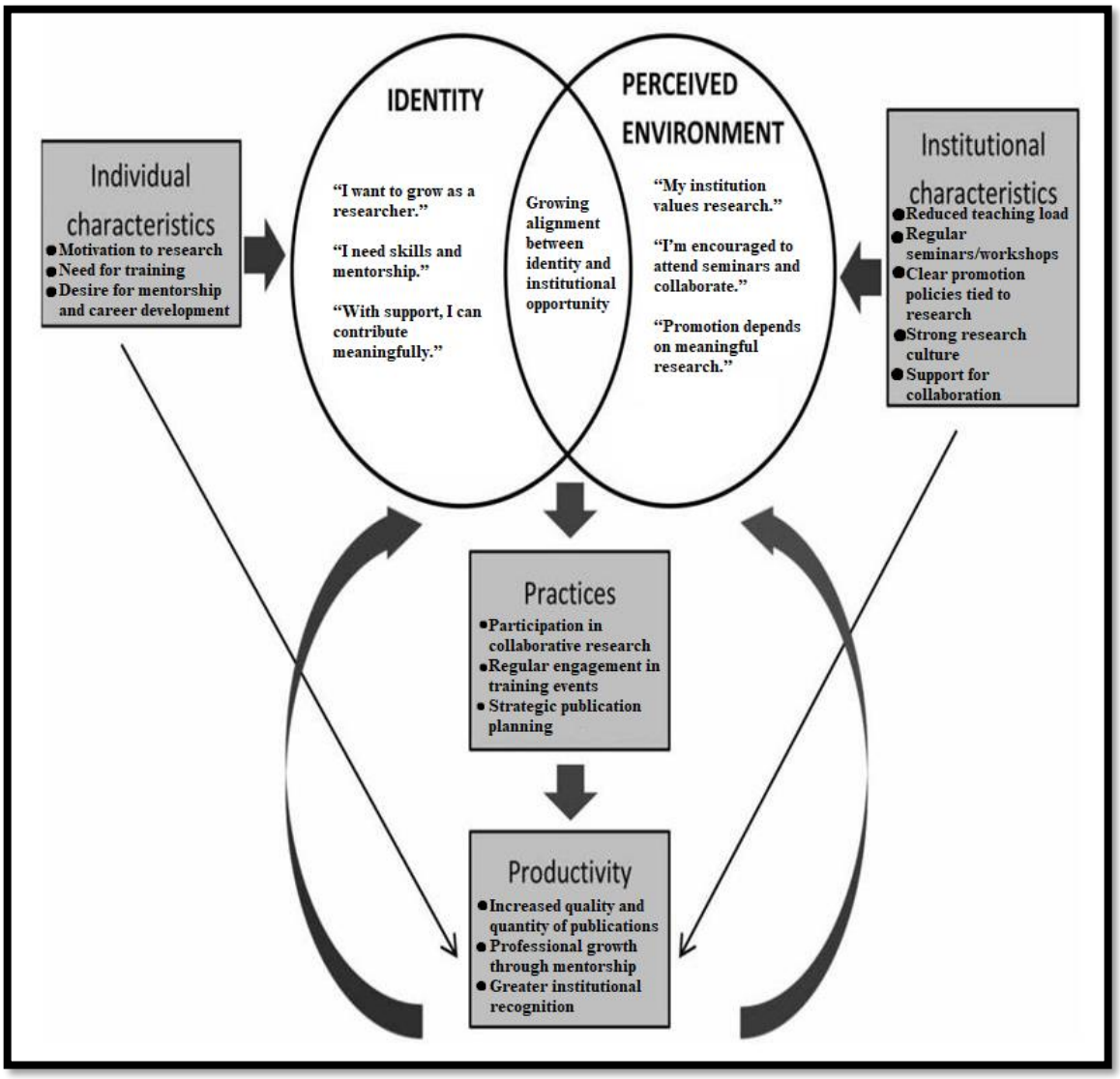

Figure 6.4: Enhancing Research through Institutional Support

6.3 Interpreting Findings in the Light of the Literature Review

I presented a literature review that laid the groundwork for situating the research within an existing framework of publications examining the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that motivate staff members to conduct research and increase output at higher education institutions in the Sultanate of Oman. Empirical studies on the state of higher education in Oman, the philosophical roots of faculty research, research productivity and impact measurement techniques, the limitations of approaches to the study of research productivity, the factors that mediate the success and productivity rates of faculty research, and the individual barriers to faculty research all serve as a common lens

through which to examine my findings. The utilization of related literature enables the development of meaning around the research's issues. While previous research has been unable to investigate cross-departmental disparities in faculty research production, emphasizing parallels in the findings and bridging gaps in settings and samples is critical for proposing comparable implications.

Regarding the theoretical framework upon which the current research is constructed, it can be concluded that the findings cohere with the framework used in the article by Nygaard (2015) by further supporting the opinion that research productivity is informed by a combination of both individual and institutional factors. The literature review has formed the basis on how intrinsic motivation, structural barriers and disciplinary differences affect faculty research.

Consequently, these dynamics are important dimensions that can be explored using the approaches to identity, perceived environments, and practices promoted by Nygaard, whose work serves as a useful tool in explaining such dynamics as well as in cases where earlier analysis failed to capture the difference across the departments. Extrapolation of this literature can assist in providing background of the findings and enhance their general applicability.

6.3.1 Factors that Mediate the Success and Productivity Rates of Faculty Research

6.3.1.1 Individual Characteristics

This sub-section begins with an examination of individual characteristics. The theme examines faculty members' perceptions of their educational attainment and its effect on research production. Additionally, I wanted to discover which kind of academic writing is most critical for them to generate at this point in their careers. Additionally, the participants discussed how their professional and life stages affect their performance in an institution. The amount of schooling of academics was discovered to have an effect on their research production. Faculty members from each department agreed that educational attainment had an effect on the productivity of research. My findings corroborated previous research indicating that academics with greater educational credentials published more than those with lesser credentials. According to Frantaz et al.

(2010), the department's steady research production can be linked to the researchers' qualifications. According to them, PhD holders performed high-quality research.

As anticipated, staff with a high degree of education were more productive in terms of research. Numerous participants agreed during my study that educational attainment is critical for research output. PhD holders have the knowledge and abilities necessary to undertake research and increase productivity. Faculty members with advanced degrees possess sufficient expertise of research methodologies such as data collecting and analysis. As a result, PhD holders are more productive than non-PhD holders. Doctorate holders demonstrate discipline in their job and engage in activities that build their confidence, competence, and community status. Smeby and Try (2005) discovered that PhD holders are more productive than Master's degree holders. Similarly, participants in my research asserted that PhD holders contribute to increased research production as a result of their research abilities and capacities.

