

Introduction

Following the reduction of government funding for UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), competitive funding models are now becoming the norm, with institutions facing consumerist pressures that are typical of a highly marketised environment (Woodall, Hiller, & Resnick, 2014). Within this environment academics are encouraged to *compete* for the best students in order to maximise revenue both from the UK and abroad (Molesworth, Nixon, & Scullion, 2009). There has also been an increased focus on overseas markets whereby agents and consultants are often hired to enable HEIs to recruit students, and establish and maintain a competitive advantage over their rivals (Bolsmann & Miller, 2008; Rudd, Djafarova, & Waring, 2012). For many Business Schools the recruitment of international students is an essential revenue stream with UKCISA (2018) estimating that there were 442,375 international students studying in the UK during the academic year 2016/17 with 121,675 studying a Business & administrative studies undergraduate degree. Menzies & Baron (2014) agree that the economic benefits of international students is quite formidable and thus the educational experiences they receive must be of a high quality. The vast majority of these international students come from China (95,090 in 2017), with one-third of non-EU students having a Chinese nationality, this is a 14% increase from the year 2012/2013 (UKCISA, 2018). Other countries from which a significant number of students come to the UK include Malaysia (16,370), USA (17,580), India (16,550) and Nigeria (12,665) (UKCISA, 2018).

In the midst of all of these ever increasing numbers, the last three decades has seen a rise in managerialism at UK HEIs (Burnes, Wend & By, 2014), which following Alvesson & Spicer's (2016) broad definition we understand as: *'the strong belief in and*

widespread use of systems, procedures and initiatives driven by managers'. The results of this managerialist trend have been multifaceted including an increase in top-down and centralised decision making (Burnes et al., 2014); an increase in administrative tasks and greater power being placed in the hands of administrators (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016); and increases in the use of activities to evaluate teaching quality (Kalfa & Taksa, 2012; Teelken, 2012).

Despite a large body of work on managerialism within HEIs, the impact of managerialism on teaching practice has to date been largely underexplored (Kalfa & Taksa, 2012). Within this paper we go some way to addressing this gap by exploring business school academics' views on the manner in which increased managerialism has impacted on their teaching of international students. To that end, this article reports the findings of interviews with 22 business school academics within three UK HEIs.

In what follows, we briefly review the literature on the international student experience, and the importance of empathy for undertaking the culturally responsive teaching needed to meet the needs of an international student body (Jabbar & Hardaker, 2013). We then consider how managerialism may be detrimental to and inhibit this process by embroiling academics in unnecessary tasks and reducing their autonomy.

International student experience

The participation of international students in UK HE has increased significantly, making a vital contribution to the financial health of many HE institutions (Jabbar, Analoui, Kong, & Mirza, 2017). These participation rates however are not reflected in student achievement, with diverse students persistently achieving lower attainment levels compared to UK home students (Iannelli & Huang, 2014) and obtaining fewer 'good degrees' i.e. first or upper second class honours (Richardson, 2008). Data suggests that for international Chinese students the lack of attainment is a particular

challenge with only 42% of students from China obtaining a 2:1 or above (Swain, 2014). These low achievement levels are compounded by a poor student experience which involves being subject to behaviour based on stereotypes, poor expectations of academic ability, and in some cases racism (Brown & Jones, 2013; Ryan, 2011).

This lack of achievement in some aspects of literature is put down to poor student language, understanding and competence (Heng, 2018). Identifying specific data points which relates to student entrance criteria, competence and performance is difficult, primarily due to the limited nature of the data available, which causes significant issues in identifying patterns and trends. This type of data is also limited in where this data is stored, in many cases the data often resides with a single institution (Iannelli & Huang, 2014), hence detailed data on incoming competence as a measure of performance is difficult to obtain. One exception to this is the work of Morrison, Merrick, Higgs, & Métais (2005) who studied the differences of international student performance data using HESA statistics. In their results there was a correlation with the work of Richardson (2008) where international students tended to achieve fewer 'good degrees' (i.e. first- or upper-second-class honours) than UK home based students, however even within this research Morrison et al. (2005) acknowledge the limitation of the datasets, especially in relation to competence, achieved grades and performance.

Poor experiences may not be intentional but an outcome of globalisation where international students are merely tolerated due to the fees paid and not encouraged in their academic endeavours (Habu, 2000). In Habu's research students felt disconnected from their studies and from the university experience, ultimately creating a sense of resentment. This resentment often manifests itself in different ways, for example Jones (2017) highlights that many international students struggle with problems of adjustment and isolation which Oberg (2006) argues can create feelings of culture shock. Heng

(2018) discusses these struggles in a greater detail and highlights the challenges of learning a new language and developing new communication style in attempting to think like a ‘Westerner’. In many scenarios these challenges emanate from students attempting to identify with school, societal and cultural expectations.

