A Qualitative Study of Satisfaction of IT Academics with Transnational Education

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Abstract

As Australian universities' involvement in Transnational Education (TNE) continues to grow, little thought is given to the role of the academic. It is important that academics are engaged positively with TNE in order to mitigate some of the risks associated with TNE. A study of IT academics has shown that while they are less satisfied with TNE than their normal teaching role, they still show a marginal degree of satisfaction with TNE teaching. This paper reports on a qualitative study aimed at exploring and explaining the factors associated with academic satisfaction and TNE in terms of the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman and Oldham 1976). It suggests there is a fine balance between being satisfied and not; the aspects of TNE that are seen to be associated with a higher degree of academic satisfaction (e.g., face-to-face interaction with students, collegial relationships and interactions with TNE teaching staff) need to be encouraged and facilitated through university procedures and policies. On the other hand, those aspects of TNE that cause dissatisfaction (e.g., extra administrative load) need to be understood, managed and mitigated where possible.

KEYWORDS

Transnational Education, IT education, academic job satisfaction, Job Characteristics Model

INTRODUCTION

As discussed extensively elsewhere (e.g., Doorbar and Bateman 2008; Healey and Michael 2014; Lang 2011; Mahmud et al. 2010), Transnational Education (TNE) is important to many universities as a source of income that is independent of government funding, and as a strategy for the achievement of "internationalisation" objectives. It is important to students in that it provides the potential to complete studies in their home country, decreasing the costs (Healey and Michael 2014), both in terms of tuition and living expenses, and for some, provides access to tertiary studies that might not otherwise be available. Involvement in TNE however, exposes universities to financial and reputational risk (e.g., Hoare 2012; McBurnie and Pollock 2000), and there have been several high-profile TNE failures, the most notable being UNSW ASIA and John Hopkins in Singapore (Sidhu 2008).

The success of TNE programmes at least partially relies on the support of home campus academics; indeed, academic antipathy toward establishment of a campus in Singapore by Warwick University is cited as one of the reasons for the university not establishing a larger presence in Singapore (Sidhu 2008). This support or cooperation in turn is causally related to the satisfaction home campus academics derive from their participation in TNE.

The study reported in this paper is a component of a larger mixed-methods study where the first (quantitative) phase explored the factors that influence the satisfaction IT academics gain from TNE. The results of the first phase, reported in Toohey et al. (2013), suggest that there is a positive relationship between the amount of interaction academics have with TNE students and satisfaction, but a negative relationship between the amount of interaction academics have with TNE teaching colleagues and satisfaction. There was also a marginal association between the satisfaction gained from TNE and the degree of control academics have over the conduct of their TNE courses. The purpose of this second, qualitative, phase of the project was to increase our understanding of these findings. More specifically, it addresses the following questions:

- *Why does interaction with TNE students, regardless of the mode of interaction, result in higher satisfaction for home campus academics?*

- *Why does increased interaction with TNE teaching colleagues result in lower levels of satisfaction for home campus academics?*
- *How does the level of control over the TNE offering of a course impact on satisfaction of home campus academics?*
- *What are the other major factors that impact on satisfaction with TNE for home campus academics?*

BACKGROUND

TNE has been addressed thoroughly in a wide range of contexts. Much of that literature addresses the importance of TNE to universities as a source of funding (e.g., McLean 2007), in development of research collaborations (e.g., Mahmud et al. 2010), and in terms of internationalisation of the curriculum (e.g., Chan 2011). Crosling (2012) suggests benefits to the university in terms of projecting an "innovative" image in responding to issues of global needs and changes. Of most relevance in this study though, is the role of academics; in particular, their more traditional teaching and learning responsibilities (e.g, curriculum design, choice of assessment methods, grading of student performance) and how that translates to the TNE context. This section begins by examining how the various modes in which TNE is delivered have been defined and described. These differences will have impacts on the role academics will play in TNE. It concludes by reviewing the research that has focused on the benefits that can accrue to academics from their involvement in TNE.

While most TNE arrangements can be grouped into a small number of categories, the ways in which TNE is delivered to the student vary widely (McBurnie and Ziguras 2007). Doorbar and Bateman (2008) suggest that these differences arise because there is "*no one size fits all*" (p.17), and that factors such as the mission of the university, the consumer country, financial reasons and the "*perceived acceptability of models in relation to quality*" (p.17), all impact on how TNE is delivered.