According to Lertputtarak (2008), the types of academic writing created by researchers are critical for inspiring individuals to conduct research and increasing productivity. Scholarly publications, such as those published in scientific journals and academic books, are vital for conducting research and expanding the body of knowledge. My study's respondents, who were faculty members, similarly shared anecdotes on the value of publishing academic writings such as journal articles. The respondents agreed that it is critical to publish journal articles. Publishing journal papers enables an individual's academic research-based activity to achieve national and international attention. Additionally, respondents felt that the content of subjects contributes to research productivity because all themes address societal issues. Local journals are critical because they distribute critical regional information to scholars, and institutions as indicated by Moreno-Montoya (2023) and Mills et al. (2009; as cited in Gupta, 2021).

Producing books is critical because they provide extensive information. According to the respondents to this study, books provide information that fosters corporate interest and promotes continual education. Publication is the most essential metric of research production. The respondents felt that publishing journal papers was critical because it can result in individual advancement, serve as evidence of institutional competence, and serve as a pre-requisite for competitive research funding. Previous research has indicated that publishing scholarly works such as academic books and journal articles might result in recognition. Institutions of higher learning encourage

faculty members to write and publish research papers. Numerous respondents in my study cited publication of journal articles and academic books as a means of increasing research productivity.

Career advancement results in changes in performance, worth, and abilities. Numerous respondents agreed that one's objectives and interests shift over time. Similarly, previous study has shown a relationship between age and research production; Hedjazi and Behravan (2011) discovered that the research output of staff employees increases rapidly throughout their early careers and then gradually falls. Additionally, Goodwin and Sauer (1995) argued that increasing research production is common throughout the early stages of academic careers because researchers desire advancement. Similarly, numerous participants in my survey stated that research output is higher in the early stages of a researcher's career because researchers desire a higher income, promotion, and employment status in terms of the institution's reputation. Additionally, Bland and Berquist (1997) reported that academics' average productivity appears to drop with age.

In the study of the relationship between age and research production, different conclusions were reached. Hedjazi and Behravan (2011) discovered that the research productivity of academics improves dramatically until it reaches a high point in their early careers, after which it begins to fall progressively. Researchers Goodwin and Sauer (1995) have found that the greatest gain in research production happens during the early stages of academic careers, when faculty members hold temporary or non-tenured posts. It is stated in Diamond's (1986) life-cycle model of human capital investment that as academics become older or attain tenure, they may be required to perform extra administrative activities that take up much of their time. As a result of these actions, they are reducing their investment in, or commitment to, research initiatives. The conclusions of all of the authors listed above are in direct conflict with those of Smeby and Try (2005) and Perry et al. (2000).

Nonetheless, several studies have argued that aging has no effect on the productivity of researchers. Numerous older faculty members continue to be extremely engaged in research, and their productivity is far higher than that of junior faculty members. The majority of respondents, notably those from the Engineering Department, believed that career growth does not have a detrimental effect on research productivity.

According to the respondents, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that career stages affect research production.

The association between career advancement and research productivity has been explained theoretically in a variety of ways. Similarly, respondents to my survey expressed varying perspectives on the effect of professional advancement on research productivity. Researchers in their early careers may be productive in their research in order to further their careers. Additionally, late-career academics may be prolific in their research because they desire respect and recognition from both students and society. Senior academics might increase their production in order to increase their personal happiness and peer-recognition. Levin and Stephan (1989) examined the effect of age on the productivity of researchers. They discovered that an individual's productivity drops as he or she aged. However, several researchers have questioned their conclusions, claiming that their technique was ineffective. As a result, this research suggests that career advancement does not prevent researchers from being productive. This result was reached following a careful examination of previous literature studies and responses from my respondents.

Additionally, gender and marital status have an effect on research output. According to Fisher (2005), gender has a role in increasing research output. Similarly, Kaya and Weber discovered that females submit fewer grant proposals, have fewer peer-reviewed journal articles published, and have fewer articles published than males. Female researchers, according to the respondents in my study, confront unique obstacles. According to Zhang (2010), females may be less productive in research due to household duties. Similarly, participants in my study stated that female members balance family responsibilities and research. As a result, they encounter difficulties increasing productivity.

According to Wolff and Moser (2009), collaboration strengthens and sustains relationships among faculty members and contributes to mission accomplishment. Collaboration has been demonstrated to boost the output of research in the past. Collaborative research among faculty members is a form of research socialization (Jallon, 2010). These encounters are critical because they enable junior members of staff to exchange ideas and learn new information from senior faculty members. Additionally, participants in my research offered tales demonstrating the value of collaborative research. Numerous junior academics stated that they had gained valuable knowledge

from senior academics. Collaborative research increases research productivity by allowing academics with similar research interests and knowledge to share their ideals and goals. Collegiate relationships are critical for inspiring research output because they enable colleagues to share ideas and information.

Motivation is critical to job performance (Baron, 1983). According to Stoner (2002), motivation is critical to organizational effectiveness and serves as a predictor of performance. Both internal and extrinsic factors contribute significantly to academics' motivation to pursue research. My respondents offered personal narratives on the elements that encourage them to conduct research. Academics are motivated to conduct research by a variety of factors, including financial compensation, promotion, tenure, and performance evaluation. Additionally, some researchers pursue study in order to gain personal recognition and peer-acceptance. In short, human and institutional factors influence the productivity of research.

Individual variables such as high levels of self-confidence and self-efficacy influence researchers to increase their output. Indeed, they are the internal motivators that motivate an individual to undertake study regardless of the circumstances. Lechuga (2012) defined self-determination as a process that manifests itself through competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Numerous participants in my investigation, notably senior academics, related their stories on how their inner drive motivates them to be productive in the research arena. Hardre et al. (2011) used self-determination and self-efficacy to explain why individuals are productive. Academics are also motivated to pursue research by institutional considerations. These elements, however, are influenced by the country's economic structure, foreign ties with foreign agencies, governing culture and traditions, and politics (Cloete et al., 2011). In the collegiate setting, respondents highlighted common markers of institutional characteristics. Several institutional variables include collaborative research, leadership support, access to current academic journals, research training, and incentives.

Nonetheless, certain individual and institutional issues can make it difficult for academics to undertake research. Lerputtarak (2008) investigated the elements that contribute to faculty members' low research output. Lerputtarak's study conducted in-depth interviews to elicit faculty members' assessments of obstacles impeding their research productivity. According to my study, several factors contribute to participants' inability to undertake research, including a large teaching load, time restrictions,

institutional pressure, a lack of adequate financing, restricted scholarly resources, and a lack of self-efficacy in conducting research. Such challenges were somewhat present across all three departments Similarly, they also expressed similar concerns regarding impediments to conducting research. My research discovered that participants felt demotivated as a result of variables such as a large teaching load, time constraints, a lack of institutional support, and a lack of professional meetings and research workshops that increase skills and capabilities.