In discussing these challenges in more detail Poyrazli & Grahame (2007) are of the view that on arrival many international students are expected to navigate a myriad of complex systems with which they have little or no experience. Examples include finding a place to live, learning to use the transportation system and registering for classes. All these challenges, while seemingly trivial can cause distress to international students having negative impacts on their academic studies, and as a result on career potential. It is within this context that Carroll & Ryan (2005) during their research propose that the student experience while critical can sometimes be compromised by high academic workloads and further pressures. In scenarios such as this the onus is on HE institutions to create learning environments where international students feel valued and supported (Brown & Jones, 2013; Marginson, 2012). As the international student becomes integral to UK HEI finances, a change to the academic system is arguably on the horizon. Hence, even with all these challenges UK HE is still an attractive proposition to many international students with Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) explaining that historical and colonial links between host and home countries have in the past played a significant role in the migration of international student flow. More recent research in this area suggests that many students make decisions based on the prestige of British universities, alongside the broader social and cultural offerings (Cebolla-Boado, Hu, & Soysal, 2018).

Empathy

Indeed, changes in the demographics of the student population have led to some scholars to respond with culturally responsive teaching that meets the needs of a diverse student body (Jabbar & Hardaker, 2013). A consistent contention in such commentaries is the necessity of understanding students, and their cultural backgrounds and heritage as a prerequisite for designing appropriate interventions and producing climates that support learning (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

This understanding of the *other* is often captured in the notion of empathy (Jabbar & Hardaker, 2013; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Warren, 2018). Empathy involves achieving an accurate understanding and access to another's frame of reference, such that one is able to sense the other's '*private world as if it were your own*' while retaining the recognition that is not (Rogers, 1992). Empathy is tripartite having cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions (McAllister and Irvine, 2002). Thus, when being empathic, one is able to think and feel as though one were another, and taking this into account act accordingly with what can be termed empathic. That affective and cognitive empathy are a logical prerequisite for empathic behaviour is self-evident: it is only when the academic understands the student's private world that they will be able to respond empathically. Empathic responses in the context we are discussing may include changes of various degrees, including changes to programme designs, classroom activities, assessment tasks, methods of interaction and so forth (Warren, 2018; Jabbar & Hardaker, 2013; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Evidence for the value of empathy when teaching culturally diverse groups can be found in a study by McAllister and Irvine (2002) who examined a multicultural professional developmental training programme that involved 34 teachers and aimed to enhance culturally responsive teaching. Participants in the study agreed that empathy

was important for working with diverse students, and “*teachers reported that an empathetic disposition led to more positive interactions with their students, supportive classroom climates, and student-centred pedagogy*” (McAllister & Irvine, 2002).

Despite recognition that empathic and culturally responsible teaching is beneficial, not all overseas students have an experience of HE that can be accurately characterised in this manner. There is evidence that students often perceive a lack of empathy on the part of the individuals and the institutions in which they study, not feeling connected to their academic tutors, and perceiving that the embedded structures do not care or cater for them (Habu, 2000; Turner, 2006). There are a number of ready explanations for this. First, it is clear that empathy is a necessary but not sufficient condition for culturally responsive and effective teaching of international students (McAllister and Irvine, 2002). Individuals may have an empathic understanding of the private worlds of their overseas students, without an attending desire to address or meet these. Some scholars have suggested that teaching one’s students in an appropriate manner should be elevated to a moral obligation (Jabbar and Hardaker, 2013), thus providing the necessary impetus for action between the recognition of a need, and meeting of it. Of course, while such moral prescriptions may be desirable their concomitant behaviours are not guaranteed or necessitated, and a lack of individual interest could serve as a potential barrier to empathic engagement with one’s students. Further, even where the desire to generate empathy and adopt an empathic disposition exists, there is a requirement to be able to effectively communicate. To gain an understanding of an individual’s frame of reference and their private world (Rogers, 1992) requires the ability to communicate meanings, thoughts and feelings, and this may be difficult for overseas students who do not have a strong command of the language used by their tutors (see Turner, 2006 for an exploration of difficulties).

Second, placing individual considerations to one side, Turner's (2006) study also raises questions about the role of the institution in providing and enabling culturally responsive teaching. Lynch (2001) argues that empathy can also be conceived of at the organisational level, in which an empathic organisation adopts policies, practices, norms (and so forth) that are sensitive to the needs and requirements of those that it serves. We contend that the existence of individual cognitive and affective empathy is logically prior to the provision of institutional empathy, that is, at some point, someone in the organisation must be able to empathise with the relevant student's or student groups so as to determine culturally responsive policies, practices and rules. In considering institutional policies and practices it is important to note that HEIs in many countries exist within the context of increasing governmental pressure and are subject to significant quality assurance requirements (Steinhardt, Schneijderberg, Götze, Baumann, & Krücken, 2017). With respect to business schools, where they seek accreditation such as that offered by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) they must demonstrate the achievement of certain standards and processes (Hunt, 2015). Thus, what may be perceived as a lack of institutional empathy need not be explained solely by ignorance or neglect and may indeed stem from the requirement to devote organisational resources towards the achievement of other standards and targets deemed to be important.

