EXPLORING THE CLARITY OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT ROLE IN A TIMOR-LESTE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

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DECLARATION

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This thesis entitled **"Exploring the Clarity of the Head of Department Role in a Timor-Leste Higher Education Institution"** is submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the Unitec degree of Master of Educational Leadership and Management.

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CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I confirm that:

- This Thesis represents my own work;
- The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.
- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.

Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: **2019-1005**

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ABSTRACT

Heads of Department perform a crucial role in improving student learning outcomes and achieving the institutional goals. One of the essential considerations to ensure that Heads of Department perform well is the need for role clarity in the statement of the job description for heads of department so that they have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in performing their functions. This study explored the clarity of the Head of Department role in one Timor-Leste Higher Education Institution.

An interpretive approach was adopted for this qualitative study to examine the perceptions of Heads of Department concerning their understanding of role documentation. This study also investigated the challenges faced by heads of department, including exploring their perceptions related to suggestions for improvements for clarifying their role. Two qualitative methods were employed to collect data: semi-structured interview and documentary analysis. A semi-structured interview was used to obtain heads of department perceptions, challenges and suggestions for improving their role performance. Documentary analysis was used to examine what documents revealed about the roles and responsibilities of Timor-Leste Heads of Department.

This study reveals that the job description of a head of department is vital to provide an in-depth understanding of the roles and responsibilities that are required and expected of them. Whilst some job descriptions were provided, half of the participants in the study had no written role description. A key finding was that the department heads would have liked the opportunity to discuss their role documentation and they would like to negotiate tasks. This study also found some challenges encountered by heads of department mainly related to time pressure and role ambiguity and expectations related to research and community service activity. It is recommended that the institution should develop two guidelines: for research and community service activity. Also, capacity building was highly recommended for Heads of Department.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANAAA   Agência Nacional para a Avaliação e Acreditação Academica

DIT   Dili Institute of Technology

ETCI   East Timor Coffee Institute

HOD   Head of Department

ICFP   Instituto Católico para Formação de Professores

ICR   Instituto de Ciências Religiosas "São Tómas de Aquino"

IOB   Institute of Business

IPDC   Instituto Profissional de Canossa

ISC   Instituto Superior Cristal

NAAAA   National Agency for Academic Assessment and Accreditation

UNDIL   Universidade Dili

UNITAL   Universidade Oriêntal Timor Lorosa'e

UNPAZ   Universidade da Paz

UNTL   Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e

UREC   Unitec Research Ethics Committee

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Country background

Timor-Leste is the newest nation in the world and is located in Southeast Asia. This small nation gained its independence in 2002 after 450 years of being a Portuguese colony, which was followed by 24 years of Indonesian rule. The country is located on the eastern part of the Timor island, the western part is Indonesia's territory. Timor-Leste has two near neighbours: Darwin, Australia in the south, separated by the Timor sea and in the north, it is surrounded by the Indonesian archipelago. Regionally, Timor-Leste has more than 1.5 million citizens, and more than half of Timor-Leste's population live in poverty. Regardless of where they live in Timor-Leste, the people struggle to have access to quality education (Buchan & Weller, 2012; Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan, 2011-2030). After the country's year-long conflict in 1999, Timor-Leste had to undergo much reconstruction and re-development, including building up its education system.

Although Timor-Leste is small, it is a multilingual country, and the language of instruction in schools has changed over its history as did the colonization. Tetum is the lingua franca, and while only a small proportion of the population refers to it as their mother tongue, it is the most commonly spoken local language across the country (Shah, 2012). Throughout the Portuguese colony, Portuguese was predominantly used as the only language of instruction; whereas, the Indonesian language came into place during the Indonesian occupation and became a widely spoken language (Burns, 2017). After the nation gained its independence in 2002, the first constitutionally elected Timorese government decided to make Portuguese and Tetum the co-official languages of the country (Shah, 2012).

As a new country, Timor-Leste's government has prioritised the education sector as the fundamental means for improving its social development and implementation of reforms. As outlined in the National Education Strategic Plan (Ministry of Education Timor-Leste, 2011), the vision for education in Timor-Leste is that:

> In 2030 the people of Timor-Leste will be educated, knowledgeable and qualified to live long and productive lives, respectful of peace, family and positive traditional

values. All individuals will have the same opportunities for access to quality education that will allow them to participate in the economic, social and political development process, ensuring social equity and national unity. (p. 12)

The education system in Timor-Leste comprises of several education levels, including pre-school education, basic education, secondary education (which comprises secondary general and secondary technical-vocational education), higher education and recurrent education, (which centres on non-formal or adult education) (Ministry of Education Timor-Leste, 2011). The higher education level comprises universities, institutes and polytechnics (Education System Framework Law No. 14/2008). Under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education, each level of education has its own structures and departments responsible for the operation as well as for ensuring students have adequate access to an equitable and quality education throughout all levels of education (Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan, 2011-2030).

Research setting

In Timor-Leste, there are eleven Higher Education Institutions in total which include one public university; the Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e (UNTL) and three private universities; Universidade da Paz (UNPAZ), Universidade Dili (UNDIL), Universidade Oriêntal Timor Lorosa'e (UNITAL), and seven institutes; Dili Institute of Technology (DIT), Institute of Business (IOB), Instituto Superior Cristal (ISC), Instituto de Ciências Religiosas "São Tómas de Aquino" (ICR), Instituto Católico para Formação de Professores (ICFP), Instituto Profissional de Canossa (IPDC), and East Timor Coffee Institute (ETCI). All these Higher Education Institutions are accredited by Agência Nacional para a Avaliação e Acreditação Academica (ANAAA), the National Agency for Academic Assessment and Accreditation. Most of the higher education institutions in Timor-Leste are independent private institutions except the UNTL, which is funded by the government of Timor-Leste. All the above universities and institutions offer undergraduate programmes in agriculture, health, education, business, hospitality and tourism, engineering, informatics, and petroleum management, but only some of them offer post-graduate and master level programmes.

According to ANAAA's report published in 2015, the number of active students in all Higher Education Institutions in Timor-Leste in 2013, 2014 and 2015 reached 44,924, 53,940 and 51,863 students, respectively. The two major universities are the UNTL and UNPAZ, which on average took more than half of all active students in Timor-Leste. UNITAL and ISC are the

next largest higher education institutions, which accumulated about 11% and 10% of active students, respectively; while, DIT, UNDIL, IOB and other institutions take only a small proportion of the total active students.

In Timor-Leste, there is no single document or national organic law that outlines the general requirements of how a basic institutional structure should be organised. Unlike other higher education institutions, the Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e (UNTL) has a statute which outlines its basic structure. According to Decree Law No 16/2010, the UNTL basic structure consists of a rector, vice-rectors, deans, heads of departments and general administrators, which may generally be applicable as well in other higher education institutions in Timor-Leste. Within this structure, the head of department is responsible for proposing, reviewing and executing the academic programmes and the academic activities in the respective scientific areas, whilst other positions such as the academic rector, vice-rectors, deans and general administrators have their specific competencies to be responsible for scientific, pedagogical and academic programme plans. From the eleven higher education institutions in Timor-Leste, it is estimated that there are up to 150 departments and heads of department. The UNTL has up to nine faculties and 34 different departments, which makes it the university that has the most departments followed by UNPAZ, DIT and ISC. Other institutions such as UNDIL, UNITAL and IOB have fewer departments.

My research is concerned with one aspect of developing and improving educational endeavours at the higher education level. It was conducted in one higher education institution in Timor-Leste, and it focuses on the role played by Heads of Department (HODs) as the leaders of effective education at this level. This institute is one of the private higher education institutions in Timor-Leste, which primarily focuses on the area of commerce and information technology. The institute has on average less than 5,000 active students enrolled annually, and it has up to 30% HODs in proportion to UNTL's HODs.

There is very limited literature specific to the establishment of an underlying institutional structure and guiding document for the head of department's role in Timor-Leste higher education institutions. By far, among all higher education institutions in Timor-Leste, UNTL is the only university that has clearly defined their structure and roles. Therefore, I was very interested to explore how other higher education institutions are able to establish their systems. In addition, curiosity about how academic leaders are able to effectively handle and manage

their tasks in complex situations without a clear statement of the role expectations was an interest and inspiration for me to carry out this research.

Research rationale

In Timor-Leste, it is essential for all educational leaders to have a clear view towards an understanding of effective leadership of educational achievement; hence, it is crucial to clarify the expectations held of leaders in academic institutions. The focus of this study is on exploring the role descriptions for heads of department in Timor-Leste higher education institutions in my country as there appear to be problems relating to a lack of clarity in the statement of expectations. I have personally become aware of this situation because of my involvement in a role that required me to evaluate the development of programmes in some higher education institutions. This has made me aware of problems that some department heads are experiencing because they are not clear about what is expected of them in the role.

I have had the opportunity to study the literature about the impact of effective educational leadership on student achievement (Cardno, 2012; Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). This knowledge has alerted me to the importance of clearly stating the nature of the work of an educational leader. It highlights the need for clear job descriptions so that what is expected of educational leaders is made clear.

Many educational institutions expect educational leaders to succeed in achieving the school's vision including improving the outcomes of students' achievement (Ministry of Education, 2012). The educational leader's position and role can vary depending on different levels and settings. My concern is mainly related to educational leaders at the middle or programme level in higher education, however there is much about higher education leadership that can also be learnt from the secondary school sector (Ramsden, 1998). In secondary school settings, the educational leader is called the head of department or middle manager (Ministry of Education, 2012) and is described as being at the "forefront of knowledge in the study, teaching, evaluation and planning for learning about their particular subject area" (Gold, 1998, p. 2). In a higher education setting, the head of department is often called academic leader (Cardno, 2013). Their roles are not merely focused on teaching and learning but also on conducting research as described by Cardno (2012). In addition, most academic leaders also carry out leadership and management functions at department level (Bryman, 2007; Yielder & Codling, 2004). The leadership functions are about directing the strategic vision in achieving the academic goals

(Bryman, 2007); whilst the management functions are more concentrated on operational aspects (Yielder & Codling, 2004).

In Timor-Leste's context, the term head of department is used in the higher education institution system and people in this position are expected to be educational leaders of programmes. At the heart of the problem is that many of the institutions are newly set up and there are no available guiding documents describing the position of the head of department in a way that is common across the system. One of the issues faced by the heads of department in Timor-Leste is that the way job descriptions are currently written causes confusion, but this is purely anecdotal as no research has been carried out to investigate this issue. I have been alerted to this need for clear job descriptions because it is recognised in the international literature (see for example, Cardno, 2014; Marshall, Orrell, Cameron, Bosanquet & Thomas, 2011; Scott et al., 2008). In addition, because the job description is usually the basis for setting and measuring expectations in the role, this confusion also affects the setting of evaluation performance criteria for heads of department (Marshall et al., 2011). Scott et al. (2008) assert how important it is to achieve clarity of expectations in a job description and state that these documents impact the performance of the role.

In my country, the performance appraisal system is itself ambiguous and often not impartial because there is no rigorous system aligned with any existing Timor-Leste decree-law. Consequently, these heads of department often struggle to articulate their performance expectations. Another concern is that the heads of department may not be aware of how they should prioritise their functions because they are not adequately prepared for their role. In this regard, in Timor-Leste, there is a lack of specific training for them as educational leaders. Therefore, in my experience this problem has created stress and confusion for them. I am motivated to conduct this study because I believe that we need to understand the situation being faced by these educational leaders who are struggling with the role.

There are several reasons underpinning the choice of this research. Firstly, I would like to investigate how heads of department understand their role in a situation where there is a lack of explicit position descriptions. Secondly, I want to examine existing documents and whether these job descriptions are clearly defined, and their complex language easily understood. A third reason is to analyse how these roles are described, and whether the functions listed give a clear indication of what these heads of department are expected to do in the role of educational

or academic leaders. Finally, I am curious to study how heads of department can handle their tasks effectively despite much confusion regarding their roles.

My research findings will be of benefit to the participating higher education institution and other higher education institutions in Timor-Leste that have the same leadership positions in the academic structure and similar roles. It is hoped that by participating in this research, the heads of department will gain a deeper understanding of the expectations of their role and reflect on ways in which their job descriptions could be more useful in explaining the role. In addition, this study will benefit students' achievement as the heads of department may be provided with insights about the nature of effective educational leadership and adjust their focus on priorities that impact student achievement. This research will also be of benefit to the Ministry of Education in Timor-Leste as currently there are no job description guidelines for heads of department in the higher education sector. If such guidelines were established, they could highlight the key priorities for effective educational leadership by heads of department.