My results are also in line with those of Dundar and Lewis (1998) who stressed that personal characteristics including academic rank, age, and qualification are primal foretellers of research productivity. Likewise, Abouchedid and Abdelnour (2015) noted that female scientists in the Gulf region have started to reduce the productivity gap between them and their male colleagues - a fact that is reflected in the focus of my participants on increasing female contribution. Nevertheless, in contrast to these studies, my results emphasize that in Oman, individual motivation is very much influenced by institutional constraints, which is an oversight of these studies.

6.3.1.2 Identity

The second theme of the study was about self-identity. Faculty members have varying perspectives on the usefulness of research. The attitude toward research varies considerably among faculty members. Attitudes toward research are critical throughout the research process. Hogg and Vaughan (2009) defined attitude as a relatively stable structure composed of behavioural inclinations, feelings, and beliefs about socially significant events, groups, or things. Positivity toward research results with increased research productivity. Negative attitudes toward research, on the other hand, result in a poor level of production. According to Henson (2010), a negative attitude toward research results in self-efficacy concerns about one's competence and motivation to succeed in research-related tasks. My study's participants discussed their experiences participating in research activities. Several academics expressed pessimistic opinions, while others expressed optimism.

Faculty members may have a favourable attitude toward research as a means of self-motivation. Academics are compelled to conduct research and publish journal articles in order to progress their careers and maintain their positions. Coll et al. (2002)

observed that academic members felt obligated to undertake research and publish in order to maintain their positions and improve their careers. Academics invest time and effort in their research in order to get compensated. Incentives encourage academic members to contribute more time and effort to research activities. The majority of respondents in my interviews stated that they had a favourable attitude toward research because they desire financial compensation. Institutions place a high premium on research production in order to promote academics. Increasing research output both encourages and sustains academic interest. Conducting research has economic benefit because it enables faculty members to get research grants, providing much-needed relief to the institution's budgets. Participants in my study are in perfect harmony, demonstrating that personal interests significantly boost research output.

Work-life balance has long been a challenge for researchers in Oman's higher education institutions. According to Lockwood (2003), work-family conflict, work-life programs, work-life culture, and work-life initiative all play a significant role for institutional workers. Striking a balance between personal and professional life is difficult. Academics are concerned about their employment responsibilities and their personal lives at the same time. Academic professions can be stressful and demanding, affecting work-life balance. Adebayor (2016) noted that faculty members' association with their families during work hours had a detrimental effect on their job performance. Zhang (2010) revealed that female researchers face greater stress as a result of their family roles and responsibilities. Respondents to my research mirrored this argument. The majority of female participants stated that they face problems due to the fact that they must juggle home duties with study. In Oman, culture mandates that women shoulder family obligations. As a result, female academics face stress and burnout as a result of the obligations associated with increasing research productivity.

According to Guest (2002), difficulties affecting balancing acts include those connected with workplace development, those dealing to life beyond the office, and those relating to individuals and their personal lives. Academic institutions exert pressure on academics to increase their production. These professors spend little time with their families. As a result, the connection between husband, wife, and children becomes strained. Female members are disproportionately impacted. Women are expected to serve their husbands dutifully by tradition and culture, notably in Oman. In my study, female respondents discussed their experiences with work-life balance. The majority of them

stated that their culture requires them to prioritize family obligations over job. As a result, the institution should refrain from pressuring people to increase their production. Bailyn, Drago, and Kochan (2001) found that if workers' pressures are not successfully controlled, it will have a negative influence on their personal lives outside of work. These sentiments were echoed by study participants, who stated that pressure at UTAS-A has a negative effect on their personal lives outside of work.

It is critical to strike a balance, and institutions should refrain from pressuring scholars. According to Barnett and Hyde (2001), employees should take vacations to spend time with their family. The majority of HEIs in Oman prohibit their employees from taking holidays or spending time with their family. According to the participants in my research, their heads of department are frequently hesitant to authorize yearly leave. UTAS-A should enact a policy requiring employees to take annual vacation. The college's leadership should urge department heads to allow faculty members to take leave to alleviate workplace strain and pressure. Leave would allow academics to spend more time with their families and alleviate some of the pressures associated with job. According to Bellavia (2005), feelings of appreciation at work boost motivation and performance. In this sense, department leaders should permit staff members to take leave, thereby increasing productivity and motivation. Butler et al. (2005) advocated that institutions create a work-life balance policy. Participants in my research expressed similar sentiments, stating that UTAS-A should adopt a work-life balance policy to aid academics in striking a healthy balance between work and home life.

Such results were not outlined only in my study; as Shin et al. (2013) also concluded, more positive views on research are related to the increased productivity and enhanced teaching performance. Nevertheless, a crucial point that befell my investigation is the role of cultural expectations and gender roles in academic identity development, particular to women who have to reconcile research with family responsibilities, which was scarcely acknowledged in Isfandyari-Moghaddam and Hasanzadeh (2013) and was not the focal point of the majority of reviewed literature.

6.3.1.3 Perceived Environment

Bandura (1997) observed that whereas institutional contexts are frequently viewed as vast, undifferentiated entities, academics are both producers and consumers of microenvironments within the wider educational setting. Additionally, he stated that the exercise of personal agency over the course of one's life varies according to the modifiability and nature of the environment. According to him, whether faculties like it or not, both physical and social structures within an institution have an effect on them. Bandura referred to this type of atmosphere as an imposed environment, one over which academics had no influence. Additionally, an environment is developed in which staff members can develop social and professional relationships within the institution. Individuals develop social institutions that empower them to have a larger say over their life. According to Bandura, individual beliefs in their own efficacy have a significant impact on how they generate, control, and arrange the environment that influences their developmental trajectories (Bandura, 1997).

Wlodkowski (2008) outlined the characteristics of a stimulating workplace that demonstrates an awareness of variety. To be precise, diversity in UTAS-A is skewed in favour of male academics and Arabs. Wlodkowski asserts that culture has an effect on the workplace through differences in individualism, collectivism, gender, and power distance. Academics who refuse to acknowledge these distinctions face estrangement. Inclusivity requires the department to foster an environment that values diversity inside the institution. Academics can then develop collaborative partnerships with their colleagues. Failure to develop ties among faculty members creates a sense of marginalization for some. Due to culture, the UTAS-A atmosphere is hostile to non-Arabs and females. Several individuals discussed their personal experiences with marginalization in the school setting. Female staff employees indicated how their male colleagues see them as being less effective. Similarly, non-Arabs, particularly faculty members of African heritage, recounted their encounters with institutional discrimination.