The third explanation we propose for a lack of individual empathy towards overseas student is the trend towards increasing managerialism within the UK HE sector. In what follows we summarise the research describing the impact of managerialism on HEIs before outlining our argument that increasing managerialism has provided a context in which managers in HEIs have increasingly determined and

directed academics' activity and workload, and thus curtailed their ability to act empathically towards their students.

Managerialism

As discussed earlier in this paper we define managerialism as: '*the strong belief in and widespread use of systems, procedures and initiatives driven by managers*' (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016). As a concept and notion managerialism and the influence of new public/private management practices in the H.E. sector has operated in parallel alongside globalisation and internationalisation as a significant driver of change in most modern international universities (Bellamy, Morley, & Watty, 2003; Chandler, Barry, & Clark, 2002; Kalfa & Taksa, 2012; Marginson, 2012; Marginson & Considine, 2002; Meyer, 2002; Schapper & Mayson, 2004; Winter & Sarros, 2001). This change and the movement towards managerialist ideology has increased the power of university managers, resulting in the systematic reduction of academic freedom and autonomy, creating an environment of an alienated and demoralised workforce who operate in a climate of low morale, resentment and in some cases resistance (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016; Bellamy et al., 2003; Chandler et al., 2002; Kinman & Jones, 2003; Lomas, 2007; Rowley, 1996; Schapper & Mayson, 2004; Shain & Gleeson, 1999). From the perspective of the aforementioned researchers their work argues that managerialism has created a culture of centralised decision making, increased stress and workloads, which stems from the alienation of academics from decision making processes (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016; Jabbar et al., 2017; Rowley, 1996).

This is not a new phenomenon with Burnes, Wend & By (2014) arguing that the last three decades have seen English universities increasingly attempting to model themselves on private sector organisations. The result of this approach, they highlight,

has been increasingly top-down and centralised decision-making, with academics finding themselves being told what and how to teach, and what and where to publish. Indeed, Alvesson and Spicer (2016) note that a significant part of the UK HEI agenda (underpinned by managerialism) has become focused on the production of particular forms of research - with research article publication (and not teaching) becoming the core focus and indicator of success for many individual academics and business schools, reinforced by the provision of rewards for those who achieve. The pressure on academics to publish particular forms of publication is not restricted to UK HEIs alone. Parker's (2014) anonymised case study of the European Business School, demonstrates a striking case of how a focus on research article publication can be fostered (or perhaps enforced) at the expense of a focus on teaching.

In a study providing insights from multiple European HEIs, Teelken (2012) undertook 48 interviews with primarily academic staff across ten Universities in the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK. Findings of the study demonstrated that academics faced increased pressure to publish in certain forums, and there was a significant curtailing of freedom; and that institutions and external bodies placed an increased emphasis on teaching quality, and its measurement. The work of Teelken (2012) brings forward some key points which highlight the historical evolution of managerialism through the perceptions of academic staff across the three countries, their work finds an increased emphasis on staff observations and performance measures, including quality of research and teaching. These issues they argue in Sweden and the Netherlands are compounded by the Bologna process, while in the UK managerial developments pre-dates the implementation of Bologna. The differing implementation timelines suggest that different countries are being hampered by managerialism at different times and in different ways, for example Teelken (2012) highlights the impact of the research

assessment exercise (UK), the financial aspects of research (Sweden) and the possibilities for sanctions (Netherlands) as key drivers in the implementation of managerialism philosophies.

Common methods used to measure and evaluate teaching quality included among other activities, student-evaluations, meetings with various stakeholder groups, peer review, and external reviews by official bodies. Further afield, (Teelken, 2012) highlight various changes in teaching practices within an Australian HEI due to managerialism including a need to demonstrate how courses addresses externally set targets, a shift in focus towards the development of student's practical skills valued by employers, and in response the adoption of particular forms of teaching. The managerialist trend has also created additional time pressures for academics through competing academic demands (Kinman & Jones, 2003), pressure for publication (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016; Teelken, 2012), and engagement in (perceived) ineffective activities purported to improve teaching quality (Teelken, 2012). Moreover, it has been argued that the general trend of increased managerialism has affected academic morale, and alienated academics from decision-making structures and systems (Schapper & Mayson, 2004).