Research aims

This research study explores concerns about the clarity of the head of department roles in one Timor-Leste higher education institution. The aims of this research are to examine the perceptions of heads of department related to their understanding of the role in documents. In addition, this study is also seeking to investigate the challenges faced by heads of department in understanding and performing their role.

The specific aims are:

1. To examine the perceptions of heads of department in relation to the documentation of their role in a Timor-Leste higher education institution
2. To investigate the challenges related to the head of department role in this higher education institution
3. To explore the perceptions of heads of departments regarding improvements for clarifying their role

Research questions

The following research questions are central to this study:

1. What are the perspectives of heads of department regarding their role documentation in a Timor-Leste higher education institution?
2. What are the challenges faced by the heads of department in understanding and performing their role?
3. What improvements are suggested by the heads of department?

Thesis outline

Chapter One

This chapter presents the background and describes the role issues faced by the heads of department in higher education in Timor-Leste along with a rationale for this study and the research aims and questions.

Chapter Two

This chapter provides a critical review of the academic literature. Three significant themes emerge: educational leadership, the role of heads of department, and the challenges of the role of head of department.

Chapter Three

This chapter outlines the research methodology and provides a rationale for adopting an interpretive approach for this study. The data collection method along with the participation selection criteria are described. Issues related to data analysis, validity and ethical considerations relevant to the study are discussed.

Chapter Four

This chapter reports findings gathered from semi-structured interviews with ten heads of department from the Higher Education Institution in Timor-Leste. Findings are presented in relation to the themes that emerged from the data.

Chapter Five

This chapter presents the major findings and integrates the findings with the relevant literature. This is organised according to themes that have emerged from the findings of the study. Conclusions are proposed under each theme. Limitations of the study are commented on and recommendations for future practice and further research are made.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter outlines the literature review on the themes which emerge from this study. The themes, which will be discussed within this chapter, will include the concept of educational leadership, the role of the head of department, and the challenges of the role.

The concept of educational leadership

Educational leadership at various levels has become a key principle of academic success. Leadership is seen as a common concept which people experience in everyday life. However, its meaning is still elusive and hard to define. Bush (2011), Cardno (2012), Yukl (2002) and Gunter (2006) argue that there is no exact definition in the literature about what leadership truly means and looks like. Elkin, Jackson and Inkson (2008) provide a comprehensive definition that "leadership is one of the key tasks of management" (p. 195). Bush (2011) sees leadership from a different viewpoint and claims that leadership is about a process of influencing others. He further explains that the influence process is with the intention to lead others in order to achieve specific outcomes. His view is reinforced by Robinson et al. (2009), who, in their Best Evidence Synthesis (BES), describe leadership as "a particular type of influence process" (p. 36). Furthermore, Yukl (2002) states that almost all definitions about leadership are about a process of social influence that is exercised by groups or individuals to achieve a certain purpose.

Bush (2011) then defines management as a range of methods used to increase the optimal potential and steer the organisation towards achieving its goals, while Cardno (2012) sees management as "the act of working with and through others to achieve the organisation's goals" (p. 20). Although leadership and management are distinctive, they both involve influencing people, require working with people and are concerned with the achievement of common goals (Rowe & Guerrero, 2013).

The educational leadership definition continues to evolve and expand. In educational organisations, educational leadership is concerned with educational purpose or aims and vision

(Bush 2011; Robinson et al., 2009). Bush (2011) states that the purpose of education is centred in educational management activities as it provides a crucial sense of direction that underpins the schools and colleges' management. He further adds that the centrality of educational purpose is aligned with goal setting that provides a clear direction on how to achieve certain educational objectives. Robinson et al. (2009) and Hallinger (2005) support this notion by claiming that educational goals in organisations are vital where leaders should define a comprehensive direction and encourage staff to accomplish target results. Furthermore, a vision is considered as "an avenue of influence in school improvement" (Hallinger & Heck, 2002, p. 4). Bush (2011) and Ramsden (1998) state that vision in leadership is seen as a mental image which is desired to create good conditions in the future for educational organisations. In respect of this, Robinson et al. (2009) also add that a vision may be viewed as a motivation, inspiration and loyalty commitment of leaders in the organisation. Elkin et al. (2008) make the point that shared vision requires the involvement of stakeholders to assure the creation of a vision is well articulated to others. This point is strengthened by Bush (2011) and Weber (1996) in that the development of a vision should emerge through the dynamic interaction of the organisational members.

Many definitions of educational leadership are used in different contexts. It can be applied across all settings; however, some terms are context-specific such as instructional leadership in schools and academic leadership in higher education, which are defined distinctively. In schools, educational leadership is about leading the instructional programme, where the core concern is on quality of teaching (Weber, 1987). Cardno (2012) also supports the idea by defining educational leadership as instructional leadership, which is concerned with teaching and learning. Cardno (2012) and Robinson et al. (2009) further emphasise that educational leadership is vital because the principal roles of educational leaders focus on teaching and learning which have a strong positive impact on students' learning achievement. Moreover, Seashore Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom and Anderson (2010) and Weber (1987) claim that the role of educational leaders is not only focused on the instructional aspect of school; but is also focused on all aspects that support the instructional climate and actions. Seashore Louis et al. (2010) also outline that there are two functions related to the educational leadership role: it provides direction and exercises influence. In other words, educational leaders provide direction and influence their members to focus on academic teaching and learning.

In higher education settings, educational leadership is referred to as 'academic leadership' (Cardno, 2012; Ramsden, 1998). According to Cardno (2012), academic leadership is the term that "appears mostly in relation to the leadership of curriculum and learning in the tertiary sector" (p. 27). In other words, leaders of curriculum areas are called academic programme leaders as well as leaders and managers of teaching and learning in higher education. Scott et al. (2008) in their study also support this view of academic leadership at many levels with "different meanings for different roles performed" (cited in Cardno, 2012, p. 27) and also in different forms both direct and indirect. Ramsden (1998) also asserts that people who have occupied academic positions and work in tertiary education as "middle managers of academics and support staff" (p. 22) are called heads of academic departments. In addition, academic leadership, according to Ramsden (1998), has special characteristics, unlike leadership in other organisations, which are strongly related to ones' principles and ideology as an academic, and to the nature of the organisation itself as an "academic business, which is essentially concerned with transformation of people and ideas" (p. 123).

In the context of this research study, educational leadership in higher education can be exercised through the help of people in middle management. Several authors have referred to middle management or middle managers (Clegg & McAuley, 2005) in different terms such as head of department and learning, faculty leader and subject head (Bassett, 2016; Bendikson, Robinson & Hattie, 2012; Cardno, 2012; Marshall, 2012; Ministry of Education, 2012; Scott et al., 2008). Their responsibility is to manage subsections, report to the senior leaders and liaise with different stakeholders in terms of "developing collegial relationships" (Bassett, 2016, p. 97). Cranston, Ehrich, Kimber, and Starr (2012) identify middle-level academic leaders as "those holding course coordination roles, located between senior university staff" (p. 1). Cardno (2012) describes middle-level leaders or academic leaders as persons who "lead departments and also teach" (p. 31). Blandford (2006) provides another definition that middle leaders are "pivotal in the process of translating broad principles and strategies in the actual concrete experiences of every learner" (p. xvii). In addition, the Ministry of Education (2012) has also described middle leaders as having "a pivotal part to play in helping their schools pursue their goals and achieve their objectives" (p. 11). For the purpose of this thesis, the middle-level leaders or academic leaders (as defined in many kinds of literature) will be referred to as the head of department, who is primarily responsible for leading and managing a department and the teaching in the department.

In educational leadership theory, the idea of instructional or academic leadership indicates a clear focus on teaching and learning (Cardno, 2012; 2014). This theory is relevant to my research because I want to find out how heads of department pay attention to their administration tasks and also pay attention to teaching and learning. My research questions required a review of the literature that describes the head of department role in terms of leadership of learning and teaching (Scott et al., 2008).

The role of head of department in higher education

Several research studies related to the role of the head of department are reviewed in this section because they are relevant to my study and are linked to one of my research questions on how head of department roles are documented.

The role of the head of department has been referred to as middle-level leadership (Branson, Franken & Penney, 2016) since they are the key leaders of students' learning outcomes. Busher, Hammersley-Fletcher and Turner (2007) state that middle leaders are accountable for supervising and working with members in the entire institution as they are in a key position of academic influence. Bassett (2016), Busher (2005), Cardno (2014), and Scott et al. (2008) argue that middle leaders' roles include many aspects such as instructional leadership, administration, interpersonal relations, developing staff, budgeting and strategic planning. These roles have been outlined in many research studies; however, what is most often discussed as integral to the position of middle leaders is instructional leadership (Bassett, 2016), developing staff and responsibility for administrative work and management functions (Fletcher-Campbell, 2003).

Carroll (2018) argues that the head of department is responsible for leading and managing an academic department within a university and at the same time, the head of department is also responsible for instructional leadership. According to Hallinger (2005), instructional leadership is seen as the role of the school principal. They are not fully accountable for teaching and learning activities, but they can be both direct and indirect instructional leaders. As described by Bendikson et al. (2012) "direct instructional leadership is focused on the quality of teacher practice itself, whereas indirect instructional leadership creates the conditions for good teaching" (p. 3). Bassett (2016) reiterated from Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) and Wylies (2013) that instructional leadership in secondary schools is "distributed to middle leaders" (p. 99) as their position is taking an important part of the direct instructional leadership. However,

Blandford (2006) argued that middle leaders also need to be good teachers as their role is about leading learning. They should be seen as "strong, directive leaders" (Hallinger, 2005, p. 223) in order to influence students' academic achievement. This view is also supported by Busher (2005) who suggests that middle leaders are considered as teacher leaders who are expected to implement the school's policies for the improvement of teacher practices and students' learning achievement. Moreover, various administrative functions are also included in the role of middle leaders which support teachers and students with regard to pedagogical and pastoral leadership (Ministry of Education, 2012). Those functions range from managing budget complexity and staff performance appraisal and assessments (Bennett et al., 2007; Cardno, 2014; Scott et al., 2008) to the lower level tasks such as filing and buying books (Busher, 2005).

Most department heads in higher education carry out leadership and management functions at department or school level (Bryman, 2007; Yielder & Codling, 2004). Their leadership role is about creating a vision, providing direction and purposes that support their vision of achieving academic goals; and the management role is more inclined to managing finance, staff space, resources and operational matters (Yielder & Codling, 2004). Cardno (2014) recapitulates Scott et al.'s (2008) research findings about heads of department functions. There are five main work focus areas that comprise academic activities associated with scholarly research, networking within and beyond the institution, management and administration including budgeting, meetings, and dealing with complaints, planning and policy development such as a strategic plan and managing staff including performance reviews and staff development. In a similar manner, Ramsden (1998) suggests four main responsibilities of academic leadership that are concentrated on teaching, which essentially improves learning outcomes. These responsibilities are core to the quality of teaching itself. Cardno (2014) describes four responsibilities: (1) an academic leader has responsibility for sharing vision, determining strategic action, planning and managing resources; (2) leaders have responsibility for enabling, inspiring, motivating and directing academic staff in terms of encouraging staff to share and explore ideas together and also offer rewards for outstanding performance; (3) recognising, developing and assessing performance are key leadership responsibilities; (4) the leader has a responsibility to learn to lead and improve institutional leadership. In addition to this, Ramsden (1998) highlights one important point which is that academic leaders must have comprehensive knowledge of good teaching and "must provide the means, assistance and resources which enable academic and support staff to perform well" (p. 8). In other words, academic leaders' main focus should be on managing and developing their staff.

The documented role of the head of department

In the literature on academic leadership in higher education there is reference to the way in which the role is documented in position and job descriptions (Cardno, 2012, 2014; Scott et al., 2008). Because my research focuses on a study of how the role of the head of department is described in my country, Timor-Leste, it is relevant to review the way in which documents portray the role in the literature.

Cardno (2014) conducted a study of academic leadership in New Zealand polytechnics and analysed several job descriptions submitted by twelve middle-level leaders from the six Metro-Polytechnics who participated in the study. The analysis revealed that there were four common elements to all the documents. In Cardno's (2014) study the common elements in documented job descriptions were clustered under four facets of the role: (1) the organisational leadership role; (2) the curriculum leadership role; (3) academic management; and (4) academic currency.

1. Organisational Leadership

In the New Zealand study this included visionary and strategic leadership of the department and contributing to academic decision-making at the institutional level (Cardno, 2012). The importance of making a contribution to the wider organisational context is also highlighted in the review of literature on head of department roles in higher education by Bryman (2007) and Scott et al. (2008).