Faculty members who value teamwork are more likely to be productive in their research. According to Wolff and Moser (2009), collaboration fosters and sustains relationships among faculty members and facilitates goal attainment. Collaborative research among faculty members enables them to practice writing in their daily

professional life. Similarly, self-efficacy is critical when it comes to research writing. Bandura (1997) discovered that academics who have a high level of self-efficacy regarding their skill sets are more likely to be productive in their research. Even under unfavourable working settings, such academics demonstrate resilience. These academics seize chances and devise strategies to overcome obstacles. Academics with poor self-efficacy, on the other hand, face difficulties when it comes to research writing. These faculty members frequently participate in activities that impede their productivity. Additionally, when they fail in research writing, they lack the tenacity to attempt again. The majority of senior faculty members who participated in my research described how their strong self-efficacy views contributed to their effectiveness in research writing. These participants discussed how their strong self-efficacy views motivate them to participate in a bigger learning community comprised of professional organizations and cross-disciplinary reading lists.

Numerous higher education institutions in Oman have unfavourable conditions that make it difficult to produce high-quality research writing. Participants in my research identified variables affecting the quality of research writing as institutional pressure to do research, time limits, a heavy teaching load, a lack of research seminars and professional meetings, and financial constraints. Academic leaders do not provide adequate support to academics. Bland et al. (2005) hypothesized that department heads' research productivity, performance, and involvement had a significant impact on staff members' research motivation, as staff members view their seniors as well-defined researchers. As a result, heads of departments at UTAS-A should be knowledgeable about and skilled in research, as well as supportive of their juniors. Department heads should provide faculty members with advice, mentoring programs, and collaborative opportunities.

Several previous studies have made recommendations for enhancing the quality of research writing in HEIs. Academics in Oman's HEIs require training in research-related topics. Al Ajmi and Ali (2015) proposed that faculty members in Oman's HEIs receive training on research-related topics such as how to conduct research and what constitutes high-quality academic research. Policies governing research, as well as physical and social infrastructures, must be strengthened. Research productivity and journal publication should be linked to employment advancement. According to respondents in my research, tying journal publication and research productivity to job

advancement will improve the quality of research writing. Additionally, institutions must provide financial incentives to academics to do research and increase production.

Motivating factors such as financial incentives, a collaborative research-based learning and teaching environment, the availability of research policies and solutions to investigators' problems, technical and infrastructural support, a good library with free access to the database and necessary materials, including both physical documents, digital resources, and software, all contribute to increasing research productivity. According to Lertputtarak (2008), academic materials such as journal articles and academic publications are critical for inspiring faculty members to conduct research and increasing research output. Faculty members are productive researchers in institutions with academic resources. These scholarly materials require revision. According to Man et al. (2004), research funding is a critical indicator of research output. Participants in my research expressed similar opinions. Numerous respondents stated that they were conducting productive research during a time when research funding was abundant. Similarly, Sulo et al. (2012) found a favourable association between research funding and productivity in research. Additionally, evaluation and promotion assist academics to increase their research productivity. The publication of journal articles might serve as a barometer for promotion.

The findings of my study are then in line with Jahan et al. (2018), who established that institutional support, particularly, teamwork and mentorship lead to a significant increase in research output. Similarly, Nguyen (2015) pointed out that insufficient funding represents an obstacle to faculty productivity, which was also mentioned by numerous of my participants. Nevertheless, in contrast to these studies, my work pays more attention to the psychological component of the effect of institutional neglect, which previous literature, such as Welpe et al. (2014) formed mainly in terms of material resources.

6.3.1.4 Productivity

Productivity, for the purposes of this study, refers to research paper publication in peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings. It has been established in research that UTAS-A puts research publication on the agenda as a significant element in the promotion of faculty members. While previous studies in the case of higher education

institutions (HEIs) in Oman primarily dealt with bibliometric measures of research productivity, this study focuses on a broader picture. Scholarly productivity extends beyond publication in journals to include non-tangible outputs such as doctoral guidance, which plays an important role in deciding the department's future research potential. Eventually, HEI research output depicts their national, regional, and global competitiveness as well as development.

In contrast to other studies, like Badry and Willoughby (2015) and Sigmund (2016), which valued the importance of open cultural environments and their contribution to the research, I found that, in the Omani case, institutional micro-environments, such as gender bias and exclusionary practices, play a bigger role. My respondents highlighted marginalization and collegial exclusion - these aspects were not discussed in the previous literature centrally, which is more inclined towards national or policy-level cultural aspects.

6.3.1.5 Institutional Characteristics

Institutional policies, climate, practices, and resources all have a part to play on the productivity of research. Administrative and departmental support are required for faculty members to conduct research and increase productivity. Effective communication is critical when conducting research. Academics should be able to voice their concerns about research writing. HEIs communicate in a variety of ways, including organized group discussions to hear from faculty members and a dedicated forum for discussing research-related topics (Sorensen et al., 2005). According to the participants in my research, interaction between academics and administrative workers or department heads can result in a high degree of productivity. The communication enables faculty members to address concerns such as time, resource distribution, and compensation. The research-productive faculty member's responsibilities require resources in the form of facilities, supplies, equipment, space, and time (Ju, 2010). According to several participants in my research, productive research institutions have administrators and heads of departments who are committed to research and to the appropriate allocation of academic resources that faculty members would require to conduct their research. Such assistance and support could be supported by grants and endowments (El-Ouahi, 2024).

According to Bland et al. (2005), department heads can assist faculty members in maintaining their professional networks by financially sponsoring travel, creating faculty offices to enable local cooperation, and recommending academics for research awards. Participants in my research agreed with this sentiment, arguing that administrators and department heads should be in charge of the budget, employees, collaborative research space, and financial incentives. Department heads should be accountable for championing their department's achievements and advocating for resources to ensure their departments' continued prosperity.

Institutions should establish a research budget to assist academics in developing and managing grants. Respondents in this study expressed dissatisfaction with ACT's lack of financial support for research. As a result, academic members are driven to seek external funding for research. Increased research abilities and training are other factors that contribute to increased research output. Academics improve the quality of their research and strengthen their professional traits by developing research interests and receiving research training through their graduate degrees. Experience has a significant impact on the productivity of research. Academics with research experience have been shown to be more productive in the past. Administrators and heads of departments frequently provide emotional and financial support to researchers.

The findings cohere with those of Lertputtarak (2008), whose study's findings revealed that journal publication is one of the output measures relating to research motivation. Similarly, Sulo et al. (2012) observed the necessity to connect promotion with research output. But in contrast to these more general studies, my participants also expressed that these institutional expectations frequently pose a burden without supplying the support required, and this disjuncture between expectations and capacity is not discussed in the extant literature that I have reviewed in any depth.