Since the edicts of management do not necessitate behavioural change, it is important to consider the behavioural responses of academics to such events. Alvesson and Spicer (2016), found, somewhat to their own surprise, that for business school academics faced with managerialism there is "*much variation, but compliance seems to be a common, if not, a dominant response.*" Teelken (2012) suggests three distinct forms of response: *symbolic compliance*, in which academics appear to comply but resist; *professional pragmatism*, in which change and the managerialist agenda is accepted but steps are taken to overcome or ameliorate the negative effects, and finally

formal instrumentality, in which a willing stance is taken, perceiving the managerialist agenda more positively. Teelken (2012) finds that the former two responses are more common than the latter, stating that in many cases respondents managed to cope with these obligations by finding ways to work around these stressful obligation, by maintaining their autonomy and academic freedom.

Having described the impact of managerialism on academics within HEIs we are now in a position to outline our contention that managerialism may prove detrimental to academics' ability to generate empathy, and thus engage in culturally responsive teaching practice. We begin with the recognition that the generation of affective and cognitive empathy is time consuming and requires communication between the parties involved (Rogers, 1992; Warren, 2018). Next, we note that to behave empathically, taking into account the other persons world (Rogers, 1992) and so engage in culturally responsive teaching (Warren, 2018; Jabbar & Hardaker, 2013; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) requires the freedom to make changes to pedagogic practice with respect to methods of instruction and design of learning exercises and programmes. What is evident from our review of the literature is that the outcomes of managerialism seem to curtail academics time and place restrictions on their autonomy. Therefore, with respect to the former, since academics have only finite time and energy to devote to their work, we expect that where managerialism leads to unnecessary and counterproductive activity on the part of the academic then this will detrimentally impact the potential for them to generate empathy. Indeed, we expect, that even those who perceive generation and enacting empathetic behaviour to be desirable, and/or a moral imperative (Jabbar & Hardaker, 2013) would find it difficult to meet with, discuss and consider the issues and work of each of their students, there simply is not sufficient time in the working week. With respect to the latter, where a reduction in autonomy and morale and an alienation from

decision making structures and systems occurs (Schapper & Mayson, 2004), we expect this to hinder the ability of academics to make suggestions that would allow for empathetic institutional policies and practices.

However, as noted earlier, the impact of managerialism on teaching and learning has to date been largely underexplored (Kalfa & Taksa, 2012) and thus we offer these suggestions tentatively. An important caveat to this discussion is the need to distinguish between management interventions in general and the impacts of managerialism that we have described. The value of any management intervention is only evident once it has been enacted and many commentators are in favour of management interventions to improve quality. There are various texts arguing for the importance and value of quality management systems in HEI (see for example, Sallis, 2014 and Ellis & Hogard, 2018). Steinhardt et al (2017) have argued that quality assurance of teaching and learning is becoming a distinct area of research and scholarship. In light of this, we are not suggesting that complete academic autonomy is desirable, and that management intervention is always to be avoided. Rather we contend that the enacting of increasing numbers of poor management interventions (stemming from the managerialist shift) will reduce the potential for empathetic and therefore culturally responsive teaching. To address the limited exploration of the impact of managerialism on teaching practice the authors address the following research question within this paper: to what extent do academics within UK business schools perceive that managerialism has affected their teaching of international students?

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Methodology

We align ourselves to a broad social constructionist position, a position of which there are multiple views and interpretations (Burr, 2006; Crotty, 1998). We hold to the general assumptions of social constructionism outlined by Gergen (1985) and so assert that: researchers should take a critical stance towards received knowledge; the ways in which the world is understood is historically and culturally specified; knowledge is sustained by social processes, and finally that knowledge and social action are intertwined. Thus, on our view, social reality is in a constant state of flux, being continually constructed by actors who imbue it with meaning (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). This approach has no doubt influenced the framing our question which seeks to understand academics' perceptions of aspects of their working world (managerialism and teaching practice). Therefore, a qualitative approach is suitable since its methods can be used to uncover participants' experiences and stories, and make their voices heard (Creswell, 2012). The choice of semi-structured interviews also stems from our approach, since it allows for a deep understanding of participants views and experiences (Yin, 2009).

For many institutions a study such as this carries significance and relevance. In this paper we argue that the increase in international students may require Business School's to place an emphasis on modifying teaching strategies that have proven to be successful with other cohorts, and develop new best practices and approaches in the teaching of international students and international business. Thus, to address this research question 9 men and 13 women were interviewed (22 interviews in total) who held positions as lecturers, senior lecturers, graduate teaching assistants, principal lecturers and professors. All respondents had a minimum of three years' experience of teaching within UK HE Business Schools, and are based in newer (post-1992)

institutions in the North of England. Post-1992 universities are ‘new’ universities which were conferred with a university title by the government in 1992. These universities were chosen as they are relatively newer to receiving larger numbers of international students. Therefore, there exists the potential that institutional infrastructures are not sufficiently developed to support academic staff in the provision of high-quality teaching. The focus is on the business schools within these institutions as they tend to attract the most international students (CABS, 2015). (CABS, 2015). These, post 1992 institutions universities are vocational in nature, and, while not traditionally research orientated, are members of the University Alliance, hence, for the purposes of this paper we make the distinction that these universities have the development of students’ practical skills as a core part of their mission. Table 1 provides an overview of the sample; the names of the respondents have been changed to protect anonymity. In order to distinguish the various respondents and provide some back- ground on their situation, we define their years of working in the sector and their position as an academic.