2. Curriculum Leadership

The main activities described in the New Zealand job descriptions were a combination of both leadership and management tasks. The leadership tasks involved setting strategic direction for the programme, leading change and improvement and leading research to establish a research culture for academic disciplines. The management tasks related to quality assurance processes and the marketing of the programme. The importance of managing the programme and its quality is also identified as critical work for the head of department by Ramsden (1998).

3. Academic Management

Academic management in the Cardno (2014) study was related to the management of staff, students and resources for the programme. These core functions are also mentioned as key responsibilities in the literature (Scott et al., 2008; Ramsden, 1998).

4. Academic Currency

In the polytechnic context in which Cardno (2014) conducted a documentary analysis of department head job descriptions, there was a strong expectation that the department leader should also be an academic leader with currency of ability to teach and research in the discipline area. This expectation is similar to Ramsden's (1998) view that the leader of an academic programme, someone who manages other academic staff, should have an academic background and profile.

There is very little current literature that focuses specifically on a documentary analysis of actual job descriptions. I have been able to locate no studies other than Cardno (2014) that provide such an analysis. This confirms that my own study could be very worthwhile as it will close this literature gap by answering questions about the nature and clarity of the actual job descriptions of heads of department in my country, Timor-Leste.

The challenges of the role of head of department

The role of the head of department in higher education is multifaceted and challenging. The literature on challenges of department heads is reviewed because this theme is related to one of my research questions.

Ambiguity of role

Many research studies have revealed a wide range of challenges encountered by heads of department in their role. According to Marshall et al. (2011), the role of academic leadership in higher education also presents conflicts and problems owing to ambiguity in relation to leadership and management aspects of the role. Cardno (2014) argues a major issue of role ambiguity that is confronted by the head of department is "a lack of clarity about the nature of the role" (p. 355). This is because differences between leadership and management functions are not adequately described in the official documents. Yielder and Codling (2004) also add that role confusion and overlap can cause "conflict of interest, inequities in workload and inappropriately applied expertise" (p. 320). A study was done by Bennet (2008) about middle leader roles in the secondary school and has illustrated similar challenges faced by heads of department in higher education. He states that a first-time subject leader found their role was unclear and that the "generic nature of the job descriptions suggests that the schools in this research have not thought about unpacking the detail of the role" (p. 52). Thus, the role of leaders at department level are complex and challenging (Bassett, 2016; Cardno, 2012) because

they have to deal with many aspects in terms of dealing with leadership and management itself. Scott et al. (2008) have also added that leaders with such positions have huge responsibilities to manage up and down the institution and they felt like they were "the meat in the sandwich" (p. 51).

Accountability

The demands of accountability continue to grow in higher education because leadership is seen as the keyway of improving students' learning achievement as well as the educational conditions (Cardno, 2014; Ministry of Education, 2012; Scott et al., 2008). Accountability is about holding individuals and organisations liable or responsible for their actions towards other people and agencies (Levitt, Janta & Wegrich, 2008). Levitt et al. (2008) and Normore (2004) emphasise that accountability is a multifaceted and slippery concept because it can be defined as different things in theory and in practice. There is an expectation that heads of department are responsible for both academic leadership and managerial leadership of a department in tertiary education institutions (Yielder & Codling, 2004). However, research done by Heffernan (2018) and Marshall (2012) found that with increasing workload demands, heavy external accountabilities, pressure to improve student results and unpredictable conflicts on a daily basis, heads of department are "caught between competing imperatives, institutional dynamics and institutional structures" (Marshall, 2012, p. 521). In this sense, Fitzgerald (2009) utilises the term 'bureaucracy' to outline the increasing demands of management-related accountability and suggests that this leaves little time for leadership.

Power and autonomy

One of the biggest challenges normally faced by the head of department is the lack of power and autonomy which the head of department has, to lead and manage a department. Busher et al. (2007) state that a head of department is not able to be influential because of power disparities. Influence and authority are most often in the hands of senior leaders, who can influence and lead people (Busher et al. 2007; Elkin et al., 2008). Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) assert that being a head of department means being "on message" (p. 337). In other words, the head of department is the recipient of codified messages that must be transmitted to teachers. This view is supported by Hammersley-Fletcher and Kirkham (2007) who state that the head of department is often seen to only be in place to "impose external initiatives" and they question "to what extent are they able to develop their own agenda for change and development" (p.

433). Since senior leaders ultimately hold the power to control their organisation, they are able to decide how much power to share with middle leaders or heads of department to concentrate in their own departments (Clegg & McAuley, 2005). Senior leaders have the right to limit the authority given to heads of department (Bush & Middlewood, 2005; Hammersley-Fletcher & Kirkham, 2007). In relation to this, Cardno (2006) asserts that the power limitation may be because of a lack of status attached to head of department roles. A study done by Grootenboer, Edwards-Groves and Ronnerman (2015) showed that heads of department practices and results were effective when autonomy and trust were given to them. Harris and Jones (2017) support this view by stating that both autonomy and responsibility are essential if heads of department are to "engage teachers in supportive and innovative ways" (p. 214). However, they further argue that heads of department only have a few chances to exercise their leadership role. This viewpoint is reinforced by Scott et al. (2008) who state that heads of department deal with many unnecessary aspects of the work, which leaves them "little room to lead" (p. 59).

Lack of time and workload pressures

Another challenge identified in the literature for heads of department is the lack of time and difficulty in managing the pressures of the workload in their practices. Both teachers and heads of department face the pressures of the workload, which have a negative impact on their role performance (Fitzgerald, 2009; Helsby, 1999). A study by Ingvarson, Kleinhenz, Beavis, Barwick, Carthy, and Wilkinson (2005) in New Zealand secondary schools found that heads of department enjoyed their work in terms of being held responsible for leadership, but the availability of time is "grossly inadequate" (p. 10). It was reported that heads of department found difficulty managing their workload, their survey report illustrating that 57% of heads of department could not manage their work adequately, 84% felt the workload was heavy, and 47% struggled with their workload to the point where it was affecting their health. A similar study was done by Gibson, Oliver and Dennison (2015) in U.K. schools and found that heads of department perceived pressures of their workload from related paperwork, administrative work, and the nature of over-bureaucracy which all becomes burdensome. Scott et al. (2008) also add that in higher education the variety of administrative tasks have become challenging and increase the workload of middle leaders. In this regard, Cardno and Robson (2016) support this argument that a heavy workload has caused heads of department to feel overwhelmed and unable to complete their tasks; also, job descriptions are vague and not in accordance with their current role. Therefore, Fitzgerald (2009), Gibson et al. (2015) and Ingvarson et al. (2005)

suggest that the workloads of heads of department have to be concentrated on the tasks of leadership, and managerial tasks could be delegated to administrative staff or other staff. In addition, getting more support from additional staff with expertise would make a leader's workload more manageable.

Lack of professional development

The literature has claimed that endorsing professional development for heads of department would cause a direct positive impact on students' learning outcomes (Cardno, 2012; Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung, 2007). However, the lack of professional development for heads of department is one of the major challenges identified in the literature (Bassett, 2016). Wylie's (2011) study shows that many first-time leaders were unable to step into multi-layered roles as they need background knowledge through professional development prior to carrying out their roles. Bassett (2016) also asserts that the head of department's role is "complex and varied" (p. 97) and fraught with many challenges and that management development needs to be provided. Moreover, Cardno (2014) adds that lack of training in management skills means heads of department are not well prepared for their role, and that professional development is needed for them to fully understand what is expected of them in the role of academic leader. Consequently, this affects their performance appraisal which is linked to their professional development (Cardno, 2012).

Summary

This chapter presented a literature review on the concept of educational leadership and outlined various definitions of educational leadership that are used in different contexts. The chapter also discussed the role of heads of department in higher education and how their roles are documented in position and job descriptions. Ultimately, it examines several challenges faced by heads of department in higher education institutions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Introduction

This chapter presents an explanation of the research methodology and methods providing a rationale for the epistemological position that has been adopted for this research project. The two data collection methods employed in this study were semi-structured interview and documentary analysis. These two methods are discussed along with the fundamental principles for determining the participation and documents selection for each method. Data analysis using thematic approaches is also discussed. Issues related to validity, triangulation and ethical issues in carrying out the study are explained.

Epistemology

The fundamental goal of every research study is to find answers to particular questions (Bryman, 2012). Mutch (2013) argues that research is an alternative path for researchers to "investigate phenomena (items of interest) and reduce vast amounts of data to manageable and relevant understandings often called generalisations" (p. 22). Mutch (2013) and Wellington (2015) state that educational research deals with humans, organisations and interactions between individuals within the organisation and attempts to address issues and search for potential solutions. Creswell (2012) emphasises the importance of educational research in contributing to knowledge, improving educational current practice and informing policy debates.

Questions of how knowledge is discovered and what counts as knowledge are subjective (Bryman, 2012; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). These questions are concerned with the nature of knowledge that focuses on investigating social phenomena and obtaining explanations of the social world (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Villiers & Fouche, 2015). Every research project in a particular field of study has its influence on the belief and views on the nature of knowledge, which is called paradigm (Bryman, 2012; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). A paradigm focuses on the researcher's worldview in terms of perspectives, thoughts and shared beliefs (Cohen et al., 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

Guba and Lincoln (1994), Creswell (2007) Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) and Scotland (2012) argue that to analyse the rudimentary beliefs that define research paradigms, there are several fundamental components which are interconnected to justify what belief reflects on a logic of knowledge. These are ontological and epistemological assumptions, which rationalise the methodology and methods of the research. Creswell (2007) contends that "research design process in qualitative research begins with philosophical assumptions that the inquirers make in deciding to undertake a qualitative study" (p. 15). He adds that researchers bring their own paradigms, a set of beliefs, to the research project and this informs the process of conducting and writing the qualitative study. Paradigms are crucial because they provide "beliefs and dictates that for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done, and how results should be interpreted" (Bryman, 2012, p. 630). Cohen et al. (2011) point out that a paradigm is considered as a manner of seeking information and understanding the nature of problems and finding solutions.

Bryman (2012) asserts that the questions of ontology and epistemology are philosophical questions, which are fundamental to all social research. He describes the ontological questions as the questions that are mainly concerned with "the nature of social entities" (p. 32) regardless of whether they can be and ought to be viewed as social constructions developed from the social actors' perceptions and actions. On the other hand, Crotty (1998) contends that ontology is related to the "study of being" (p. 10), which constitutes reality and whether it exists or not. A similar description is made by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) and Scotland (2012) that ontology questions are concerned with assumptions of something that makes sense or is real about the social phenomenon being investigated. Ontological assumptions are developed through research questions that are formulated according to Bryman (2012) and Kivunja and Kuyini (2017).

Unlike ontological questions, epistemological assumptions deal with the nature of knowledge, and are largely concerned with how knowledge can be acquired, and what things exist to be known (Crotty, 1998; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Bryman (2012) outlines that epistemological questions are concerned with what knowledge is accepted in a field of study, and whether the social world can and should be studied based on the same systems as natural science. Cohen et al. (2011) also support this argument that epistemological assumptions are concerned with how knowledge is formed, how it is acquired and how it is communicated to others. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) echo that epistemological questions involve how to know the truth or reality and

what counts as legitimate knowledge. They add that these questions are essential to investigate the truth and ask factual questions in the study. Bryman (2012) and Cohen et al. (2011) assert that there are two classical paradigms, which are used to outline different ways of looking at a philosophical position in research: positivism and interpretivism paradigms. Bryman (2012) describes positivism as "an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond" (p. 28). He adds that positivism entails both deductive and inductive strategic approaches, which incorporate natural sciences to study a particular phenomenon and to predict general patterns of human activity. For instance, it is concerned with the scientific method, which involves experiments to interpret observations and answer questions (Cohen et al., 2011; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). On the other hand, interpretivism is an epistemological position that "requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action" (Bryman, 2012, p. 30). It is viewed as a form of interaction that involves people in how to make sense of the world and create meaning and maintain their social world. Scotland (2012) has a similar view about interpretive epistemology as "one of subjectivism, which is based on real-world phenomena" (p. 11). It connects with the different ways of interaction between people, which they build in their social world. Cohen et al. (2011) argue that interpretivism is considered as the primary paradigm to understand the importance of the subjective experience of an individual and to understand phenomena and reality around them. They further argue that interpretivism underlines a typical comprehension of people as opposed to the general or universal.

In my study, I have adopted an epistemological position that fits with the interpretive paradigm as I will be seeking knowledge that is subjective and related to the real world of the participants in the context of their educational organisation.