Two approaches to categorisation of TNE arrangements are commonly used in the literature. The first approach examines, and is based on, the nature of the partnership between the providing institution (or home university) and the participating institution in the other country. The second approach categorises TNE delivery using the degree of control over various aspects of course delivery and curriculum control.

When discussing approaches to TNE based on the characteristics of the partnership arrangements, several categories have been noted by the International Education Association of Australia (IEAA 2008):
1. Full delivery transnational campus: delivered by home institution staff, supplemented by local staff.
2. Articulation: units of study offered by a local institution and accepted as equivalent by the home institution.
3. Franchising: an overseas institution authorised to offer an award of the home institution.
4. Branch campus: a transnational campus established to offer programs and qualifications of the home institution.

Naidoo (2009) suggests this type of classification schema causes confusion because it is attempting to describe both contractual agreements and define responsibilities for the delivery of programmes.

The Office of Learning and Teaching report on TNE (Mazzolini and Yeo 2012) suggests that the most useful way to study different TNE delivery modes if the primary interest is the role of the academic in TNE, is to concentrate on the "*locus of curriculum control*" (p.24), which deals with the contractual determination of responsibility for learning and teaching focussed elements of the relationship, such as:
1. Curriculum selection and design
2. Choice of learning and teaching activities
3. Choice of assessment methods and items, and
4. Grading of student performance.

The report defines four degrees of curriculum control based on how the responsibilities associated with curriculum control are allocated between the home and TNE campus: home campus control, limited transnational campus control, distributed control and full transnational campus control. Characteristics of each of these are shown in Table 1 below.

In attempting to map these loci of control to the International Education Association of Australia modes of delivery discussed above, the authors demonstrated that the relationship between "business model" and "locus of curriculum control" is not one-to-one (Mazzolini & Yeo, 2012). Indeed, their mapping would seem to suggest that the business model is not necessarily a good indication of how curriculum is controlled in a TNE context.

Decisions made around the locus of curriculum control would seem, then, to have more impact on the degree and nature of the academic's participation in TNE than the nature of the business model. For example, where the

locus of curriculum control is home campus, or limited transnational campus control, then there would be an expectation of more involvement of home campus academics.

Table 1: Locus of Curriculum Control (adapted from Mazzolini and Yeo, 2012)

Locus of Curriculum Control	Home campus	Limited transnational campus control	Distributed control	Transnational campus control
Characteristics	Curriculum design and assessment are determined by the home campus only. Maybe fly-in-fly-out delivery.	Opportunities for contextualisation of learning activities &/or assessment items. Assessment or sample-moderated home campus.	Transnational campus decisions constrained only by attaining the same learning outcomes. May include sample assessment moderation	Units of study or programs offer only transnational campus but with the qualification awarded by the home campus institution.
Key features:	The unit learning activities and assessment are same whoever delivers the unit	The unit and assessment are the same whoever delivers the unit. Learning and teaching activities may be contextualised	Unit learning outcomes are the same. Learning and teaching activities and assessment are contextualised	The unit is subject to QA processes consistent with Australian national protocols
Usually adopted where:	The program is offered through multiple providers OR a unit is offered at a transnational campus for the first time or with new staff	There is continuity of unit staffing and a unit has been offered successfully on a TNE campus for a few semesters	There is a continuity of unit staffing and a unit has been offered successfully on a TNE campus for a number of years	The unit is offered only at the transnational campus, though it might be taken by home campus students.