[Insert Table 1: Description of the Participants here]

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants (see Table 2 for interview questions) which typically lasted between 50 to 90 minutes, culminating in excess of 45 hours of audio data being collected. An ethics proposal was made before any research was conducted at the authors home institution and ethical permission was granted.

[Insert Table 2: Interview Questions here]

Data analysis

Template Analysis, an iterative process embedded within thematic analysis, was used to organise and analyse the data (Brooks, McCluskey, Turley, & King, 2015; King, 2012). The process consists of structured themes which are developed iteratively and applied to the data, each iteration of analysis allows for the modification of the themes. In order to begin this process King (2004) suggests that researchers should generate an initial *priori*, which is anticipated to occur in the data analysis, in this research this included Managerialism (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016; Meyer, 2002), academic pedagogical experiences (Schmeichel, 2011; Tomalin, 2007) and UK academic conventions (Shaw, 2009; Turner, 2006). The first and the second authors independently coded all the interview transcripts from the audio files themselves. These initial transcripts were used in the development of the *priori* template. Coding was performed using Nvivo 10 (QSR International), a specialised software programme designed to allow for the storage and analysis of qualitative data. The completion of the coding process and agreement by the authors on the themes paved the way for an initial coding template. This process was undertaken two additional times to clarify that all data had been applied in a consistent and systematic manner (the whole process is illustrated in figure 1).

Insert Figure 1 – The template analysis process

The completion of the final template paved the way for the authors to interpret the findings while focusing on trends, patterns, causes, meaning and frequency which indicate the influence of managerialism on the teaching of international students from an academic perspective. In addition the flexibility of template analysis allows data to be classified across two or more different codes at the same level, therefore, allowing for the emergence of relationships across clusters and themes (Crabtree & Miller, 1999;

King, 2004). Figure 1 details the process of analysis and table 3 highlights in detail how the codes have evolved during the process of analysis.

[Insert Table 3: The coding templates]

Template A builds on the *priori* by highlighting institutional structural issues which impact on the academic's feelings of autonomy and the service they provide to their students. Issues around policies and procedures, heritage and systems undermine staff attitudes and influences perceptions of the value they provide (Alvesson & Spicer, 2016; Meyer, 2002). Template B modifies this template by developing additional depth to the nodes to provide further insight. The final template highlights through the coding process the changing nature of higher education. The inclusion of the code 'institutional engagement' by academics suggest that now the emphasis is on institutions to develop customer relationships and engagement with their students. A lot of this is underpinned by increased bureaucracy which inhibit academics abilities to carry out their duties as before (Meyer, 2002). Template C is an output of the previous three steps and highlights the 9 main higher-level codes, which are indicated with an asterisk (*). Through this process, three themes emerged as illustrated in Figure 2 below:

[Insert Figure 2: Key themes to emerge from the data analysis]

Key findings

Theme 1: The rise of Managerialism

The first theme determined in the analysis is that there are increasing levels of

managerialist practice which participants perceive to have a detrimental impact on the individual academic, and impede their choices with respect to the teaching and learning process. Such experiences are reflected in the experiences of Andrew and Brian:

“We are at the stage now, where we are driven by quality systems as opposed to developing the student experience.” (Andrew)

“Quite often your lesson plan is developed on the back on an envelope ten minutes before you teach. That is the bit you've not had time to do because everybody else is shouting for other things. This is a shame because that's the most important bit of the job.” (Rebecca)

“I could say more and more, the institutions turning to be more bureaucratic. It's removing the opportunities for people like me to engage with students as individuals.” (Brian)

The experiences of Andrew and Brian seem to suggest that the focus on systems, procedures and processes has become an obstacle in the way of the teaching and learning process. As suggested by Brian, an academic with over 10 years of experience working in UK HE, academia has changed, the engagement with students which used to be so crucial, is now hindered due to additional bureaucracy. Rebecca argues that the continued encroachment of other commitments on her time gives her very little scope to do what she does best, which is teach. Schapper & Mayson (2004) view these extra demands, requirements and form filling as the transfer of power from the hands of academics to a few university managers, a view similar to that offered by Alvesson & Spicer (2016).