Methodology

Crotty (1998) describes methodology as the "strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods" (p. 3). Therefore, methodology deals with questions such as why, what, from where, when and how data is collected and analysed (Scotland, 2012). Guba and Lincoln (2005) also add that methodology deals with questions on whatever researchers discover and if it can be known. This research fits an interpretive approach embedded in a qualitative methodology. Merriam (2009) outlines the nature of qualitative methodology which is about "understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 5).

Qualitative data that will describe the experiences of research participants will be subjective in nature, will describe their reality and interpret the way they understand this reality. In qualitative methodology, this type of data can be analysed to identify patterns and themes that are common to a number of participants.

The main objective of this research is to examine the perceptions of heads of department in relation to the clarity of their job descriptions. In addition, this study seeks to investigate the challenges faced by these department heads in understanding and performing their roles. The epistemology allied with my research questions determines my position that this research fits the interpretive approach. In respect of this, interpretivism is about making meaning by studying interactions between individuals in their social world and how people attempt to perceive the reality around them by developing meaning from their experiences as described by Bryman (2012), Creswell (2007), and Kivunja and Kuyini (2017). Since this study is about making meaning of the heads of department's experiences in performing their roles, it will adopt a qualitative methodology that values the subjective data that is going to be collected in the form of people's experiences, perceptions, views and beliefs. Bryman (2012) asserts that qualitative research accentuates words instead of numbers in the data collection. It gathers detailed information regarding people's experiences in their social world that is being investigated. Merriam (2009) also adds that qualitative methodology produces descriptive data from participants' spoken words about the phenomenon of their perspectives, that is, how they make sense of their lives and their experiences. In this regard, the data sought in this study is in the form of conversation and documents that contain words as the basic unit for analysis.

Appropriate methods for collecting data in the form of words require the use of relevant instruments. Research instruments are "devices for obtaining information relevant to the research project" (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003, p. 3). Bryman (2012), Cohen et al. (2011) and Crotty (1998) argue that research methods are instruments and techniques used by researchers to collect useful data for qualitative analysis. This study employed two qualitative data collection methods: the semi-structured interview as the primary method and documentary analysis as the secondary method.

Method 1: Semi-structured interview
Interviewing is a commonly used method that is used worldwide by researchers in qualitative research to gather data. Lichtman (2013) asserts that interviews are everywhere, on television,

media and the internet. It is easy to ask people to share their thoughts, ideas and experiences on different topics; however, planning and skill need to be considered in carrying out a good interview. Lichtman (2013) describes the interview as a kind of interaction collectively made by the interviewer and the interviewee and further asserts that the interview is used to gather information from participants about a topic under study by revealing sentiments, aims, meanings and thoughts on a specific topic. Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander (1995) also define interview as "a means of gaining access to information of different kinds" (p. 62). It is merely done by asking questions directly through a face-to-face interaction between the inquirer and the person being interviewed.

There are three categories of interviews often found primarily in connection with qualitative research based on the question format and process: structured interview, semi-structured interview and unstructured interview (Bryman, 2012; Mutch, 2013). A structured interview, commonly known as a "standardized interview" is an interview method where all questions are formatted and set out in the same order and worded in a detailed interview schedule for each participant (Bryman, 2012, p. 210). In other words, a structured interview is an interview which is highly prescribed and follows a questionnaire format or checklist (Mutch, 2013). A semi-structured interview is also called a "guided interview" (Lichtman, 2013, p. 191). This method employs a topic area guide to ask questions, however, the style of asking questions follows the unstructured interview process (Minichiello et al., 1995). Lichtman (2013) states that an interview in the form of a semi-structured interview or guided interview requires the interviewer to develop a general set of questions and format that guides interviewers throughout the interview; therefore, the questions can vary depending on the circumstances. Fontana and Frey (1994) also add that the interview method can be very varied, and the interview questions can be structured as open-ended questions. An unstructured interview takes on the looks of a regular everyday conversation, and the style of questioning is often informal as it starts with a single open-ended question only (Bryman, 2012; Minichiello et al., 1995). Lichtman (2013) calls the unstructured interview an in-depth interview because it does not have a specific set of questions. The style of interviewing is very much conversational, flexible and has no fixed questions as it allows participants to talk with no limits (Bryman, 2012; Lichtman, 2013).

For my study, semi-structured interview was the method used to investigate issues and challenges regarding the manner in which job expectations were documented and understood

in the perceptions of the heads of department in one Timor-Leste higher education institution. The reason for adopting this method was to gain "a more in-depth understanding of the topic or issue from participant's perspective" (Mutch, 2013, p. 120). Villiers and Fouche (2015) emphasise the viewpoint that the semi-structured interview is "particularly appropriate in a situation where the phenomenon" (p.135) is an issue of particular personal interest to the participants. In addition, this method allows the interviewer to give continuous opportunities for participants to express their perspectives, beliefs and attitudes in relation to the issues that are to be investigated. In keeping with the intent of gaining a more in-depth understanding of the topic from the participant's viewpoint, Lichtman (2013) recommends that the semi-structured interview is a more appropriate method for new interviewers as it provides an outline to use for guidance. The semi-structured interview was used because it also provided guidance or a schedule for me, as a novice researcher, to feel comfortable following the guideline process. This method provided flexibility to prompt and probe questions; hence, a mixture of closed and open questions were able to be used.

Prior to starting the interview, preparation and planning was required to successfully achieve the research objective. The Interview Schedule (see Appendix I) which linked to the research aims and questions was developed to provide a structure for the interview.

Participant selection

This research study adopted purposive sampling. Purposive sampling has been widely used in qualitative research as it enables researchers to select participants with a 'purpose' which is relevant to the research questions (Bryman, 2012; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). This study involved ten main participants, who hold important roles as heads of department. These participants were selected from one academic higher education institution in Timor-Leste, and they have provided pertinent data in relation to my research questions to establish central themes. The interviews were conducted in the native language of Timor-Leste: Tetum. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, then translated into English. The translation was verified by a Tetum native speaker to ensure the accuracy of the translation.

In order to recruit participants, a meeting was scheduled with the Academic Rector and staff members including the heads of departments, where the participants were informed about the background of the study and why the study was being conducted. Subsequently, an invitation letter was sent out by the Academic Rector on behalf of the researcher to all ten heads of

department. In the letter, participants were invited to contact the researcher directly if they were willing to participate in the research study. All ten participants were willing to participate, and they were given an Information Sheet (see Appendix II) about this study. Subsequently, each participant was approached individually to schedule an interview meeting at their convenience. In addition, they were asked to read and sign the Consent Form (see Appendix III) to ensure they were clearly aware of the interview procedures.

Prior to the interview with participants, I explained my research project, my role as researcher, my research aims, how the data would be collected, participants' voluntary willingness to participate, to assure their privacy and confidentiality, the right to withdraw from this study within a specific time period, interview recording and verification of transcripts and sharing the final report with them. In addition, I made it clear during the recruitment process that I would be using an audio recording during the interview process and their agreement would be included in the Consent Form.

At the end of the interview, I provided opportunity for the heads of department to provide any comments they would like to add, that they did not have the opportunity to address through the questions asked. They were also informed that once the interview had been transcribed, they would have the opportunity to revise or add additional information they felt was important. Ultimately, I thanked the heads of department for their participation, assured them about confidentiality and made arrangements for them to review the interview transcripts.

Method 2: Documentary Analysis

Documentary analysis is often selected as a second method in qualitative research to collect data. Documentary analysis can be defined as "a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material" (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). Documents in this case can be very varied depending on the proposed project that contain information to be studied and interpreted in order to draw out the meaning, comprehend and establish practical knowledge (Bowen, 2009). In respect of this, Bryman (2012) believes that studying documents enables researchers to understand the way an organisation is described because documents are windows onto social and organisational realities. He asserts that documents can uncover the underlying social reality of the organisation itself such as its culture and ethos. In addition, Cardno (2018) suggests that documentary analysis can be used as an additional method for data collection in a qualitative study as it adds

"rigour to a study through a multi-method form of triangulation" (p. 626). Cohen et al. (2011) define triangulation as "the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour" (p. 195). Triangulation is normally used to expand one data source by including a second data-gathering technique in order to get participants' broader perspectives on the topic (Mutch, 2013). Wellington (2015) also supports this viewpoint that documentary research establishes a high-quality method of triangulation which is "helping to increasing the trustworthiness, reliability and validity of research" (p. 223). Documentary research is done in conjunction with other research methods such as interviews where it is considered as a complementary strategy to enrich the data (Bryman, 2012; Wellington, 2015). However, prior to analysing the documents, there are several aspects which need to be considered such as context, authorship, intended audiences, intentions and purposes, genre, style and tone, and presentation and appearance (Wellington, 2015).

Given the above arguments, in order to serve the aims of this study, which centres on the head of departments' role in a Timor-Leste higher education institution setting, I will be using documentary analysis as a secondary data collection method. The reason for using documentary analysis in this study is to enrich and to strengthen the collection of the data. Also, as stated by Cardno (2018), the importance of analysing organisational policy documents is not merely to identify what is being defined but also what is not being defined. Therefore, the method is used not only to enrich the data but also to identify any relevant gaps within the documents.

For the purpose of this study, there were three sets of documents selected as the sample of this research. The first set consists of two documents which are official documents that appeared to be most appropriate at the national level. These were *Timor-Leste's Parliamentary laws titled Education System Framework Law article 17.1 No. 14/2008* and *Timor-Leste Decree-law No.8/2009 titled Legal Regime for the establishment of Higher Education*. These two documents were selected as the soundest available official documents, which may outline the key roles and responsibilities of the heads of department. The second set of documents, which was used for this study consisted of Timor-Leste *Job descriptions of the heads of department*. The third set are international job descriptions sourced randomly from the internet. The sets of job description documents were selected because they illustrated the specific tasks and performance expectations. A framework for analysing the job description documents has been selected from the only literature available that records documentary analysis of academic

leaders' job descriptions. This framework comes from a study of academic leaders in New Zealand polytechnics (Cardno, 2014).

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis is about making meaning or making sense of the collected data (Minichiello et al., 1995). Data analysis is a transformative process that turns raw data into 'findings or results' (Lofland, Snow, Anderson & Lofland, 2006). Data analysis can be used to find meaning from the information that is being collected (Minichiello et al., 1995). Bryman (2012) asserts that the nature of qualitative data is often sizeable and cumbersome including data from interviews and documents as in the case of my research. He adds that qualitative data has 'attractive nuisance' in consequence of its attractive richness and the difficulty encountered in finding analytic paths through the large amount of data. Therefore, data analysis can be broken down into a series of choices. Thematic analysis is one of the common approaches to analyse qualitative data where the activity of searching for themes will allow patterns to emerge from the data analysis (Bryman, 2012). The process involves reading the data carefully, re-reading several times and reviewing the data (Bowen, 2009). The thematic analysis is not attached to any specific theories which is often called 'constant comparative analysis or grounded theory' (Mutch, 2013). However, in my study I conducted a comprehensive review of the pertinent literature and this work revealed several common themes which helped me to shape the interview questions and also consider the categories of data I would look for when analysing the documents. Hence, in this kind of qualitative data analysis the thematic analysis reflects the existing research base in the literature.

Two common approaches are used in qualitative thematic analysis: coding and memoing. Coding is a process of classifying data into various groups to create a meaningful set of ideas (Lofland et al., 2006). Villiers and Fouche (2015) describe coding as the process of reading transcribed data carefully many times to separate all relevant data into significant repeated ideas. Coding can be used to look for "patterns and themes" (Mutch, 2013, p. 177) in the text as it will initially examine the key words which may emerge as repeated words from the data itself. Lofland et al. (2006) assert that coding is categorised into two processes: initial coding and focused coding. Initial coding is the first step to break down transcriptions into several lines and categorise them into codes by utilising general open-ended questions. Focused coding is the next step of revealing the most common themes from the initial codes by combining these into larger themes. The second approach is memoing. Memoing is a process of noting down

ideas and themes while working on the first coding (Lofland et al., 2006). These authors also emphasise that coding and memoing are relevant and useful to each other, being the basis of the process of developing analysis. Charmaz (as cited in Lofland et al., 2006) contends that writing memos is "the intermediate step between coding" (p. 209) and the finished analysis of the initial draft and memoing is the key to a series of acts of making sense of data.

To analyse data and then to consolidate this into key findings relevant to my research problem, this study has used thematic analysis through coding and memoing. To start the coding process, the researcher read the interview transcripts from the heads of department carefully several times, then marked any ideas or keywords that emerged repeatedly in the data. Then, the keywords were grouped into several themes linked to the pertinent literature. The subsequent process of memoing was also applied during the process of coding in this study. Memoing was used when the researcher read the interview transcripts and made notes about aspects of the findings which were relevant to the study.