The "normal" or "traditional" model of university teaching involves some degree of face-to-face interaction with on-campus students and colleagues (Schulz 2013). It is characterised by immediate feedback between students and academics, and interaction between staff in the same courses or disciplines; these being seen as key factors in academic job satisfaction (Houston et al. 2006). However, variations in TNE contractual and operational arrangements will impact on how the individual academic will interact with TNE students and teaching colleagues. For example, when there is some degree of "fly-in-fly-out" teaching, there will be an element of physical interaction between the academic and the students. If the course was to be delivered without any presence of the home academic, as might be found in a "franchising" type of TNE arrangement, interaction between the academic and the students may be non-existent or limited to contact via email, discussion fora, or virtual classrooms. Similarly, the relationship between the home and offshore academics is impacted by the method of delivery in that in a more traditional, on-campus setting, the subject coordinator will have closer contact with the rest of the teaching team be they tutors, lecturers, demonstrators, than would be expected in a fly-in-fly-out model. Further, where there is no physical contact, communications will tend to be more formal and require management of the additional communication overhead (Mahmud et al. 2010). Pyvis (2011) suggests that quality in this type of delivery is seen as being a function of the relationship between the academics on both sides, and that relationships between staff at the home and offshore campus were seen as being very important to the quality of the programme.

Crosling (2012) suggests that student engagement is an important aspect TNE if student outcomes are to be maintained. The case is made that an understanding of the local setting is important if the curriculum is going to be designed in such a way so as to be engaging for both the TNE students, and the staff teaching in the TNE location. As such it is important that home campus academics have some knowledge of the setting in order to design engaging curriculum in the TNE context.

The Job Characteristics Model (JCM) (Hackman and Oldham 1976) is a popular method for modelling the characteristics of a job that result in satisfaction and improved job performance. In order to achieve these positive outcomes in a particular job, the JCM suggests three critical psychological states need to be achieved: knowledge of results; experienced responsibility; experienced meaningfulness. In turn, the model suggests that there are five core job dimensions that impact on the critical psychological states, those being, skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. These dimensions are explained in Table 2 below. The JCM has been used in this project as a reference model to assist with explaining the research findings.

Table 2: Job Characteristics Model (from Hackman and Oldham, 1976)

| CORE JOB DIMENSION	DEFINITION	IMPACTS ON WHICH CRITICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE
Skill Variety	The degree to which the job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, which involve the use of a number of different skills and talents	Experienced meaningfulness of the work
Task Identity	The degree to which the job requires completion of a "whole" and identifiable piece of work … doing a job from beginning to end with a visible outcome	
Task Significance	The degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives or work of other people	
Autonomy	The degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out	Experienced responsibility for the outcome of the work
Feedback	The degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job result in the individual obtaining direct and clear information about the effectiveness of his or her performance	Knowledge of the results of work

PROCEDURES

This study is a component of a larger mixed-methods study where the first phase explored the roles of interaction and control in determining the satisfaction IT academics gain from TNE. The purpose of this second phase of the project was to understand more about the findings reported in Toohey et. al. (2013).

The choice to adopt an explanatory sequential mixed methods research design (Creswell 2014) (see Figure 1 below) was made because of the exploratory nature of the research; there has been little research specifically addressing the impact that variations in the mechanism of delivery of TNE has on academics, and little in terms of trying to group/stratify approaches to TNE delivery from the perspective of the academic rather than the organisation. The quantitative data collected in the first phase of the project, allowed for the approaches to, and involvement in, TNE delivery to be statistically analysed at the level of the IT academic. It also allowed for a quantification of the degree of satisfaction the academic has with various aspects of this part of his or her work life.

The second phase of the study collected and analysed qualitative data to allow for clarification and exploration of issues raised in the results from the quantitative phase, and for the identification of other emergent issues in this area.

Figure 1: Explanatory Sequential Research Design (adapted from Creswell, 2014, p. 56)
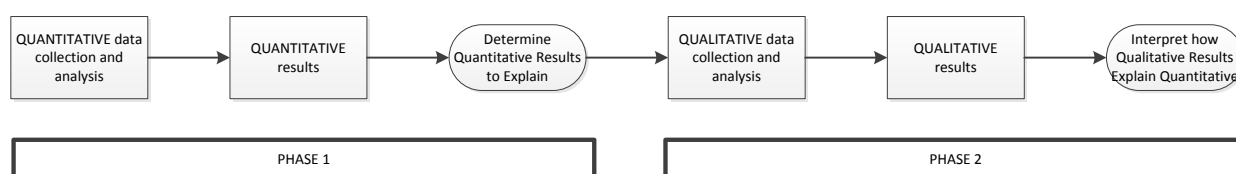
DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

In Phase 1, a list of academics involved in the delivery of IT TNE courses was created from sources such as AusLIST[1], in-country registers of TNE operations (e.g., CPE[2] in Singapore), and university websites. Two hundred and two (202) academics from the 14 Australian universities identified as currently offering IT and related courses overseas were the sampling frame for the study. These academics were invited to participate in an online survey to identify the degree and nature of their participation in TNE and how satisfied they are with this aspect of their work. A total of 47 responses were obtained, however, six were discarded as they were largely incomplete, leaving a total of 41 valid responses: a participation rate of 19.8%. The quantitative data was analysed during the first phase of the study and is reported in Toohey et al. (2013).