Literature (Bellamy et al., 2003; Chandler et al., 2002; Schapper & Mayson, 2004) suggests that while managerialism allows for centralised and consistent decision making, the lack of autonomy has created a demoralised and alienated academic workforce, such was evident in our findings

“I get very frustrated, because sometimes it seems that the managers who come up with bright ideas are not the ones who actually have to do them.” (Rebecca)

“At this institution, we just all had to re-apply for our jobs, their numbers are declining and they've been re-organised to the point of ridiculousness, all the staff think it's a horrible place to work.” (Angela)

Both Angela and Rebecca point to a lack of communication from senior management, with policies and procedures being dictated very much in a top down approach. While Angela's views may seem out of place, the drive towards efficiency gains has placed pressure on academic job security and has increased centralised decision making based on financial concerns. Kinman & Jones (2003) highlight poor communication skills as a key contributor to stress alongside a lack of autonomy, which has again been mentioned by Alvesson & Spicer (2016).

Dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs is clear amongst participants in this research with the majority of this dissatisfaction being demonstrated by academics with excess of twenty five years' experience working in academia:

“The problem is that over time there is more and more bureaucracy, there is less and less discretion [...] it's much more of a directed job” (John)

“I think over the years as I've seen it evolve and change I now don't feel valued and I don't think I'm alone in that, [...] it's all about central control” (Andrew)

“There are more rules about how long a piece of coursework should be [...] rules, rules, rules” (Rodney)

While this may not be a view widely shared amongst younger members of staff there is evidence to support the contention that the continued emphasis on systems, policies and procedures leaves less options for creating learning opportunities and experiences for students. For many academics in our sample, this lack of autonomy contributed to

feeling less 'valued' and contributed significantly to nullifying engagement opportunities with students.

Theme 2: Institutional Empathy

The international student experience is filled with a sense of expectation and promise (Rubie-Davies, Hattie, & Hamilton, 2006) and the view that a UK degree has a certain level of prestige (Rudd et al., 2012). However, a body of research (Brown & Jones, 2013; Richardson, 2008) suggests that for many diverse students a UK higher education is compromised by issues of low achievement, prejudice and disadvantage. To this end Stokes (2017) advocates the notion that more can be done to help international students feel at home by developing socialising schemes, allowing students to share experiences and asking home students to live side by side with international students. Arguably, a change of approach is needed with multiple researchers arguing that current integration efforts are overwhelming and contribute to culture shock (Gu & Maley, 2008; Oberg, 2006; Turner, 2006).

The perspectives of the academics also suggest that more can be done to support international students:

“In terms of our Chinese students we (the organization) did not adequately recognise what they needed, what support or what problems they faced and the achievement of those students was really quite poor” (John)

“I don't think institutions really understand about getting students to engage with it. They tend to think of students as something that passes through, rather than something that should belong for life” (Michael)

Michael argues that institutions he is aware of do not fully comprehend the obstacles students face and what they really need, we view this as such institutions lacking

empathy. A lack of institutional empathy we argue is a contributor towards poor student achievement, attainment and integration.

This lack of empathy can manifest itself in numerous ways, including poor support structures, inadequate curriculum, and inappropriate understanding of student backgrounds and culture (Jabbar & Hardaker, 2013; Young, 2010). When academics were asked about their views on empathy, participants often turned the discussion towards a lack of empathy on the part of the institution, arguing that their institutions seemed motivated by maximizing financial gains, without having provided appropriate support and policies for meeting the needs of students and maintaining quality:

“It becomes a numbers game, but numbers mean it becomes a financial gain, which is jobs for you and me” (Liz)

“I think maybe because the university tries to recruit more international students and faster, so I don't think there is much support that they get before they enter the degree” (Bo)

“I think we can't meet our standards, so I think maybe sometimes every School needs to sacrifice the quality of the students to get more students to come in to join the school, sometimes that's why we have very poor quality of students.” (Chui)

Houser (2008) in his research mentions the importance of identification and empathy as a critical skill for educators. The respondents at this stage show a certain amount of sympathy on how stretched resources can affect the teaching and learning experience of international students. Arguably these stretched resources are consistent with centralised managerialist decision making which prioritises financial decisions, placing it at odds with the traditional views of knowledge dissemination (Jabbar et al, 2017).

While it is clear that to function in competitive environments, institutions may need to develop new revenue streams, and continue to entice international students to complete a UK Higher Education degree (Jabbar et al., 2017), academics within our sample had concerns about the reality of the student experience. Once students have been enrolled there are seeming disparities between what was promised in recruitment and promotional materials and the support and experience provided:

“We have promised them the world and then it seems to be a scramble around with the support services that we have within the University for international students”
(Claire)

“This organisation seeks to portray a happy learning environment, where you can succeed if you work; but in my experience a lot of that is not true” (Chung)

Such experiences maybe indicative of a lack of institutional empathy, which is perhaps perceived all the more clearly due to the aspirational marketing approaches adopted.