Validity

An essential key to effective research is validity. Validity is "concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research" (Bryman, 2012, p. 47). It is used as a particular tool that measures what is supposed to be measured, where a valid account represents analysis of data that it is intended to describe (Winter, as cited in Cohen et al., 2011). Mutch (2013) also comments that validity is used to "measure what it sets out to measure" (p. 109). Another author states that in qualitative studies, validity is important for rigour and is about the factual accuracy of data findings, but reliability is also applied to determine the consistency of the data (Cypress, 2017). Reliability in this case is "concerned with the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable" (Bryman, 2012, p. 46). Bryman further adds that reliability is a particular issue concerning quantitative research rather than qualitative research because it is designed to deal with quantification and generalisability. On the one hand, Cohen et al. (2011) claims that reliability in qualitative research is not a big issue because qualitative research is not attempting to generalise the result of the research based on its principles, however, qualitative research acknowledges the context of the research. On the other hand, Guba and Lincoln (2005) contend that there is an alternative view in maintaining reliability and validity criteria in qualitative research in the light of the fact that the utilisation of reliability and validity as related terms in qualitative research assumes that a single social reality is attainable.

Bryman (2012), Cohen et al. (2011) and Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) draw one's attention to the view that to strengthen validity in qualitative research in terms of convincing audiences that the result of the research is trustworthy and credible, there are some ways of assessing a qualitative study which are about credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. These criteria are set for researchers to be reflective in order to control biases when interpreting both the interview and documentary data (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011). Bryman (2012) also adds that in order to achieve credibility in the research, the triangulation technique can be applied for cross-checking data findings.

Cohen et al. (2011) outline that triangulation is "a powerful way of demonstrating concurrent validity" (p. 195). Bryman (2012) reiterated that triangulation is "the use of more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon so that findings may be cross-checked" (p. 717). In addition, Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999) emphasize that triangulation is a method using multiple data sources to enhance understanding. According to Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999), there are four types of triangulation: methodological triangulation, triangulation of sources, analyst triangulation and theory/perspective triangulation. This study employed methodological triangulation, which utilises two or more data collection methods to explain the complexity of a phenomenon from diverse viewpoints (Cohen et al., 2011). The adoption of both semi-structured interview and documentary analysis methods gave me far more comprehensive information on the roles of the heads of department in higher education institutions in Timor-Leste. Therefore, I believe that the validity of my study was enhanced because I was able to apply two qualitative methods, thus achieving triangulation of the data.

To combine data from the two methods; first of all, I was provided the job descriptions and other relevant documentation by some of the heads of department after they were informed and agreed to take part in the interview. I further went through the Ministry of Education's website to look for Timor-Leste legal guidelines or a framework on higher education and other documentation at national level, which might be relevant for data analysis. Secondly, interviews were then carried out separately with each of the heads of department to gather the subjective data.

To increase validity, I took care to prepare an interview schedule. Bryman (2012) and Cohen et al. (2011) suggest that the interview schedule should be well constructed and used in a consistent way. It is important to test the interview questions prior to conducting the interview,

as "the best way to ensure validity is through pretesting the concepts and questions," (Davidson & Tolich, 2003, p. 32). I did this by practising the interview with colleagues before conducting my interviews. After the interviews, participants were provided with their transcripts for validation of accuracy.

For analysing documents in the second method of qualitative study, this research complied with the validity criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity as outlined by Bryman (2012). The selected official documents for documentary analysis were obtained from the Timor-Leste higher education institution and the Ministry of Education in Timor-Leste. The Timor-Leste job descriptions were identified by the Rector as official department documents and the international job descriptions can be found easily on the internet for verification.

Ethical Issues

There is a vast array of material in the literature that states the main ethical principle in carrying out research is to protect participants from harm, and to maintain participants' privacy and rights (Bell, 2010; Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011; Lichtman, 2013; Mutch, 2013; Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2001). In conducting what is appropriate in the research field, Wellington (2015) asserts that there are "morals underpin ethics" (p. 113) or a code of conduct that rule people to behave ethically.

Bryman (2012), Cohen et al. (2011), Lichtman (2013) and Mutch (2013) assert that researchers need to treat their participants with consideration. Therefore, there are some issues which need to be closely examined while conducting ethical research and protecting participants "whether harm comes from participants; informed consent; invasion of privacy; and deception" (Bryman, 2012, p. 130). Bryman (2012), Flick (2009), Lichtman (2013) and Mutch (2013) also add that there are some obvious principles, including providing information and gaining consent from participants as well as ensuring the anonymity of participants and confidentiality in reporting research. Cohen et al. (2011) and Flick (2009) state that the foremost principle for achieving non-maleficence or not harming participants is that of Informed Consent. For that matter, it is an important consideration for this research to respect participants' right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. Since this study required an interview, there was no harm or pressure on participants. The researcher carefully ensured that the instrument used did not encroach on their privacy. Subsequently, the participants' voice recordings were transcribed and re-sent to the participants for their valid verification. See Appendix II for the Information

Sheet used in the interviews to provide all participants with relevant information about the study. Also, see Appendix III for the Consent Form used for the study. The Consent Form offered the opportunity for the participants to withdraw themselves or any information from the research before, during or two weeks after they returned or confirmed the verified transcript. Flick (2009), Lichtman (2013), Mutch (2013) and Orb et al. (2001) emphasise that researchers should also ensure that participants', either individuals or institutions, information should not be revealed either to the public or in a report publication, and the use of pseudonyms is recommended. Flick (2009) also adds that any information provided by the participants from the same institution should not be identified by readers and colleagues in the research project and should not be dispersed to anyone else. Therefore, in reporting the project, this study utilised pseudonyms to ensure the interviews were anonymous to the public. It also ensured that none of the participants could be identifiable by the other participants from the same institution.

Finally, as far as conflict of interest is concerned, Bryman (2012) asserts that "the independence of research must be made clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit" (p. 146). In other words, any conflict of interest should be able to be identified and mitigated through the participant recruitment. For the purpose of this study, the researcher was well aware of the need to avoid any conflict of interest related to family connections. Therefore, no one who was known to the interviewer was asked to participate in this study.

Summary

This chapter outlined the research epistemology and methodology concerning the application of an interpretative approach and qualitative methodology in this study. The chapter also discussed the choice of two data collection methods, semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis, which were employed to collect data for analysis in the study. Finally, issues of validity and ethical research were also discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings from documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews. The findings that are from the analysis of documents obtained from official sources and documents related to the roles and responsibilities of heads of department, are presented first. Then the findings from the ten interviews with department heads in Timor-Leste are presented in three sections: how roles are described and documented, challenges of the role, and suggested improvements.

The Participants

The participants in this study are ten department heads from one of the Higher Education Institutions in Timor-Leste. Eight heads of department had been in their positions for four to five years, and the other two heads of department had been in their roles for two years. All the heads of departments were lecturers before they were promoted to become the head of department. To protect the heads of department identities, I have used a code for each of them which are shown as HOD 1 to HOD 10.

DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS FINDINGS

For the purpose of this study, three sets of documents were selected as the sample for this research. The first set consists of two official national-level documents, the second set of documents were Timor-Leste job descriptions of the head of departments and the third set was international job descriptions sourced randomly from the internet. These two sets of job description documents were selected because they illustrated the specific tasks and their performance expectations.

Analysis of official documents

The national-level official documents were called Timor-Leste's Parliamentary laws titled Education System Framework Law article 17.1 No.14/2008 and Timor-Leste Decree-law No.8/2009 titled Legal Regime for the establishment of Higher Education. These two documents were selected as the soundest available official documents, which may outline the

key roles and responsibilities of the head of department. The purpose of this analysis is to identify any content that could relate to the role and responsibilities of the head of department in a higher education institution in Timor-Leste and any gaps that are notable.

Document 1: *Timor-Leste's Parliamentary laws titled Education System Framework Law article 17.1 No. 14/2008 [Translated from Portuguese]*

In this document, the education system of Timor-Leste is described in terms of the provision of basic education, primary and secondary education and higher education. It mentions that higher education institutions should be organised into departments; however, it states nothing specific about roles or hierarchy within each type of institution.

Document 2: *Timor-Leste Decree-law No.8/2009 titled Legal Regime for the establishment of Higher Education [Translated from Portuguese]*

This document outlines the establishment of the higher education system's structure. It explains the hierarchical structure positioning the head of department between the Academic Rector (equivalent to a CEO), and the Dean of Faculty at the top executive level and the academic staff below. Section 3 of the document states that the head of department is responsible for pedagogic and scientific studies. There is nothing further that is specifically stated about their role and responsibilities.

Analysis of job descriptions

In Cardno's (2014), study the common elements in documented job descriptions of academic leaders were clustered under four facets of the role: (1) the organisational leadership role; (2) the curriculum leadership role; (3) academic management; and (4) academic currency. I have used these as a framework to conduct a documentary analysis of international and Timor-Leste job or role descriptions. The three international job descriptions (from Sheffield University, Western Kentucky University and University of Limerick) were randomly selected from the results of a Google search for head of department job descriptions on the internet. These are easily available for verification purposes. In all three documents, it is specifically mentioned that academic leadership is the focus of the job. All of these documents are at least three pages long with responsibilities clearly identified along with several tasks related to each responsibility. The four Timor-Leste job descriptions were provided to the researcher by four of the ten interview participants belonging to one higher education institution in Timor-Leste.

One of the job descriptions is two pages long and follows the format of identifying responsibilities and specific tasks similar to the international documents. The other three documents are one to two pages long and lack detail. These documents are written in a variety of languages, two in Tetum and two in Indonesian. All four of the documents analysed referred to three main elements of the roles which are teaching, research and community service activity.

The purpose of this analysis is to see the fit between these documents and the research findings on job descriptions for heads of department in New Zealand polytechnics. I will be looking in particular for similarities and gaps in the content of the documents. Under the four headings of Cardno's (2014) framework, I will present the analysis of the New Zealand, the international, and the Timor-Leste documents.

1. Organisational Leadership

In the New Zealand study, this included visionary and strategic leadership of the department and contributed to academic decision-making at the institutional level (Cardno, 2012, p. 357). In the international documents from the three universities, there is a clear reference to the importance of working within the larger university context and aligning department goals with the university goals. Contribution to institutional committees is highlighted. For example, one document indicates this role as follows, "contribute to university-wide initiatives in order to improve understanding and communication of this area". In the Timor-Leste documents, only the one that follows an international format refers to the role of contributing to the formulation and dissemination of the institutional strategic plan.

2. Curriculum Leadership

The main activities described in the New Zealand job descriptions were a combination of both leadership and management tasks. The leadership tasks involved setting the strategic direction for the programme, leading change and improvement and leading research to establish a research culture for academic disciplines. In the international documents, there are clear directions about the focus on instructional programmes and the importance of quality assurance procedures. Responsibilities for teaching and students are mentioned in all of the documents. In the Timor-Leste documents, three clearly mention curriculum leadership and the development of programmes and the management of the programmes.

3. Academic Management

Academic management in the Cardno (2014) study was related to the management of staff, students and resources for the programme. In the international documents, academic management features strongly, and there is reference to the management of teaching staff, evaluation and development and also to financial administration. In the Timor-Leste documents, three out of four job descriptions mention supervising, monitoring and managing lectures and looking after student matters. Budgeting is also mentioned.

4. Academic Currency

In the polytechnic context in which Cardno (2014) conducted a documentary analysis of department head job descriptions, there was a strong expectation that the department leader should also be an academic leader with the currency of ability to teach and research in the discipline area. In the international documents only, one highlights the development of personal academic research standing. Similarly, in the Timor-Leste documents, the focus on the personal academic profile is mentioned in only one job description.

Key findings of the documentary analysis

The documentary analysis has shown that firstly, there is easy access to models of job descriptions for the head of department role on the internet and in the literature. These documents stress the academic leadership expectation. The international documents randomly sourced for this study via Google closely match the features in Cardno's (2014) study of academic leadership in a New Zealand tertiary setting and appear to be written in detail. With one exception, the Timor-Leste documentation is brief and lacks specific detail to explain expectations of the role. These documents also omit mention of some aspects found in generic international literature on the nature of the academic leadership role.

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

The findings from the ten interviews conducted are presented below under three section headings. These are: how roles are described and documented, challenges of the role, and suggested improvements.

How roles are described and documented

Four out of the ten heads of department that were interviewed provided the researcher with a typed document on official letterhead that they called their job description. I have presented

the views of the participants in two groups below. Firstly, I will describe what was said by the four participants who presented documented job descriptions and then I will present the views of the other six participants.