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1 AusLIST is a listing of Australian education providers offering courses overseas http://www.auslist.deewr.gov.au/Misc/ImportantInfo.aspx

2 Council for Private Education http://www.cpe.gov.sg

The final section of the online survey included the following five open-ended questions seeking participants' opinions on their involvement with TNE; these form the first data source for this paper:

- What aspects of transnational teaching do you find satisfying?
- What aspects of transnational teaching do you find dissatisfying?
- What do you see in transnational teaching as being of benefit to you?
- What impact does transnational teaching have on your "normal" work?
- Do you receive additional financial payment for your transnational teaching? If so, do you think that this payment adequately compensates you for your time and effort?

Participants in the first phase were also asked to indicate their willingness to be involved in the second phase of the research that consisted of a recorded, semi-structured interview in order to clarify and explore issues raised in the analysis of the quantitative data. These semi-structured interviews provide the second source of qualitative data for this paper.

Selection of interview subjects was based on a purposeful sampling strategy with maximum variation (Patton 1990) in order to focus in depth on the experiences of academics with TNE and to identify themes that are common across different experiences of TNE. Five subjects were selected for interview on the basis of the following characteristics exhibited in the responses to the survey:

- Different institutions representing a range of the Australian university groupings (e.g., Australian Technology Network, Group of Eight, Innovative Research Universities and the Regional Universities Network were all represented)
- Different institutional approaches to TNE delivery (e.g. no student contact versus fly-in-fly-out versus extended teaching visits)
- Different involvement in TNE of the academics (different roles in TNE delivery such as subject coordinator, degree coordinator and different levels of involvement from completely hands-off to face-to-face teaching)

Prior to the interview, each interviewee's survey answers were reviewed, including the open-ended questions, and areas that required clarification were noted, in particular, those that addressed the operationalization of TNE in the interviewee's university.

INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

At the start of the interview, each participant was asked to confirm the consent they had given in the questionnaire to participate, and that they consented to the interview being recorded. Once that consent had been confirmed, the interview could continue. Each interview was conducted using Skype and recorded using "Call Recorder[3]". The interviews were transcribed verbatim by a commercial transcription service and then analysed as discussed below using an iterative coding method.

The first part of each interview included questions to confirm the survey responses with respect to the mode of delivery adopted at the interviewee's university, for example:

- How does TNE operate in your University?
- Is this the same across all partnerships (i.e., where the university has multiple partnerships, does the way in which TNE is delivered differ between those partnerships?)
- How has this changed over time? How is it being done currently?

The second part of the interview addressed an issue raised in many of the survey responses regarding the synchronization between teaching periods at the home campus and the TNE location. This was followed by discussion about how, if the interviewee were in a position to do so, they would change the way that TNE was delivered by their university. The final part of the interview was more general in its focus, allowing participants to raise other relevant issues.

DATA ANALYSIS

The textual data from both the surveys and the transcribed interviews was reduced to single-issue phrases and copied and pasted into a spreadsheet to facilitate further analysis. Each phrase was then allocated an initial code determined by whether the phrase was concerned with TNE Staff, TNE Students or Control over course delivery. These codes were based on the research questions. It became clear from the textual data that Workload was also an issue, so this was added to the initial coding schema. In the second phase of coding, phrases that had

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[3] www.ecamm.com/callrecorder/

not been clearly identified or allocated to a code were done so and an additional level of coding was applied to each of the top-level codes (see Table 3 below).