6.4 Implications for Practice

My research uncovered faculty perspectives of the elements that encourage academic staff to do research and increase research productivity at Oman's UTAS-A. My recommendations for practice are based on the faculty members' experiences. There are various implications for developing or adopting strategies that improve research productivity based on my findings. This study will have a direct impact on researchers,

department heads, administrators at higher education institutions, and government officials in Oman. As such, I will discuss the practical consequences at the individual, departmental, college, and national levels. My findings indicate that UTAS-A has numerous chances to inspire academic members to increase their research output. Faculty members from UTAS-A identified a variety of difficulties they encounter while conducting research. As a result, I am appealing to the institution to consider the factors mentioned by academics and correct its shortcomings.

6.4.1 Individual Level

My research established the vital role of faculty-faculty research collaboration. Numerous faculty members discussed the problems they face as a result of a lack of collaborative research. Collaboration is crucial in research because academics with superior research skills and expertise may help their colleagues be more productive in their studies. Faculty members are required to cooperate on a research paper or to peer-review a college-related document. Faculty members must be motivated and inspired to collaborate on research with colleagues both within and outside of the college. This will enable them to significantly enhance their research capabilities in terms of knowledge and talents.

Collaboration between academics on research will foster an environment conducive to research and production, encouraging academics to conduct research and enhance output. As a result, faculty members will be able to demonstrate a high level of self-efficacy with regard to their discussion facilitation abilities. Academics should seize opportunities to collaborate with seasoned researchers in order to exchange knowledge and ideas. They will thereby contribute to the productivity of research. Academics who are successful maintain a vast network of colleagues at various institutions of higher learning with whom they speak on a regular basis. Academics should advocate for their colleagues to prospective collaborators. Utilizing a network is an efficient way to connect with academics who are actively engaged in research. As a result, effective researchers at UTAS-A must maintain communication with faculty members at other higher education institutions in order to share research ideas and knowledge.

6.4.2 Departmental Level

My study's findings emphasized the critical nature of departmental collaboration among colleagues. This type of collaboration enables faculty members to share expertise, provide support for one another, and collaborate. This type of activity would foster the development of a departmental research culture. Respect, trust, obedience, and individual self-determination will result from this type of society. Faculty members must respect and trust one another in order to foster an environment conducive to research. Additionally, this enables department heads to assign mentors to junior academics. Academic mentors will assist academics in developing their professional networks in order to increase their research productivity. Collaboration at the departmental level will see senior faculty members assisting junior faculty members with grant proposal writing. They will be able to conduct research and increase productivity by obtaining grants from external groups.

Departments should foster a more collaborative interaction between senior and junior faculty. Department heads should enlist the assistance of an experienced researcher from outside their department to mentor academics who lack research skills and knowledge. Additionally, departments should host professional meetings, research seminars, and workshops for academics. These seminars and workshops are critical because they provide an opportunity for participants to exchange ideas about research-related subjects. Additionally, departments can make use of these occasions to remind faculty members about the department's culture and objectives. Researchers who attend professional meetings and research seminars are more likely to be competent and productive in their research. As a result, directors of departments at UTAS-A must encourage academics to participate in research workshops and professional conferences where they can discuss research-related activities.

6.4.3 College Level

My research discovered that UTAS-A rarely motivates faculty members. Academics who are internally and extrinsically driven are more likely to do research. Rieger (1990) discovered that successful faculty members believed their institutions valued them as intellectuals and researchers. The primary incentive that institutions provide to their faculty members is promotion and tenure. HEIs such as UTAS-A must

stimulate collaboration and initiate faculty group projects. Colleges should establish research centres or other facilities to draw the attention of other academics from diverse disciplines who share similar research objectives. In short, Oman's HEIs should foster a culture of collaboration by building research centres and granting incentives to boost production.

ACT should assist departments in establishing connections to the professional network in order to increase research productivity. This can be accomplished by providing financial support for faculty members' attendance at professional conferences and research training programs. Institutions must invite intellectuals and senior researchers to mentor junior faculty members. Oman's HEIs must explore collaborations with institutions in Europe and America. The majority of HEIs on those continents have made significant strides in research. Connecting with HEIs in the United States and Europe will boost production. Collaborations between Oman's HEIs and American institutions would enhance their English language proficiency and research capacity. As this study stated, English has evolved into an international scientific language, and faculty members must be fluent in the language in order to communicate with overseas researchers.

6.4.4 National Level

The government of Oman has invested money and other resources into its HEIs. However, organized administration of funding outlets should be considered. For instance, as indicated by Hammad and Al-Ani (2021), there is great potential for Government research-funding to be maximized through grants, publication awards, and conference-attendance grants. However, lack of rationalized leadership where these funding outlets can be utilized judiciously is still a challenge that is represented by diminished levels of harmony among faculty team members and their levels of commitments as well. Due to a lack of openness and accountability, research monies provided to HEIs in Oman have been mismanaged. Government money for research rarely reaches professors. HEIs have mastered the art of financial mismanagement. Additionally, the institutions fund researchers on a case-by-case basis. Allocation is frequently not based on productivity. Thus, in order to strengthen the research capacity of UTAS-A faculty members, government officials must hold the college accountable. Ministry of Education's officials

should pay a visit to the college and request an auditing report. The supposed recipients of government research grants should be summoned to demonstrate that they received funding, as the study indicates. HEIs will be held accountable and transparent in this manner.

Oman's government needs to construct more national research institutes and centres to boost the country's research production. National research institutes would facilitate the development of a broad professional network for academics. Additionally, faculty members will have the opportunity to collaborate with seasoned researchers. Oman's Ministry of Education could support researcher training programs. To boost research productivity, researchers at national research institutes should engage with academics from colleges. This partnership would enhance faculty members' research ability, abilities, and expertise. Additionally, national research institutes should award funds to qualified researchers, to elevate research motivation and production.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The motivation for this research emerged from a deep-rooted interest in understanding the intricate dynamics of faculty motivation towards academic research in higher education institutions (HEIs). Drawing from personal experiences and observations, I acknowledged the pivotal role of motivation in driving research productivity among academic staff. Through interactions with colleagues and reflections on past workplaces, I discerned a stark contrast in the levels of motivation and research productivity across different institutional settings. This stark difference served as a catalyst for delving deeper into the underlying factors that either enhanced or diminished faculty motivation to engage in research activities.

Moreover, I was motivated by a comprehensive review of existing literature, which underscored the critical link between staff motivation and research productivity in HEIs. Studies by Chmutova et al. (2022) and Masinde and Coetzee (2023) shed light on various motivational strategies and their impact on academic research output, highlighting the intricate interplay between psychological needs, job satisfaction, and professional competence.