All four (HOD 1, HOD 2, HOD 3 and HOD 4) of those who had written job descriptions commented that their job descriptions clearly stated what was expected of them. They described their role as heads of department in the institute. In addition, they described the duties, responsibilities, and working conditions of their job along with the employment contract attached to their position. They further explained that in their job description there were three main elements of work that they had to comply with teaching, research and community service activity. In relation to the existence of the job description document, two participants said:

> *I received the job description along with my performance contract and it was clear in stating what I should do. [HOD 1]*

> *My job description was an informative document and formed the basis of my job specifications which listed the roles and responsibilities of what I was expected to do. [HOD 3]*

For the other six participants (who did not present the researcher with a document), there was a concern that they were not given any document when they signed the contract for the head of department position. One participant stated that he received a letter of appointment to be a head of department; however, there were no specific tasks or responsibilities outlined in the letter [HOD 6].

Another participant offered a different viewpoint when asked about the documentation of his role that was not given. According to him, being chosen to be a head of department without a job description made it very difficult to exercise his role. He often misunderstood which work was his, and some work was not done because the role and responsibility were not clearly stated in his contract of performance. He said:

> *I did not receive a personal job description document, and I am often confused about what exactly am I expected to do. [HOD 7]*

Other participants said that since they were not given a personal job description document, they were instructed by their superiors to carry out the tasks as outlined in the Annual Program Plan Handbook. They complained that the description in this handbook was very general, and they would prefer more detail. For instance, one participant said:

> *This job description is too general and centralised, and it is common to everyone, not a personal document. [HOD 8]*

When asked about the clarity of the document, those who reported having been given written job descriptions admitted that the job description was clearly outlined and easy to follow. One participant highlighted that he clearly understood the roles outlined in the job description and it helped him in planning, managing, and executing the annual programme within the department [HOD 4].

Unlike the four who had a document, participants with no job descriptions claimed that it was not clear as to what was included in their roles and responsibilities since they were not provided with a proper job description. One head of department said:

> *I have been without a job description for almost two years now. Most of my work was verbally instructed by my superior and the instructions were often unclear, so it caused confusion as to what I was required to do. [HOD 9]*

Other HODs also argued that all other jobs they have been doing in their fields had never been outlined in a written job description. The contract they signed on their appointment to the nominated role did not provide detailed information on their roles and responsibilities. These were verbally explained in brief including such tasks as teaching and monitoring lecturers' performance; however, as far as other tasks are concerned, they were merely told to carry-out any additional tasks whatsoever, if they were instructed to do so.

Key findings
- Those who had written job descriptions were satisfied that the role was clearly defined, and they felt there was enough detail in the document.
- Those who did not have written job descriptions were confused about what was expected of them and felt that they should have been given more clear instructions.

- Generally, it was felt that there was an absolute need for a clearly written job description.
- All the participants acknowledged that although within the Annual Programme Plan Handbook there was an outline of the Head of Department Role, this was not sufficient or clear enough to be a useful working document.

Challenges of the role

The ten heads of department were asked about the challenges or concerns in performing their roles. Several themes emerged and are displayed below. These themes are the ambiguity of role, lack of time and workload pressures, research demands, challenges of community service activity, and a lack of professional development.

Ambiguity of Role

Four heads of department, who were provided with the job description, appeared to have no problem with ambiguity. They explained that they have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, first of all, because the job descriptions were well written and easy to follow, and they were provided with a good and detailed explanation of their roles and responsibilities.

Two of these four participants stated that:

> *My roles and responsibilities were clearly defined in my job description and I had no doubt in carrying out my tasks. [HOD 2]*

> *The job description provided me with a general understanding of my roles and responsibilities, and it allowed me to be more independent in my daily work. [HOD 3]*

These four department heads agreed that the role clarity in their job helped them perform better at work. They further explained that the work that they have been doing every day for years, such as teaching and management functions had become a habit; thus, they knew what they are meant to do.

For the other six heads of department, it was difficult to understand their roles and responsibilities because there was no written job description which could be used as a guiding

document to carry out their job on a daily basis. Almost all of these six participants made comments about the ambiguity of their role being a challenge. One head of department (HOD) said that:

> *I have difficulty in understanding my roles because there is no clarity in the statement of expectations, so I try to carry out my job like other heads of department, that is teaching. [HOD 5]*

Another participant admitted that he did not understand adequately what his job actually was. He was confused and felt he failed in engaging in appropriate work. He said:

> *Honestly, I merely understand half of my job, which is teaching and monitoring each lecturer's timetable under my department. But with other jobs concerning management functions, I am not sure, and I have to ask other heads of department. [HOD 6]*

These six HODs further argued that the lack of clarity of their job description had decreased their work productivity. They also noticed that they mostly worked in confusing situations where they did not comprehend their work well.

In conclusion, all four participants who had written job descriptions confirmed that the job had been explained to them and this made it clear. In contrast, those who were suffering from the role ambiguity (the other six) would have liked opportunities to discuss their role with a manager and get some explanations.

Lack of Time and Workload Pressures

The document analysis revealed that the Timor-Leste job description documents involved three main elements of teaching, research and community service activity. Almost all the participants complained there was not enough time to do research and community service activity because they had a very heavy teaching load. Many of them felt they were overworked and under pressure to take on additional tasks. For instance, one of the heads of department said:

> *As the head of department, I also have a teaching responsibility. Due to the minimum number of lecturers, I am obliged to teach up to 10 to 14 classes a week in total, and with such a tight schedule our department does not have*

enough time and thus, is unable to perform the other two important tasks, among which include conducting research and community engagement activity. [HOD 1]

The essential issue of lack of time became a huge challenge for heads of department to perform their roles effectively. They further stressed that they had insufficient time to complete their core tasks. In relation to this matter, one participant said, for example, that:

My teaching schedule is very tight, and I am fully occupied almost throughout the whole week. Despite giving lectures in class, I also have to assist students with practical exercises in the computer lab. Therefore, for all these years, our department has not initiated research and community services activities because of time, which is very limited. Further, it seems difficult to me to manage the time that I have for teaching and to do the other two core tasks, because every semester I need to deliver all the relevant topics that are left before exams. [HOD 3]

These comments express the frustration of some heads of department that most of their time is allocated for lesson preparation and teaching. In addition, they complained of an increasingly heavy workload or additional tasks. Most department heads felt very stressed and the pressure of added responsibilities added to the lack of time. One participant expressed his frustration in this quote.

Additional responsibilities such as administrative work were not included in my job description; however, I have to carry out the tasks because they are assigned by my supervisor and required by me to complete before the deadline. [HOD 4]

Another participant also argued that additional tasks were given by the superior such as dealing with clerical jobs and finance-related tasks which deal with payroll, and carrying out a survey on the price of merchandise products in the market as well as purchasing office stationery for the department which are inappropriate tasks for a head of department [HOD 5]. These tasks lead to an increase in workload, which merely worsens the lack of time in carrying out the other two core tasks that are required by most of the heads of department in this study.

It was evident that the majority of heads of department in this study were in a position where they were involved in a great deal of work in their own department. Lack of time and excessive workloads (additional tasks) and tight deadlines have caused stress and burnout in the long run. To do this effectively, they would like to have a discussion with their superior on the additional tasks they are given.

Research demands

Another key element of the role that was found as a challenge for department heads in this study was research tasks. My findings indicated that almost all heads of department tended to do more teaching, followed by some research efforts. However, due to the lack of substantial resources, such as time, research funding and network strengthening in this institution, research was not conducted.

The research issue, in this case, was considered as an additional demand that increased the tension on the heads of department, where departments are obliged to comply with accreditation rating requirements established by the Timor-Leste National Agency for Academic Assessment and Accreditation (NAAAA) before they are accredited. In order to carry out this task, many heads of department encountered challenges; the reason being that there is no available guiding document for directing them to do this task. One participant in this study presented his view as follows.

> *Being in the position, the head of department, research is a new task for me. At the moment, we have not got any guidelines whatsoever that are being prepared for us to follow. [HOD 5]*

Most of the heads of department in this study also presented another concern: insufficient time allocation for research. According to one of the participants, teaching activities have become the first priority in their institution. He then added time constraints were the biggest inevitable concerns to do research activities [HOD 6].

Another participant believed that research is an important area because it is closely related to and within his teaching field; however, the research itself is time demanding and requires full commitment, as per his following statement:

> *In my point of view, research requires more time, energy and commitment because research is complex and may need separate attention and dedication. [HOD 7]*

Most of the respondents in this study highlighted that their additional workload has increased pressure on the heads of department. The issue of time allocation was the greatest concern for heads of department to undertake additional tasks demanded (research). A lack of guiding procedures for research was another challenge identified by the heads of department in this study.

Challenges of community service activity

Community service activity is one of the three roles of the higher education that are attached to the heads of department position. All of the participants admitted that community service activity was another obstacle that increased pressure on the heads of department. These participants commented that to be engaged in community service activity, they needed a pre-established procedure that guides them in this activity. One participant said:

> *This activity has caused frustrations because there is no clear direction which direct us to do this activity. [HOD 4]*

Another participant also said that community service activity is a new task that is similar to the research task. According to him, this activity required more understanding on how to structure interactions with different levels of the community and how to establish a strong working relationship with people in society. He stated:

> *I think in carrying out community service activity, the heads of department need additional specific skills and knowledge in this field, for being the reason that dealing with the community from a different background is a complex issue. [HOD 8]*

A further issue identified in this finding was insufficient time for heads of department to carry out the community service activity. The intense heavy workload related to both internal and external aspects of their institution, contributed to the lack of time to undertake other tasks. One of the participants expressed his frustration in the following comment:

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It is simply not possible at any one time to do this task effectively for the fact that other tasks seem to require more expectations, such as teach well, deal with endless administrative demands, be permanently available for students and mark all students' assignments. [HOD 9]

It was clear that the majority of department heads in this study indicated that lack of time and a heavy workload were major concerns affecting their work performance. In addition, poor implementation of this activity was because there was no guideline document for directing heads of department in carrying out this activity.

A lack of professional development

Ideally, an effective role performance should improve the quality of role expectations. Thus, it can be said that professional development has an impact of either direct and indirect benefit to the individual or institution associated with students' learning outcomes. When each head of department was asked about concerns that they had about their role performance, most of them in this research identified a lack of professional development to enable them to undertake their role which was a challenge. One of the heads of department expressed his concern in his comments:

There are no management and leadership training skills for heads of department in this institution. I became head of department for several years and I have to manage my department without knowing how to manage people. [HOD 6]

The irony of this is clearly expressed by another head of department:

I think the institution is a prodigy in that they offer almost no training whatsoever for any kind of leadership role. I developed my own understanding and ability on how to do things as I go along, but for my role, there is no training. I just learn from the job itself. [HOD 7]

Another concern was also raised by other heads of department that there was no training available for them on research and community service activities. One of the participants

admitted that he felt a lack of relevant experience in these fields; therefore, he needed to enhance his knowledge, particularly in both areas, theory and practice [HOD 10].

To conclude, it appeared from the responses that training and professional development was an essential issue for the heads of department. Most heads of department would have liked opportunities to discuss with their manager in terms of identifying room for improvements through performance appraisal. In addition to that, having chances to participate in training would be a great opportunity for heads of department to enhance their knowledge and skills in their field.

Key findings

- The role is ambiguous for those without written job descriptions. Discussion of the role with managers would help to reduce ambiguity.
- For these heads of department there was a major issue related to lack of time to carry out the role and they all felt they experienced workload pressures.
- Research was an additional demand that increased pressure on the heads of department.
- Understanding what was expected in relation to community service activity was an additional pressure because there were no clear procedures in place.
- Specific professional / leadership development for these heads of department was not available to them.

Suggested improvements

To improve challenges encountered by the HODs, there are several suggestions that need to be taken into consideration in order to improve key elements that are directly contributing to the achievement of the institution's goal. These suggestions for improvements are divided into several sub-sections as follows:

Improving role clarity through documents and discussion

Poorly defined roles and responsibilities in job descriptions can lead to tension. Participants in this study suggested some strong points related to improving role clarity through both documents and discussion presented as follows.

> *I think role clarity is important within the institution. It is highly recommended for employees to know what they need to do and what is expected of them. [HOD 5]*

Other participants who did not have a job description commented that they had experiences where they were put into the positions without fully knowing what they were responsible for and accountable for. Therefore, they needed clarity, alignment and expectations for them to exercise their role effectively. One of the participants said:

> *I need an official job description for my position that describes my roles and responsibilities, and most importantly, these roles and responsibilities need to be discussed thoroughly, face-to-face, the clarity of roles expectations. [HOD 8]*

Another participant also suggested that to improve role clarity within the institution, managers should check in with heads of department on a regular basis. In addition, managers should at least find out if heads of department are experiencing high levels of work pressure, whether what is expected of them is clear and how to improve the situation [HOD 9].