Table 3: Final Coding Schema

Level One	Level Two
TNE Staff	Academic Collaboration
TNE Staff	Administration
TNE Students	Mode of Interaction
TNE Students	Impact on pedagogy
Control over course delivery	Moderation
Control over course delivery	Involvement in delivery
Workload	Recognition/Remuneration
Workload	Timing
Workload	Nature

RESULTS

It is interesting to note that while the quantitative findings of the previous study demonstrated neutral to positive feelings of satisfaction with TNE, the qualitative data suggests there are a number of factors that cause great dissatisfaction. These are discussed below, with the most notable being the impact of TNE on workload, in particular with regard to the timing and nature of the work associated with TNE, and the apparent lack of control over, and involvement in, the delivery of the course.

Interaction with TNE students

The qualitative data confirms the positive attitude of academics toward their TNE students reported in the quantitative study. For example, the opportunity to interact with a different or more diverse group of students than would be expected at the home campus is reported positively (coded as TNE Students: Mode of Interaction), leading in one case to "*...a better understanding of local international students*". Similarly, the opportunity to interact with students "in-country" and experience different cultural perspectives is seen to be "*…as much a learning experience for me as for my students.*" Many of the respondents reported a positive recognition of the commitment and effort required on the part of the students, suggesting that the "*...dedication and effort displayed by many transnational students is inspirational*", and "*I have very fond memories of the students and staff who work so hard, it makes me feel that I must also work hard for them.*" One academic who teaches at Masters level particularly enjoyed his time teaching at the TNE location because of the calibre of the students, who he said, "*…are quite clever guys and come from a really interesting background, and can actually add quite a lot to what's happening in a unit.*"

Several of the respondents reported positive outcomes for their teaching arising from involvement in TNE, coded as TNE Students: Impact on Pedagogy. One commented that, "*Teaching in both External and On-Campus mode forces you to try to think outside of the box. How can I provide innovative learning to all of my students – not just the ones I see on campus.*"

Interestingly, the negative comments coded under the TNE student code were from five respondents who reported dissatisfaction, not with the students *per se*, but with the lack of personal contact and opportunity to work with the students and the lack of time for quality interaction with the students.

Interaction with TNE teaching colleagues

While the quantitative data suggested a generally negative relationship between academic satisfaction and the amount of interaction with TNE teaching staff (in answer to the question 'how often during a typical teaching period would you have some contact with individual teaching staff'), the qualitative data suggested a more positive picture of this relationship, with just over 80% of the phrases coded with the two-level code TNE Staff: Academic Collaboration, reflecting a positive attitude toward the relationship. This was most noticeable when discussing the TNE staff's input to the course in terms of collaboration in delivery or design; the assistance provided to the home campus academic by the TNE teaching staff was most appreciated: "*...he takes real ownership of the unit even though it's not his material and he'll make suggestions, give me feed-back and so forth. And his marking is beautifully consistent.*" Similarly, the opportunity for input from "another set of eyes" from a different cultural and/or pedagogical background was appreciated.

However, all comments regarding moderation (coded as Control over course delivery: Moderation) were ambivalent, with comments such as, "*A lot depends on how good your local lecturer is*", balanced with more negative comments such as, "*I've gone through every single paper and made adjustments as needed*". The two most negative comments suggested that the marking completed by TNE teaching staff was overly generous, with both suggesting that this is as a result of partner institution requirements for student evaluations in making future employment decisions. Similarly, there was concern raised by one respondent regarding "coaching" of the students in order to perform better in examinations being a focus of the teaching.

Two other circumstances were reported by respondents as being causes of dissatisfaction with the interaction with TNE teaching staff. The first is where there were multiple TNE teaching staff in a course. One respondent complained, "*...staff are not always communicative. They also do not talk to each other and I have to carry out the same conversations with 2 or 3 lecturers delivering the same unit because they are not even aware of each other's existence.*" Another participant complained the interaction easily becomes more administrative and less collegial: "*(my role) is almost entirely composed of administration, creating spreadsheets, marking assignments and (often unsuccessfully) attempting to train the lecturers on how to assess and teach students in the way that we would do at this university.*"

Control over course delivery

Bellamy et al (2003), in a study of business academics, suggested that an important factor in determining academic job satisfaction is the degree of control they can exercise over their work. In the context of teaching, the primary ways that academics exert control is in course design, management and delivery. The quantitative study did not demonstrate a significant relationship between content provision and satisfaction, but it did suggest a marginal association that required further investigation.