Additionally, insights from Albert et al. (2016) emphasized the importance of tailored incentive systems to align individual motivations with institutional goals, ultimately shaping the confidence and competence of academic staff in producing high-quality research. Therefore, the research aims to identify the faculty perceptions towards the factors that motivate academic staff to conduct research and enhance research productivity in HEIs in Oman that is promoting an emphasis on research.

Moreover, I used qualitative research through the utilization of thematic analysis as the main analysis methodology and conducted in-depth interviews with 30 faculty members from three departments at UTAS-A, the Engineering Department, Business Department, and the Information Technology Department.

7.2 Brief Summary of Findings

When it comes to the manner through which faculty members experienced the limiting or inhibiting factors of faculty research, it was concluded from the evidence gathered that such limitations can be outlined as follows:

1. Faculty members at UTAS-A face several obstacles that hinder their research efforts, including (a) heavy teaching load, (b) insufficient funds and resources, and (c) lack of collaboration opportunities.
2. Participants in the interviews expressed difficulty in balancing teaching responsibilities with research, due to heavy workloads.
3. The university's support for research initiatives is perceived to be inadequate which limits academics' research capacity.
4. Lack of research-related training for staff.
5. Lack of sufficient encouragement towards staff participation in research seminars and training.
6. Insufficient financial support to enhance research productivity.

Regarding the extent to which the experience of relationships between individual and institutional factors mediated faculty research, it can be concluded that both institutional and individual factors were found to be critical in facilitating research activities, with research capability hinging on institutional support, self-efficacy, and self-confidence to enhance output. The synergy between research knowledge and skills alongside both individual and institutional support was highlighted as essential. However, institutional support alone, without fostering self-efficacy and self-confidence, proved insufficient to make faculty members effective in research endeavours, and vice versa.

Additionally, researchers emphasized a passion for their work to yield favourable outcomes. Despite this, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Oman were noted for prioritizing teaching over research, which demotivated academics from engaging in research activities. Several participants reported that UTAS-A, in particular, encouraged more time spent on teaching rather than research, contributing to its low research capability compared to larger HEIs in the Middle East.

When it comes to the extent to which the experiences of ignored factors of faculty research that UTAS-A attempts to bring to the fore are considered pertinent to faculty researcher at the UTAS-A and other HEIs in Oman, it was concluded that the experiences

of overlooked factors proved crucial for researchers at Oman's higher education institutions, with faculty members at UTAS-A regarding research as integral to their responsibilities. Despite having a high sense of self-efficacy, many academics were demotivated by a lack of scholarly resources and well-organized research workshops.

Their enthusiasm and productivity in research heavily relied on institutional support, emphasizing the need for HEIs to provide sufficient time, resources, and funding for research activities, while also alleviating teaching loads. Professional gatherings were identified as vital for research, with institutions needing to incentivize faculty attendance at research conferences to enhance skills and collaboration. This emphasis on research excellence applies, not only to UTAS-A, but also to other HEIs in Oman, where similar challenges are faced, underscoring the necessity for a collective effort in fostering a strong research culture to drive advancements in research careers and publications.

When it comes to the experiences and perceptions of faculty members about the kind of support that their institution (ACT and other HEIs) can provide to help increase their research productivity, it was concluded that faculty members in Oman proposed several measures to enhance research quality, including reducing the teaching burden to allow more time for research and prioritizing research over teaching within higher education institutions (HEIs). They suggested providing training in research methods and establishing regulations linking career advancement to research production and publishing. Institutions were urged to cultivate a strong research culture through regular professional meetings such as research seminars and workshops.

Moreover, department heads were encouraged to promote research collaboration between senior and junior faculty members to facilitate skill development. Overall, the consensus was that HEIs should foster a positive research climate by supporting academics and adopting research policies that incentivize and assist staff in conducting high-quality research.

7.3 Research Limitations

In this study, the researcher was confined to UTAS-A in Oman, which limits the applicability of the findings of the study to other institutions in Oman and other countries. The variations in institutional forms, resources and national education systems imply that the outcomes would not be fully representative of the overall picture in higher education.

The study also relies solely on interviews as the data collection method, without incorporating experimental or quantitative methods. This limitation means that the research may not capture all aspects of research productivity and faculty motivation comprehensively. Experiments or quantitative data could provide additional insights into the effectiveness of different research incentives or barriers, offering a more robust understanding of the factors influencing academic research.

Such experiments can be conducted on testing the effect of different incentives, such as grants, lightened workload, or designated research time, on faculty research productivity. Research could also test whether research productivity is enhanced by provision of advanced research equipment and databases. Behavioral experiments could test the effect that motivation, self-efficacy, or an institution's ranking would have on research participation. Quantitative analysis of such aspects through controlled research could provide an understanding of how effective these research incentives and barriers are.

Moreover, sample size limitations are represented by the fact that the study includes only 30 participants, which may restrict the depth and breadth of the findings. A small sample size can limit the representativeness of the data and may not fully capture the diverse perspectives of all faculty members at UTAS-A. This limitation could affect the reliability of the conclusions drawn and their applicability to the entire academic staff at the institution.

7.4 Research Contribution

My study contributes to the body of literature by arguing that research cannot be sufficiently stimulated unless institutions attempt to address all the challenges at different levels (individual, departmental, college and national) simultaneously. Common strategies such as attempting to promote research through availability of funds is unlikely to be successful without also reducing the teaching workload, for example. Concentrating on research output without making the environment favourable is also experienced by faculty as problematic. The findings show that it takes reconciling research with other obligations, institutional support, and establishing an enabling environment for knowledge sharing all together to sustain research engagement. This is a different approach that shifts the conversation from singular interventions to a broader strategy

that ensures sustained research productivity. Therefore, the following recommendations can be provided and would prove to be effective if implemented properly:

- The Omani policymakers must focus on the establishment of a national research strategy that can strike a balance between teaching and research in all higher education institutions. At the present time, the overwhelming emphasis placed on teaching damages research participation. An explicit national mandate that inserts research expectations into institutional missions and performance reviews would generate a research-supportive culture and amend academic practices in accordance with the objectives of the Oman Vision 2040. Moreover, it needs financial input in terms of research infrastructure and funding. Policymakers are encouraged to introduce specific budgets on faculty research, travel grants and attendance of international conferences on equal terms per institution and per department. This should involve setting up competitive national research grants and mentorship programs which benefit junior as well as senior faculty, building research capacity though the ground up.
- In addition, regulation systems ought to be reformed so that the output of research may become a primary measure of academic promotions and career advances. Policymakers can encourage sustained academic activity by institutionalizing research productivity as an activity that is measured and rewarded. Explicit policies on how research outputs can be connected to promotion rules, taking contextual variables (teaching load, institutional support, etc.) into consideration will enhance motivation and retention of academic personnel.
- Universities such as UTAS-A need to make an effort to lessen the extensive teaching load that faculty members are usually subjected to. Protected research time in faculty workload would permit the staff to carry out research without affecting their teaching duties. This necessitates institutional redesigning of academic work and scheduling systems so as to achieve a more even balance of time allocated to research, teaching, and service.
- Moreover, universities ought to consider investing in continuous professional development in terms of research skills. Workshops focused on needs, writing retreats and research groups can also be useful capacity-building measures, especially with early-career faculty. These activities enhance not only the technical

skills but also research identity and sense of belonging which are essential to long term engagement in academia.