To summarise, the proposed suggestions indicated that providing clarity of job descriptions enables heads of department to do their job effectively. Manager's approach to heads of department is highly needed to provide comprehensive roles and responsibilities which align with their department and institutional goals.

To negotiate additional tasks

Taking on more responsibilities can be an effective way to gain more experience. However, it is also essential to consider several aspects that may exacerbate other priority tasks. Almost all heads of department who received additional responsibilities complained that heavy workloads often deflected them from teaching, research and community service activity. Therefore, some suggestions are presented as follows.

> *I suppose every additional task that is assigned by my manager to me should firstly be discussed because I usually have other priorities to be handled. [HOD 2]*

One head of department, for instance, found that additional tasks such as administrative work, workshops and meetings appeared to have overtaken other main tasks. He added that his classes were sometimes interrupted due to being called urgently to go for meetings without much prior notice. Therefore, he suggested that:

> *Managers should invite heads of department into a formal conversation regarding the increase of any additional tasks which can be managed without blocking out sufficient time to accomplish other priority responsibilities. [HOD 7]*

Other participants also noticed that there were too many additional tasks to do in short time frames and they needed more time to complete the tasks before deadlines. Therefore, one of the participants suggested that delegating tasks to other subordinates would be a great solution for heads of department to handle a cumbersome workload in order not to fall behind the deadlines [HOD 8].

In conclusion, most heads of department suggested that there is a need for discussion regarding additional tasks given by their managers. Negotiating tasks with managers such as discussing due dates and deliverables, heavy volume of work and delegating complex tasks to specialised subordinates will avoid negative impacts on the performance outcome of the head of department.

Guidelines for research assessments

In conjunction with increasing research demands at the higher education institutions; indicators of research assessment are needed. Most of the heads of department in this study stated that since research is a new task, a guideline for internal research assessment is required to assess the research output by using the NAAAA's benchmark to delineate the institution's area of relative strengths and identify areas and opportunities for development. One of the Heads of Department (HODs) presented his view as follows.

> *We need a guideline that provides us with a clear indication of how our research output should be measured. [HOD 6]*

The above viewpoint is clearly uttered by another head of department:

> *To obtain a positive rating for research outcome, our departments really need a research assessment's guideline to direct us to follow what criteria for assessing research quality at an institutional level. [HOD 9]*

Moreover, one participant also commented that research assessment is very important to assess whether the research output contains elements of new insights that contribute to the transfer of knowledge and generating positive outcomes to the institution [HOD 10].

To sum up, as far as a guideline for research assessment is concerned, it is evident that there is a need for setting up a new guiding document for driving heads of department to follow a proper process coherent to the existing quality assurance agency's benchmark.

Guidelines for community service activity

To engage in community service, there is a need to develop a deeper understanding in this field, particularly how to interact with people in the community as well as building good relationships. To do this activity, the majority of participants in this study suggested that a pre-established guideline is highly needed in order to help them in this activity. One participant stated that:

> *We need a guiding procedure to enable us to study what components are included in the procedure itself and the condition of participation in the activity. [HOD 3]*

Another participant also commented about what counts as community service in terms of what skills development was required in this activity. One participant presented his suggestion as follows:

> *In order to obtain the meaningful outcome of community service activity, I suppose we need adequate resources and enough background knowledge on how to engage with the community. [HOD 4]*

Moreover, other participants also believed that having a clear guideline would help them to participate more effectively in community service activity. In addition, it would also make a difference to the institution and people being served in the community.

In conclusion, most of the heads of department suggested that pre-determined guidelines (standards) for community service activity is crucial because this activity is part of the higher education role attached to the heads of department position. In addition, this activity would also involve students working with the community.

Provision of professional development

Professional development is a missing piece of the puzzle. Professional and career development is an important element of the institution to capacity-build its staff and personnel. The majority of heads of department argued that there was a lack of training opportunities and discontent with the selection process, within the institution; therefore, the following suggestions were presented.

> *I need to know how to lead and manage my department and I also need a practical training focus on technical areas. [HOD 5]*

This was echoed by another head of department who said:

> *When you look at management and leadership in this institution, we are just not trained. I could have the opportunity to learn a lot if there had been an excellent leadership programme provided by the institution. [HOD 6]*

Other HODs also commented that they would have liked some training in specific issues, particularly on modern cutting-edge technology-related areas. One of the HODs stated that:

> *I would like to participate in training mainly in advanced technology-related areas for the fact that I need to develop my skills, competency and knowledge as per the job requirement. [HOD 7]*

Given the above comments, the other two HODs in this study also commented that it is important to attend technology training because technology is constantly growing and evolving. Therefore, training and development are key factors in institutional success.

In summary, as claimed by the majority of HODs, training and professional development seems to be the key solution for all matters. Lack of knowledge, skills and experience are reported to

be the main issues faced by the HODs, and so it is claimed that adequate training may give them the required skills and knowledge to better carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Key findings

- Several aspects were highlighted by the participants as things that could be improved. These included being able to have a dialogue with managers to negotiate additional tasks before they were assigned. Guidelines for research assessment needed to be developed and similar guidelines to direct community service activity were needed. Provision of professional development which focused on the role of the department head was seen as a most necessary feature of improvement.

Consolidated findings: triangulation of two methods

In a nutshell, the findings of this study are based on the triangulation of two methods: documentary analysis and individual face-to-face interviews. Both of these methods revealed that in the majority of cases, the documentation of the head of department role in this one higher education institution in Timor-Leste is inadequate. This inadequacy of documents and detail was revealed in the comparative analysis of existing documents and the responses of individual interviews with ten participants. The documentary analysis shows that in some instances the Timor-Leste job descriptions are a good match with international examples and the interviews confirmed that those who were provided with written job descriptions were generally satisfied with the way these explained their role. Overall, the Timor-Leste institution was making an effort to provide guidelines and documents, as revealed in the documentary analysis. However, in both the analysis of the content of existing job descriptions and in the interviews, the shortcomings of these documents were highlighted.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the findings I have presented in this chapter under the headings suggested by the research questions which are about role documentation, the challenges of the role and suggested improvements.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings in Chapter Four by combining the findings with the literature reviewed earlier in Chapter Two.

My research is titled exploring the clarity of the role of the heads of department in one Timor-Leste higher education institution. My study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the perspectives of heads of department regarding their role documentation in a Timor-Leste higher education institution?
2. What are the challenges faced by the heads of department in understanding and performing their role?
3. What improvements are suggested by the heads of department?

I have used the research question to structure the discussion of the findings and will be using the following headings. The first heading is *the role documentation*, the second heading is *the challenges of the role*, and the third heading is *suggested improvements*. Ultimately, this chapter presents conclusions and recommendations.

Discussion

In this section, in the first heading, the role documentation, I discuss succinctly the roles and responsibilities of heads of department based on the content analysis of Timor-Leste job descriptions and the international job descriptions. In the next heading, the challenges of the role, the focus is on the discussion of challenges encountered by the heads of department in performing their roles. The last heading is related to the suggestions for improvements concerning the challenges experienced by the heads of department.

The role documentation

The findings of the documentary analysis showed that Timor-Leste's written job descriptions had a great deal in common with the international practices that were analysed. In the literature

that examined documented roles for department heads in New Zealand polytechnics (Cardno, 2014), there was reference to four essential areas of the role including organisational leadership, curriculum leadership, academic management and academic currency. Many of the aspects mentioned in Cardno's (2014) analysis are also to be found in the Timor-Leste documentation.

The key finding in my interviews with ten department heads revealed that more than half of them did not have written job descriptions and this created concerns and confusion. Whilst those who had job descriptions confirmed that these clearly described what was expected of them. As far as the clarity of the document is concerned, the Heads of Department (HODs) who did not have job descriptions found it difficult to exercise their role as it was not defined clearly. This finding connects to the Cardno (2014) and Marshall et al. (2011) studies where they identified the lack of clear role descriptions of heads of department in both leadership and management functions which are not described sufficiently in the job descriptions. Studies conducted by Fitzgerald (2000) and Kallenbergs' (2007) also noted similar findings to this study and further state that there is a lack of clarity in job definitions statements for middle managers as well as a slight recognition of their roles in the context of higher education. This lack of role clarity, both in practice and in research, is also noted by Bennett, Newton, Wise, Woods and Economou (2003) who note there was "some confusion as to what those expectations are" (p. 4).

Many research studies identify that the head of department is the key leader of students' learning achievement (Bryman, 2007; Cardno, 2012; Marshall et al., 2011). According to Scott et al. (2008) and Marshall et al. (2011), the role of the head of department needs to be clearly defined in a proper document in order to easily achieve succession planning and performance management. However, my research findings showed that those heads of department who survived without job descriptions argued that the issues of their job description did not seem to be taken seriously by the institution, therefore, they often carried out their duties ineffectively. This finding related to Adey's (2000) study which emphasised that the heads of department need clearer guidelines concerning their roles and responsibilities to manage and grow their staff within their department.

This study also revealed in the documentary analysis findings that the role of head of department in the Timor-Leste higher education institution is related to three dimensions:

teaching, research and community service activity. However, these roles were not reflected in reality, as heads of department in this study admitted that teaching activities were the first priorities of their role which they frequently spent a great deal of time on. Despite these activities, Cardno (2012) asserts that the heads of department in higher education are not accountable merely for teaching and learning but their roles should be extended to include research and 'community engagement' (Ministry of Education, 2012). Also, Marshall et al. (2011) in their study noted that almost all department heads realised that leadership and management practices are not performing properly because of a number of aspects that interfere with the effectiveness of heads of department functions. These include role ambiguity, lack of time allocation, increased accountability, lack of pre-determined guidelines and lack of professional development. The challenges or concerns encountered by the heads of department are described in the following.

The challenges of the role

This study identified a number of critical challenges encountered by the heads of department in one Timor-Leste Higher Education Institution. These challenges are discussed in the following subheadings: ambiguity of the role; time and workload pressures; research demands; the challenge of community service activity and a lack of professional development.

Ambiguity of role

My findings indicate that role ambiguity was the biggest concern for heads of department who were not provided with a written job description. Conversely, those who had job descriptions did not seem to have an issue with ambiguity. Six of the interview participants reported they did not fully understand what role was attached to their positions and what they were required to do. This finding correlates with research conducted by Marshall et al. (2011), which revealed that leaders in academic positions, particularly in higher education, appeared to have issues of role ambiguity due to unclear position descriptions. Moreover, Cardno's (2014) study also found that the role of department heads is very complex and often caused ambiguity owing to the fact that the leadership and management functions were not sufficiently described in detail in official documents.

The finding also illustrates that heads of department had an important role to play in their departments. However, the haziness of the role made it very difficult for these HODs to perform their roles. According to Scott et al. (2008) and Yielder and Codling (2004), role confusion and

role uncertainty are part of ambiguity, and this may lead to a conflict of interest, unfairness in workload and inappropriate assumptions made about expertise. Furthermore, the six HODs who had no job descriptions argued that the lack of clarity about the expectations of their managers has caused negative impacts in meeting performance expectations. Inevitably, this issue contributes to "inefficiencies, diminished job satisfaction and reduced quality of overall management" (Scott et al., 2008, p. 4).

Time and workload pressures

A lack of time and heavy workload pressures were overwhelmingly identified as the most significant challenges facing heads of department in this study. Research carried out by Bassett (2016), Fitzgerald (2009), Helsby (1999) and Ingvarson et al. (2005) highlight that a lack of time has hindered middle leaders completing their work expectations. Other related studies conducted by Gibson et al. (2015) and Scott et al. (2008) also report that increases in heads of department's responsibilities, such as administrative and other managerial tasks, constantly challenged the time they had to complete the tasks. Similarly, the finding in this study also showed that almost all heads of department were required to do additional tasks assigned by their superior, which overtook their time to do other main tasks. These heads of department argued that these additional tasks were not included in their job descriptions and this created confusion and problems. This finding is fairly consistent with the findings of research studies by Fitzgerald (2009), Gibson et al. (2015) and Ingvarson et al. (2005) who further state that heads of department should focus on the tasks of leadership and other work such as administrative tasks could be delegated to administrative staff or other staff within the institution.

The consequence of lack of time and increasing workload in this research was that the majority of heads of department noticed that they were not performing up to a satisfactory level. They recognised that heavy workloads consumed all their time and enormously affected their role performance. This tension has been previously highlighted by Cardno and Robson (2016) and Ingvarson et al. (2005), who stated that inadequate time allocation and heavy workloads have caused heads of department to feel that they are under great pressure.