Theme 3: International student experience

Research in the field of the international student experience approaches the topic from multiple perspectives, for example Brown & Jones (2013) who interviewed 153 international students discuss the impact of racism, while authors such as Oberg (2006) discuss the perceptions institutions and educators have of international students, while Turner (2006) notes, many international students feel unwelcome, unsafe and threatened. These issues and challenges point to an inconsistent international student experience across the sector, further, compounded by pedagogical experiences which do not resonate with the students own frames of reference (Durden, 2008; Earwaker, 1992). Thus, international students may be made aware of their *otherness* both in HEIs and as part of the wider communities that they find themselves in. These issues have a serious

impact on the integration, and educational achievement of international students, with academics suggesting that their institutions are struggling to adapt to this changing student body:

“This Institution is very slow to adapt to change, like most institutions” (Amber)

The delayed process of change is having a detrimental impact on student-academic relationships, and teaching mechanisms in the classroom (Shaw, 2009). These issues are exacerbated due to time and workload pressures (Kinman & Jones, 2003; Woodall et al., 2014) leading many academics to place the blame of failure and lack of achievement directly at the door of the students:

“I’m not sure what goes on in China, but quite a number of them repeat anything they read, only by accident does this have anything to do with the question” (Sam)

“They don’t really understand a lot of things I think there is a lot of pressures, not just for me but other lecturers at the university to make sure they succeed” (Bo)

International student academic skills are often questioned, probed, analysed and dissected allowing academics to find fault with the student as opposed to their own pedagogic practice. Potentially, pedagogic practice could be improved through structured training and support which may go some way to equipping academics to improve the international student experience. However, for academics within our sample such potential was not realised

“We are supposed to know, but I don’t, we had a training thing two years ago, but I think it was a generic session that was sent to everyone” (Abtin)

“The training I had was designed and delivered by people who have never stood in front of the students from any background and it was probably designed by somebody who probably read the definition from a text book somewhere without ever having thought about it” (Michael)

We had the training but the training was actually not very helpful, not very related to the teaching duties (Bo)

I think ultimately, it's down to the University to initiate training, we are recruiting large numbers of students, we are taking a lot of money from them. There needs to be more support and guidance and encouragement to the academic members of staff to get their heads around what is the best way of developing these students (John)

There seems to be a mixed picture here, academics perspectives indicate that in some cases the training is not consistent and in others it has made things worse. John and Bo both articulate the need for additional guidance and support in meeting the needs of the student, in a targeted and supportive manner which helps academics to develop the best international student experience possible.

Discussion

This study contributes to investigations into managerialism in HE by providing evidence of 22 business school academics' perceptions of managerialism within three UK HEIs. Based on the findings presented, our central contention is that for the academics in these HEIs, the managerial policies and practices have been detrimental to teaching quality and the international student experience. We report that increasing managerialism has indirectly curtailed academic autonomy, both by increasing administrative workload, which reduces the time available for academics to perform their teaching (and other) tasks in the way they believe best, and by providing prescriptions for teaching practices. This increase in managerialism in UK HEIs is consistent with prior research (Alvesson and Spicer, 2016), and as shown in other studies, managerialism has not, in the view of participants, had a positive impact on the quality of their work (Teelken, 2012; Alvesson and Spicer, 2016) but has had the

opposite effect. It is interesting to note that academics in our study differed in their years of experience, with some being well established and others being newer to the profession. Since all perceived an increase in managerialism we take this as evidence that managerialism in these institutions has been increasing in both the long and short term. Academics within this study perceived managerialism to have had a detrimental impact on their ability to provide a valuable student experience for international students. Based on the arguments outlined earlier in this paper, this can be explained by the reduction in the opportunity, and in some cases willingness, to generate and act with the empathy necessary for culturally responsive teaching (Jabbar & Hardaker, 2013).

This is not intended as a criticism of managerialism *per se*. We did not assert and do not wish to be interpreted as concluding that managerialism in all its forms and permutations will necessitate deleterious outcomes. Our point, based on our earlier discussion, is that if culturally responsive teaching requires empathy, which in turn requires time and the autonomy to choose pedagogic practices, then the systems, procedures and interventions determined by management must allow for this. Thus, in our study of business schools within three HEIs we find three cases of mismanagement. As a further caveat, we also note that we do not wish to align ourselves with the view that academics should have complete autonomy without any oversight. Therefore, it is not that the shift towards managerialism that is necessary problematic, it is simply that in the three HEIs in this study the edicts of management have been ineffective and perhaps misguided. Of course, if management practice is poor, then it is likely that an emphasis on increased management control and intervention will lead to poor consequences for those involved. The converse may also hold to be true, and participants' perceptions regarding managerialism as an overarching ideology may have been more positive if the various interventions had been perceived as effective. That the

managerial interventions have not been effective is borne out in the discussion of the final two themes. Participants reported that their respective institutions did not provide adequate support and training for academics to work effectively with international students, and that the institutions do not have appropriate policies and practices to support the international students. Indeed, there are a great number of practices that can be put in place to support international students both prior to and during their arrival in their host country (see Lillyman & Bennett (2014) for a review of the literature). In addition to staff training, once students have arrived, HEIs can develop schemes and opportunities for socialisation, facilitating students sharing of their experiences with others, and asking home students to live side by side with international students (Stokes, 2017).