- Lastly, the institutions ought to empower internal research ecosystems through interdepartmental partnership and mentorship. Collegiality and productivity can be improved by creating formal structures of peer support, co-authorship and research seminars. Departmental leadership should be actively involved in determining the obstacles and mechanisms of accessing departments' resources and support networks.

The study's contribution lies in enabling the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS-A) to spearhead the research productivity movement within Oman. By focusing on the institutional and individual factors that influence academic research output, this research aims to provide UTAS-A with actionable insights to enhance its research capabilities.

The study's findings are expected to help the institution align with the broader developmental and strategic goals set forth in Oman's higher education policies, ultimately positioning UTAS-A as a leading centre for research excellence in the country. Moreover, this research will support UTAS-A in meeting the ambitious objectives outlined in Oman's Vision 2040.

This is because as the Omani nation strives to become a knowledge-based economy with a strong emphasis on research and development, the insights gained from this study will be instrumental in guiding UTAS-A towards achieving these goals. By addressing the challenges and leveraging the opportunities for improving research productivity, UTAS-A will be better equipped to contribute to the national vision and foster a thriving academic environment that supports Oman's long-term educational and economic aspirations.

This study provides astute and practical conclusions from UTAS-A, a large institution of higher education in Oman, giving a perspective which has largely been under-represented within the existing literature. By bringing focus to the issue of research productivity from UTAS-A researchers' points of view, this study highlights faculty's actual practical issues, e.g., high workload in teaching, limited research grants, and effects of ranking within institutions.

Additionally, as compared to studies in established research institutions with ample resources, the current study sheds light on the fate of Omani researchers in an

emerging research environment and is therefore a valuable contribution to research about research productivity in such an environment to help enhance the status of Omani university amongst advanced HEIs across the globe that place high emphasis on research, given the current low score of Omani HEIs regarding research indicators.

7.5 Summary

Researchers' worldview significantly impacts their research, influencing it through their personal experiences, beliefs, and objectives. Motivated by a passion for encouraging collective voices and enhancing research productivity, I have seen first-hand the crucial role of support and resources in academic research.

At their current institution, UTAS-A, I have observed positive changes in research focus and productivity compared to previous workplaces. This has led to a deeper interest in identifying the factors that motivate or demotivate faculty researchers, aiming to understand and improve the academic research environment at UTAS-A.

Accordingly, the current study is inspired by my observations of varying motivation levels and their impact on research productivity. Previous experiences revealed that increased workloads and declining budgets often demotivated academics, leading to reluctance in conducting research. In contrast, the current workplace demonstrates greater motivation and concern for research productivity. My review of literature underscores that effective motivation strategies include administrative support, reduced bureaucracy, and addressing psychological needs to boost research productivity.

The findings indicate that faculty perceptions of research motivation are influenced by both individual and institutional factors. Key motivators include intrinsic interest and prior experience, while challenges involve balancing research with teaching and personal responsibilities, inadequate support, and limited resources. The current study highlights the need for improved institutional support, including better funding, training, and a supportive research environment, to enhance productivity. Recommendations include reducing teaching loads, linking research output to career advancement, and fostering a collaborative research culture to support academic staff effectively.

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Appendix

Appendix One: Letter to the Chancellor of the Al-Musanna College of Technology, Oman

Re: Permission to Conduct the Study at UTAS-A.

Dear Sir,

I am…… a doctoral student at……. I am carrying out a doctoral dissertation under the supervision of…… The study is titled "*FACULTY PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE ACADEMIC STAFF TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AND ENHANCE RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY IN A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN OMAN."*

Project Highlights

Nowadays, doing scientific research is one of the most basic responsibilities of academics in Higher Education (HE). Academics' success in research depends very much on their commitment to research activities, for example writing and publishing journal articles, as well as presenting conference papers. Their commitment to research can be recognised and/or measured by looking at their attitudes towards and behaviours in research. A visible outcome of their research commitment is research productivity, in terms of scholarly publications such as peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, textbooks, and books.

This research project aims to explore perceptions of academics about research and its importance to their professional career, to discover individual and institutional factors that have positive or negative influences on their research commitment and research productivity, and to model the relationships between research productivity and a variety of psychological, sociological and cultural constructs, and research behaviours. The results of this study are expected to be used by the University to develop policies and procedures that may improve the level of commitment to research and the number of research publications, in the local HE context of Oman.

I hereby ask for your permission to conduct the research at this university. If you would be willing to cooperate with me on this research project, please provide me with the appropriate permission to contact and collect the data from academics at the College. More importantly, I would be grateful if you would deliver a message to academics of the College in order to emphasise the importance of this research to the College, and encourage your academics to participate voluntarily in the interviews and surveys.

Information gathered during the study will be maintained in the strictest confidence. The names of participants will not be known to anyone. Participation in this study is voluntary. Individuals can withdraw from the study without any prejudice. A summary of the findings will be provided at the completion of the study upon your and the participants' interest.

Yours Sincerely,

Appendix Two: Notification of Research to Faculty Members

My name is ……. and I am a doctoral student at……. I believe that research productivity is usually important in higher education institutions. I am currently focussed on my dissertation which explores how academics perceive motivation factors that enhance research productivity. This research aims at achieving the following:

1. How do faculty members perceive factors which inhibit their faculty research?
2. How do faculty members' experiences indicate the importance of both individual and institutional factors?
3. How do faculty members perceive the importance of neglected factors in their production of faculty research?
4. What are the faculty members' perceptions about the institutional support they receive in increasing their research productivity?

I would like to collect data at your college to answer the above-mentioned research questions. I will consider using a one-on-one semi-structured interview approach for collecting in-depth data. The study will involve academics from Engineering department, Business department, and information and technology department. Probably, each interview will last for 45 to 60 minutes.

The research will conform to the ethical policies provided by HEIs in Oman. If you have any question, you can contact me through……..