As discussed above, the majority of respondents expressed quite serious concerns about issues associated with moderation of assessment marking (coded as Control over course delivery: Moderation). Comments such as, "*...what actually happens is often quite a black hole to us. We often find that assignments have been marked generously*" and "*...staff do not assess and mark work to the same standard in spite of the extremely detailed marking guides that are provided*". These impressions are then reinforced when "*the exam results ... confirm that the students do not have as good a grasp of the unit content as their assignment marks would suggest*". One respondent suggested a sense of frustration in this regard, "*...the experience can often be quite unsatisfying as you can see that there are serious issues in these institutions but are quite powerless to do much about it. Moderating too harshly and failing everyone leads to a whole lot of drama, so some staff end up turning a blind eye.*"

Respondents who do not have direct involvement with the delivery of the course commented that ... "*I have virtually no knowledge of how the courses are being offered offshore,*" and "*I am unsure of how the content is delivered as I have never been to .... or met the people who I deal with on a daily basis.*"

When there were positive comments, they were made in the context of long standing relationships with individual TNE teaching staff who had made a positive contribution to the delivery of the course. "*We've been extremely ... fortunate, we've got a good bunch of local lecturers who've been with us ... for seven, eight, nine years and they're good*".

Workload Recognition and Remuneration

The most commented on issue was the workload associated with TNE. Only two of 120 the comments coded under the Workload top-level code could be considered to be positive in that they described the remuneration for involvement in TNE as being adequate. The remaining comments were divided equally between those describing the amount and timing of the TNE workload, and the recognition of TNE either in load calculations or by additional payments.

The timing of workload associated with TNE was seen by most respondents as being a cause of dissatisfaction, particularly in that it tended to be spread out across the year, increasing the number of workload "peaks", and impinging on time that might otherwise be allocated to other activities. One respondent stated that, "*it is very difficult to take holidays as TNE teaching regularly occurs when domestic students are on their winter or summer breaks*", and another, "*...our semesters and their trimesters fill the whole year except between Christmas Day and New Year's Day – and even that time is spent in frantic preparation for the 2nd January start.*" Just over 10% of the responses suggested that involvement in TNE interferes with the capacity to conduct research, with a typical comment being, "*It makes it much harder to be productive and my working week is more fragmented, and I am unable to get reasonable length periods to focus on research.*"

Many of the respondents complained about the amount of administrative work associated with TNE, particularly when they saw there being no explicit return for their efforts. *"The almost constant requirement to be writing assessment items, moderating and remarking offshore work, and creating endless spreadsheets, exams, moderation reports and other volumes of administrative work occupy a lot of time and have little perceivable benefit."* This seemed to be more of an issue with respondents who did not have any face-to-face interaction with the students, *"These same tasks may not be perceived as being so negative if there was any kind of contact or engagement with the offshore students"*.

DISCUSSION

This study has explored a number of factors that appear to cause both satisfaction and dissatisfaction with TNE for IT academics. A better understanding of these factors can be used to influence university policy makers if there is agreement that there is a need for academics to be positive about their TNE experiences in order to enable universities to achieve their TNE objectives.

The first research question was concerned with why interaction with TNE students resulted in a higher degree of satisfaction for home campus academics. The results suggest that interaction with students is a significant factor in academic satisfaction; indeed, contact with students was seen as being a factor that could mitigate some of the dissatisfaction caused by increased workload and administration. While any degree of contact or interaction would appear to result in some satisfaction, the most satisfaction appears to arise from face-to-face contact in a learning and teaching environment.

This positive impact of interaction with students on satisfaction can be attributed to several of the "core job characteristics" as described in the JCM (Hackman and Oldham 1976). The first is that a higher degree of interaction with TNE students allows for increased opportunities for *feedback*; this amount and variety of feedback is simply not as available when there is a limited amount of contact between staff and students.

The results also suggest that there is an increased sense of the meaningfulness of the work associated with TNE, firstly because of an increase in the *task significance* dimension resulting from an understanding of the positive impact on the students that the opportunity to study for a degree in their home environment can have, and also because of a recognition of the effort displayed by TNE students. Secondly, TNE affords the opportunity to increase *skill variety* because of the potential for working in a different environment with different cohorts of students and using different pedagogical approaches.