The consensus of the academics seems to suggest that there is too much focus on developing support systems that contribute to the status quo of current policies, procedures and power structures which is to the detriment of the international student experience, which is consistent with prior research (see, Avery & Thomas, 2004; Nieto, 1999; Turner, 2006). This focus on continuing to implement supposedly robust and efficient support systems does not address the fundamental issues, there needs to be a change to school policies, procedures and practices to better support academic ability to develop a cohesive student experience.

While the sample precludes any generalisations and narrative about the impact of managerialism in UK HEIs in general, the findings reveal the difficulties that arise when academic autonomy is curtailed, and ineffective managerialist interventions are imposed. Thus, based on these findings we suggest that while the value of managerialist intervention cannot be universally specified, it is likely that it will negatively affect

teaching quality when it overly curtails academics' ability to respond autonomously to the needs of their students.

Conclusion

This study suggests that managerialism may influence academic perceptions of teaching international students. In this paper, we present the research and highlight a situation in which academics perceive themselves to lack institutional support, and who feel they are burdened with increased administrative tasks. These challenges impact on their teaching responsibilities in a way they believe to be inappropriate, creating conditions where they feel unable to adequately meet the needs of their international students.

There were also important limitations which need to be addressed. One problem identified is that perceptions such as these are sometimes addressed in isolation. In such cases, there is a risk of drawing oversimplified conclusions based on limited data. Moreover, although we have argued that there is detrimental mismanagement within the three business schools within the HEIs we studied it does not follow that this will be so in other academic institutions in the UK and farther afield. Another limitation identified and an opportunity for further research in the future is academic perceptions and responses to the managerialist imperative. While this research has a focus on academic perceptions of international students, little data has been collected on how academics feel about the managerialist culture. In moving this research area forward and expanding the data set there is scope to explore this in the context of the international student and to consider the perspective of academic administrators.

In balance, this paper identifies a tension between academic and institutional expectations, while there is a dislike for growing administration, diminishing autonomy and heavier workloads the financial health and growth of the institution is intrinsically

linked with the growth of international students. This paper envisages that as universities become more global, institutions will provide support and infrastructure for appropriate learning development strategies.

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Table 1: Description of the participants

Name	Role	Teaching Experience (years)
Sam	Senior Lecturer	30
Sarah	Senior Lecturer	6
Brian	Senior Lecturer	10
Ayub	Director of Education	12
Chung	Senior Lecturer	20
Paulina	Lecturer	4
Claire	Senior Lecturer	7
Rebecca	Lecturer	8
Angela	Lecturer	4
Liz	Senior Lecturer	7
Lisa	Course Leader	15
Julie	Course Leader	7
Georgina	Senior Lecturer	6
Abtin	Director of Education	25
Chui	Lecturer	3
Michael	Principal Lecturer	7
Bo	Lecturer	3
Rodney	Principal Lecturer	30
John	Principal Lecturer	35

Amber	Senior Lecturer	4
Andrew	Lecturer	27
Emma	Course Leader	9

Table 2: Interview questions

Questions
Question 1: In your own experience can you describe some of your experiences when talking to and supporting international students?
Question 2: Does your institution support you with the necessary training to interact and teach international students?
Question 3: Do you feel that your institution allocates significant resources for international students?
Question 4: What are the current priorities for your institution?
Question 5: In your experience, what is the best way to engage students from an international background?
Question 6: How do you feel this institution supports you in your pedagogy development for international students?

Question 7: How do you feel this institution has adapted to the challenges of Internationalisation?

Table 3: Coding templates

Priori Template	Template A	Template B	Template C
Managerialism (Gay, 2002)	Policies & Procedures Heritage Systems	Policies & Procedures <u>Language</u> <u>Centralised decision</u> <u>making</u> Systems <u>Increased</u> <u>administration</u> <u>Evaluations</u>	Policies & Procedures * Language <u>and support</u>* Systems*
Academic pedagogical experiences (Schmeichel,	Curriculum	Curriculum <u>Attainment</u>	Curriculum* Attainment* <u>Institutional Engagement*</u>

2011; Tomalin, 2007)			
UK academic conventions (Shaw, 2009; Turner, 2006)	Staff Attitudes	Staff Attitudes <u>Previous student experience</u>	Staff Attitudes* Previous student experience* <u>Bureaucracy*</u>

Figure 1: The template analysis process

Figure 2: Key themes to emerge from the data analysis