Yours Sincerely,

Appendix Three: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Semi-Structured Questions	Participants' Responses
• How does academics level of education affect research productivity: • Does having a PhD, or the university you graduated from, influence your productivity do you think? Why is that? • Do you think the ranking of the institution that you are working at now affects research productivity very much? Why do you say that? • What do you think is the range of diversity of staff in your department? • Does that range have an effect on research productivity do you think?	In many different ways, the different kinds of institutions and staff members might have an impact on aspects of research productivity. What stage of career would you say you have reached personally, and how senior would you say you are positioned within the institution?
• What do you think is valued, and what is not valued? • What are the kinds of research topics carried out? To what extent does the content of subjects support research productivity? • What academic discipline do academics feel most aligned with? • What are research topics that academics are interested in? Is that because they are prestigious, or can attract funding, or for some other reason?	I'm interested to know if there are any kinds of academic writing that are most important for you to produce (kinds of articles or books, places to publish) at your stage of career.
• How do demographic factors like age, gender, marital status, numbers of children and family duties affect research productivity for other members of staff, do you think?	In many different ways, being at different stages of career and life affect someone's performance in an institution. Could you take me through how your own different stages of career and life have affected your research productivity over time?
• To what extent do you think collegiate relationships are essential to encourage research productivity? • What are the reasons/factors that motivate you to do more research in your workplace and what are the reasons/factors that prevent you from conducting research? • What would you suggest to improve research productivity in your institution or department? • If you were suddenly put in charge of all research development, what would you do to make change happen?	All of us, in our everyday work, might have promising expectations and might get influenced by different people and various kinds of pressures in our work environment. What do you think have been the influences and pressures that have been most influential on you and your research?
• Do you think that the other people you work with feel differently? • Do they perceive that researching is part of their job? What benefits do academics think research can bring to them or to their institution? • • To what extent do you think the different academics you work with think they are good at research?	I'm very interested in how academics might be different from each other in the ways they value research. What would you say is your attitude towards research, as an academic?
• Which are most important in your life? • How do you try to balance your time between them? • How do you think your experiences are similar or different from those of the colleagues you work	All of us, in our everyday life, have to balance different priorities-about where to focus our time, where to exert more effort, which meeting to attend, which decision to take and so on. I am interested in the balancing acts that

Semi-Structured Questions	Participants' Responses
from?	you and other academics have to deal with: as researchers, teachers and family members. Which communities do you feel you belong to (teaching, research, family/home, etc.?
	I am interested in the way how you achieve writing within your everyday professional lives. Could you walk me through your experience with research writing? Could you take me through how you became involved with it yourself? How has it developed over time?
• Why was it so difficult? • Can you take me through how you tackled this and how you found time to write?	Have you ever been working on some research writing that really stood out as stressful or difficult to deliver? What happened?
• What do you think was helping you to be productive? • How did you set goals and plans to undertake academic writing?	Can you take a moment to think about a nice time when you feel you were very research productive? Can you take me through that experience? What happened?
• Can you take me through some of the main indicators that your institution is looking for? • What are your perceptions of current levels of productivity? • What do you think are the aspirations for future productivity? • How do you know? Where does it get discussed? • Are you aiming to be more productive in the future yourself? • What kind of goals do you have over the next 2-3 years?	I'm interested in how research outputs are counted within your institution and department. What would you say about the types of outputs that count more and gain more recognition than others?
• To what extent do you think research is emphasized in the institution and department, in the context of other duties? • Do you think that the goals of career progression in your institution and you department incentivize research? • Does the faculty use research productivity as criteria for academic promotion? • How are productive researchers rewarded within the institution and department?	I'm very interested in how your institution and your department value researching?
• What are the sources of research funding? • What are the sources of information? • Do you find them easily accessible?	I would like to talk about the research policy of your institution and department and how it might affect research productivity. What would you say about how the leadership and management are organized in your institution and department?
• To what extent was your department supportive in encouraging research productivity in terms of training, funding, teaching load, publication and other facilities? • Can you tell me about something that was helpful to you back then? • What are your institution and your department in particular doing to stimulate research now, do you think?	I'm also interested in your own experience. When you became involved in researching, what kinds of support were provided to you?
• On the other hand, if you had to say what are the three most important things preventing academics in your department from conducting research,	If you had to say what are the three most important things motivating academics in your department to conduct research, what would

Semi-Structured Questions	Participants' Responses
what would you say they are?	you say they are?
	Is there anything else that you think is important concerning research productivity at higher education institutions that we have not discussed?

Appendix Four: Example of the Coding Process

Raw Data (Responses)	Initial Codes	Focused Codes	Emerging/Potential Categories for Initial Themes
"Having a PhD makes a difference in research productivity because it provides the skills and mindset necessary for conducting research."	PhD as a productivity factor, research skills, mindset for research	Higher education as a research enabler	Educational background and research productivity
"The ranking of the university matters. Institutions with strong research environments provide better opportunities."	Institutional ranking, research opportunities	Institutional reputation's impact on productivity	Institutional influence on research
"There is diversity in my department, with faculty from different academic backgrounds, which fosters idea exchange."	Diversity in academic staff, interdisciplinary collaboration	Diversity as a driver of research collaboration	Academic diversity and research outcomes
"Funding availability determines whether research can be conducted effectively."	Research funding, financial support	Funding as a facilitator of research	Institutional support and research productivity
"Family responsibilities limit the time I can dedicate to research."	Family responsibilities, time constraints	Work-life balance challenges	Personal factors affecting research productivity
"My motivation to conduct research comes from career advancement opportunities."	Career incentives, promotion, research motivation	Career progression as a research motivator	Institutional policies and motivation
"Collegial relationships are essential for research collaborations."	Collaboration, peer support, academic networking	Collegial relationships as enablers	Workplace environment and research productivity
"There is pressure to publish, but sometimes, the focus on quantity over quality is a concern."	Research pressure, publication quantity vs. quality	Publication pressure as a challenge	Institutional expectations and research output
"The institution values research, but teaching load limits research productivity."	Research emphasis, teaching workload	Workload as a research barrier	Institutional constraints on research
"Productive researchers are rewarded with funding and reduced teaching loads."	Research incentives, workload reduction	Incentives for research productivity	Institutional rewards and research motivation
"The institution provides research training, but more support is needed."	Research training, institutional support	Training as a research facilitator	Capacity-building in research
"Balancing teaching, research, and family is challenging."	Time management, competing priorities	Challenges of balancing roles	Work-life balance in academia
"I set research goals over 2–3 years, but institutional support affects goal achievement."	Long-term planning, institutional impact	Research planning and institutional dependence	Future aspirations and institutional support
"Some faculty members don't consider research as part of their main job."	Attitude towards research, faculty perceptions	Research as a secondary responsibility	Differing academic priorities