It is important therefore, that there is some provision for interaction between academic staff and TNE students, and that where possible, there is some opportunity for "on-the-ground" interaction in order to achieve the most positive outcomes for academics. Reducing the role of the academic in TNE to being providers of learning and teaching materials would seem to be counter-productive in that it results in a largely dissatisfied workforce.

The second research question asked why increased interaction with TNE teaching colleagues resulted in lower levels of satisfaction for home campus academics. The results of both the quantitative and qualitative studies agreed that when interaction with TNE teaching colleagues is concerned with teaching, and is collegial in its nature, then there is a degree of satisfaction for the academic. This appears to increase when there is an opportunity to develop a relationship over an extended period, and there is a degree of mutual respect and trust in the relationship. This relationship is cruelled however, when it is built on a need for close supervision and moderation of assessment marking.

While these outcomes may seem to be contradictory, the positive outcomes associated with interaction with TNE staff can be explained as being about *feedback* and *skill variety* in a similar manner to the staff-student relationship. However, when the work becomes increasingly focused on administrative tasks, there is a decrease in both *skill variety* and *task significance* leading to a decreased sense of the meaningfulness of the work.

Where possible, there must be strategies to encourage stability in personnel in the teaching staff on both sides of the partnership to allow for the development of collegial relationships. As with student interaction, it is also important to create opportunities for home campus academics to have a greater degree of interaction with their TNE colleagues that is not supervisory in nature. As Pyvis (2011) has noted, good quality relationships between home campus academics and TNE campus academics are essential for the success of TNE.

The third research question was concerned with how the level of control over the TNE offering of a course impacted on the satisfaction of home campus academics. The two issues raised in this study with regard to control over course delivery were moderation and involvement in delivery. Moderation has impacts on both the meaningfulness dimensions in that it is a mundane task that requires little in terms of skill (*skill variety*), it is a "fragmented" task in that it is not part of the "identifiable whole" of the teaching role (*task identity*), and that it

is not seen as being particularly significant (*task significance*). Lack of direct involvement in the delivery of the course reduces the responsibility felt for the outcomes of the course (*autonomy*).

However, as discussed above, this appears to be less of a problem when there is a stability and consistency in the workforce. Similarly, dissatisfaction associated with the "distance" from the delivery of the subject is seen to be less when there is a strong collegial relationship between the members of the "teaching team" and useful interaction with the TNE students.

The final research question was broader in that it explored other possible impacts on academic satisfaction. The addition of TNE to the academic workload is seen to be very obviously problematic in terms of academic satisfaction. Much of the dissatisfaction appears to arise from a feeling that the additional workload is either not recognised or recognised inadequately, and because of the reduced "down-time" for other scholarly activities such as research and course re-design.

Planning of TNE academic calendars must be made in knowledge of how this impacts on the individual academic. Similarly, allocation of TNE teaching duties must acknowledge that academics do require time when they are not required to be teaching or responsible for the conduct of a course, in order to fulfil the other aspects of their role. Work in the TNE context must be adequately recognised in academic workloads and not viewed as a "marginal activity" with little or no impact on actual workload.

CONCLUSION

This paper has presented the results of a qualitative study that aimed to explore and explain the results of an earlier, quantitative study (Toohey et al. 2013). The results of the study were analysed and discussed in the context of the Job Characteristics Model of (Hackman and Oldham 1976). The results suggest that there are aspects of TNE that do result in positive outcomes for academic staff, of which interaction with students, working in different cultural and pedagogical settings, and development of collegial relationships are the main examples. However, there are also aspects of TNE that are not seen so positively by academics and these result from aspects of the work that are mundane, routine, not seen to be challenging, and that reduce the academic's sense of ownership and control over the TNE delivery process.

The paper makes several suggestions as to how universities can accentuate the positive aspects of TNE. The most important of these being the need to encourage and facilitate consistency in the workforce on both sides of the partnership in order to foster collegial working relationships, the need to adequately recognise and reward TNE teaching, and the need for there to be some meaningful interaction between home campus academics and TNE students.

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