Research demands

Another important finding in this study was the concern expressed by many participants about the demand for doing research and publishing their work. Most participants stated that research

is a new task required by the National Agency for Academic Assessment and Accreditation (NAAAA) in Timor-Leste. The purpose of the research demands is where departments should meet accreditation rating requirements established by the NAAAA. Pertinent to this issue, this study revealed that the absence of research guidelines has made it difficult for heads of department to conduct research. As a result, all heads of department have not taken a step forward to initiate any related research in their field of study due to the lack of guidance either as a written procedure or formal instruction from superiors. In respect of this, a study conducted by Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005) connects with this finding and notes that a written procedure is essential to provide broad guidelines in order to achieve uniformity in practice.

Furthermore, the intensification of workload for Timor-Leste heads of department related to the research demands, had increased their frustration. Most of the heads of department complained the time allocation for research was insufficient due to the excessive workloads. This finding is also related to the time constraint and excessive workload issue, as outlined in the previous finding. This issue is confirmed by several authors Brown, Boyle and Boyle (2002), Cardno (2014) and Dinham (2007) who state that the workload of middle leaders increased, which further complicated the issue that their role was not clearly defined and described. They further add that middle leaders were not clear about what their role involved, and this limited their ability to fulfil the demands of the role effectively. In addition to that, Marshall et al. (2011) also highlighted that lack of time might interfere with the effective performance of the role of heads of department within their department.

Challenge of community service activity

A further finding of this research was the tension of carrying out community service activities. This was additional pressure for all heads of department due to the lack of clear guidance from their superiors. In addition to this pertinent issue, there was no available guiding document for the implementation of such activity. This issue is similar to the previous finding (research demands). This problem has led to great pressure of meeting their performance expectations because these heads of department could not satisfy the institutional demand as precisely as required by their superiors. This finding is correlated with the literature by Cardno (2014), who argues that multiple responsibilities create stress and confusion. Moreover, most of the heads of department in this study also admitted that they were not adequately prepared for this accountability as they had minimum knowledge and skills. This finding is also reflected in an international context where heads of department are required to develop their skills and abilities

to handle complex tasks as well as to increase their understanding of their role requirements (Scott et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 2009).

A lack of professional development

The findings of this research showed that the majority of heads of department had not been prepared enough prior to and after they were appointed. This became evident in their response to the interview questions. According to the interview data, most of the department heads did not attend any professional or leadership development programmes provided by the institution. This finding is mirrored in several items of literature which describe the lack of professional development as one of the main challenges for middle managers and particularly for heads of department in performing their roles (Bassett, 2016). Wylie (2001) also concluded that those who held a leadership position for the first time were not ready to carry out multifaceted roles as they needed training prior to performing their roles.

Most of the respondents in this study emphasised that the lack of training had affected their overall performance. They further commented that the appraisal practices in the institution had not yet reached a level where it affected professional development for heads of department. This finding reflects the arguments of several authors who assert that the role confusion also influences the measurement of staff performance quality (Cardno, 2012; Marshall et al., 2011). Moreover, Cardno (2014) draws attention to the view that there is a need for heads of department to participate in training, such as developing management skills because they are not "adequately prepared for their role" (p. 356). Bush (2010) also argues that incapability of using leadership and management skills leads to poor performance. Therefore, professional development requires a particular arrangement to be made for heads of department to participate in training that is relevant to their role and to gain solid grounding skills required to carry out their functions effectively.

Suggested improvements

The findings under this section reported a number of suggestions for improvements in relation to the challenges encountered by the heads of department in performing their role in one Timor-Leste higher education institution.

Six of the heads of department who reported not having job descriptions in this study suggested that their job descriptions need to reflect their current leadership role; therefore, they would

value having a clear written job description attached to their contract. Cardno (2012) argues that difficulties arise when a job description is absent or ambiguous, as it becomes an issue when evaluating expectations along with performance. Therefore, job descriptions of the heads of department are required to clearly define their role expectations. This is evident and discussed by many authors in the international literature (see for example, Cardno, 2014; Marshall et al., 2011; Scott et al., 2008).

As far as additional responsibilities are concerned, all the interview participants in this study argued that there is a need for further discussion on the additional tasks given. Additional tasks often increased the work intensification and challenged the heads of department due to the insufficient time allocation. In relation to this issue, job descriptions of heads of department need to clearly describe the negotiated role and responsibilities and what requirements need to be fulfilled as described by Blandford (2006). The findings show that HODs want opportunities to discuss their roles and negotiate additional tasks with their managers. The New Zealand Ministry of Education (2012) also supports this view that there is a need for job descriptions to be negotiated between the superiors and heads of department to allow opportunities for them to improve and utilise their strengths.

Moreover, all participants in this study suggested that guidelines for research assessments and community service activities needed to be established in order to give them clear guidance to carry out both research and community service activities in the right direction. These participants hoped that the establishment of new guidelines would enable them to exercise their role independently with less supervision. In addition, they believed that guidelines are important and will help them to understand what is expected of them and what will happen if they violate the rules.

Ultimately, professional development was suggested by all as a way of making the role clearer and improving performance. Professional development for heads of department is deemed to have a direct and indirect impact on students' learning (Cardno, 2012; Robinson et al., 2009; Timperley et al., 2007). The participants in the study were keen to be good academic leaders and ensure quality teaching practice was delivered so that students' learning outcomes would also be improved. This, therefore, gives rise to the importance of professional development for heads of department and makes it the central concern of educational leaders (Bassett, 2016; Van Velsor & McCauley, 2004).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The research concludes that the description of the role for a head of department is one of the most important aspects of managing work expectations. A conclusion from this study is that for Timor-Leste department heads in this one institution, the role not only needs to be described in a document but also needs to be discussed.

Because these heads of department have expressed their wish to be academic leaders, the documented job descriptions should ideally reflect the functions of academic leadership that are evident in internationally documented job descriptions. The major concern that was revealed in my study was related to the additional tasks that were demanded of these middle managers. They strongly asserted they wish to be able to discuss and negotiate additional tasks rather than having them imposed on them without discussion. Without an effective appraisal system, that allows the job description to be discussed at the beginning of an appraisal cycle (Cardno, 2012) and then regularly discussed to make changes, the Timor-Leste HODs will continue to struggle.

The findings from this study have provided a clearer understanding of one of the most important contemporary issues which drives the overall performance of the heads of department at the Higher Education Institution level in Timor-Leste which is the documentation and discussion of the role and its expectations. Drawing on the conclusion of this research, the following recommendations are proposed.

Recommendation 1

The institution should ensure that department heads receive clearly expressed and detailed job descriptions with their appointment contract.

Recommendation 2

The head of department job descriptions should be discussed annually at regular intervals as part of an appraisal system so that additional tasks are undertaken through negotiation.

In relation to the challenges experienced by the department heads in this study, it can be concluded that they operate in a culture of considerable confusion related to many aspects of their role. In particular, two major expectations are research and community service activity. They need clear guidelines to help them understand exactly what is expected in these two areas of work. Work pressures are without a doubt related to a lack of clarity and there is genuine

evidence that their roles regarding research leadership and community engagement are ambiguous.

Recommendation 3

The institution should develop two guidelines: one for research stating expectations for conducting and assessing the research in the department; and one for engaging in community service activity. These guidelines should be prepared in consultation with the department heads.

This study concludes that the institution has a responsibility to prepare its middle managers for the role they undertake as heads of department. It is clear that no training, or professional or leadership development has been provided for any of the participants in this study. The participants are aware that they have not had opportunities for capacity building and as there is no formal appraisal system, there is no evident link between performance evaluation and professional development. The challenges of role ambiguity and work pressure are exacerbated when there is no system for professional evaluation and improvement, and this is also related to a lack of documentation and discussion about the role.

Recommendation 4

The institution should establish a formal system that includes performance appraisal and professional development with the job description as the starting point.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research has focused on the role played by of heads of department in one higher education institution in Timor-Leste. This research has highlighted issues in relation to role documentation and other challenges faced by the heads of department. However, in the future, I would like to conduct further similar research with different higher education institutions such as one public and one private institution in Timor-Leste.

I would also be interested in suggesting that further research is conducted (either by myself or others) on the following topics:

- A study involving heads of department and deans of faculty to uncover issues related to the purpose, practices and challenges of staff appraisal in higher education in Timor-Leste.

- A policy study of national documents that relate to quality assurance of academic staff in higher education institutions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I – Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Name of the participant: _____

Date: _____

Venue: _____

Documents and procedures

1. Tell me about what kinds of documentation (procedures, job descriptions or guidelines) you have or that exists in your institution?

2. What knowledge do you have about these documents? Can you show them and explain them?

3. What do you think about the clarity of these documents (for example, procedures or job descriptions)?

4. Could you discuss how helpful these documents are?

Roles and challenges of head of department

5. How do you understand your role?

6. Tell me something about how your role was explained to you when you came to this institution?

7. What exactly do you do?

8. Are you clear about what is expected of you and can you share this with me?

9. Which responsibilities do you enjoy? Tell me why?

10. Which responsibilities do you not enjoy? Tell me why?

11. What are concerns do you have about your role as a head of department?

Improving roles descriptions

12. If we could write the job description together, what do you think its purpose would be?

13. What would you like to be included in this job description?

14. How would you use this job description?

15. Have you come across any examples of well written job description that could be used as a guideline?

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Title of Thesis:

Exploring the clarity of heads of department role in a Timor-Leste higher education institution

My name is Iria Ximenes. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Educational Leadership and Management degree at Unitec Institute of Technology and seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a Thesis course which forms a substantial part of this degree.

The aim of my project is to examine the perceptions of heads of department related to their understanding of the role in documents. In addition, this study is also seeking to investigate the challenges faced by heads of department in understanding and performing their role.

I request your participation in the following way.

I will be collecting data using an interview schedule and would appreciate being able to interview you at a time that is mutually suitable. I will also be asking you to sign a consent form regarding this event. The interview venue will be …………………. and the duration of the interview will be 45 minutes. You will be provided with a copy of the interview transcript to check for accuracy and will be asked to verify this within a week of receipt of the transcript.

Neither you nor your organisation will be identified in the thesis. I will be recording your contribution and will provide a transcript (or summary of findings if appropriate) for you to check before data analysis is undertaken. I do hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find this participation of interest. If you have any queries about the project, you may contact my supervisor at Unitec Institute of Technology.

My supervisor is **Professor Carol Cardno** and may be contacted by email or phone.
Phone: (09) 815 4321 ext 8406 Email: ccardno@unitec.ac.nz

Yours sincerely

Iria Ximenes

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2019-1005)

This study has been approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee from (01 April) to (01 November). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 8551). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Unitec
Institute of Technology
TE WHARE WĀNANGA O WAIRAKA

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

RE: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

THESIS TITLE: Exploring the clarity of the head of department role in a Timor-Leste higher education institution

RESEARCHER: Iria Ximenes

Participant's consent

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research and I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered. I understand that neither my name nor the name of my organisation will be used in any public reports. I also understand that I agree to this interview being recorded. I understand that I will be provided with a transcript of the interview for verification and that I may withdraw myself or any information that has been provided for this project up to two weeks after the return/confirmation of my verified transcript.

I agree to take part in this project.

Signed:		_____

Name:		_____

Date:		_____

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2019-1005)

This study has been approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee from (01 April) to (01 November). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 8551). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Declaration

Name of candidate: Iria fatima Antonia Ximenes

This Thesis/~~Dissertation/Research Project~~ entitled : Exploring the Clarity of the Head of Department Role in a Timor-LESTE Higher Education Institution
is submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the Unitec degree of Master of Educational Leadership and Management

Principal Supervisor: Professor Carol Cardno

Associate Supervisor/s: Dr Jo Howse

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I confirm that:

- This Thesis/Dissertation/Research Project represents my own work;
- The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies.
- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.
  Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: 2009 - 1005

Candidate Signature: ....Date: 22 /10 /2019.

Student number: 1485641

Unitec

Institute of Technology

TE WHARE WANANGA 0 WAIRAKA

Full name of author: Iria fatima Antonia Ximenes

ORCID number (Optional): ....

Full title of thesis/dissertation/research project ('the work'):

Exploring the Clarity of the Head of Department Role in a Timor-Leste Higher Education Institution

School:: Education

Degree: Master of Educational Leadership and Management

Year of presentation: 2019

Principal Supervisor: Professor Carol Cardno

Associate Supervisor: Dr Jo Howse

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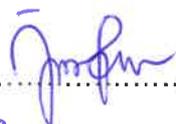
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