Exploring English Language Teachers' Professionalism at the Colleges of Technology in Oman

Submitted by

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Abstract

Literature in the field of teacher professionalism suggests that neo-liberal educational reforms and the managerialism that frequently accompanies such reforms may compromise and distort teacher professionalism. Specifically, concerns have been raised that such reforms seek to make dramatic changes to teachers' practices while ignoring the importance of their effect upon teachers' professional identities (Al-Hinai, 2007, Day and Smethem, 2009).

In recent years higher education institutions in Oman have been subject to repeated reform efforts and associated policy changes frequently focused upon the ostensible aim of improving the quality of education. This study explores English language teachers' professionalism at the Colleges of Technology in Oman (CoTs). Specifically, teachers' interpretations of teacher professionalism, the tensions the teachers experienced as the result of reform efforts, as well as the teachers' responses to threats to their sense of professionalism.

The main method of data collection in this qualitative study were semi-structured interviews with thirty English language teachers from three colleges of technology in Oman. The study was divided into two phases with Phase 1 data analysis being used to help develop interviews for Phase 2.

It was found in this study that the teachers had a very clear idea of what constitutes professionalism and believe that professionalism encompasses both the way teachers act and the way they are perceived and treated. At the same time, they raised concerns that their sense of professionalism was being compromised by a number of practices in their institutions. Furthermore, it was found that this affected their sense of professionalism that, in turn, had an influence on their professional identities, motivation, work performance and

personal life. These factors were further found to hinder their capacity to act in a way which they, themselves, believed to be characteristic of professionalism. The study highlights the importance of considering teachers' perceptions, sense of professionalism and professional identity when developing educational reform policies.

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List of Acronyms

Acronym	Description
BA	Bachelor’s degree
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CSEPF	Civil Service Employees Pension Fund
EFM	English for Me
ELCs	English Language Centres
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
GCC	Gulf States of the Cooperation Council
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GES	General Education System
GFP	General Foundation Program
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ITTCs	Intermediate Teacher Training Colleges
L2	Second Language
MA	Master’s Degree
MENA	Middle East & North Africa Countries
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOM	Ministry of Manpower
NCSI	National Centre for Statistics and Information
OAAA	Oman Academic Accreditation Authority
OAC	Oman Academic Council
OWTE	Our World Through English
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SCA	Student Centred Approach
SCPTT	Specialized Centre for Professional Training of Teachers
SQU	Sultan Qaboos University
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TESOL	Teaching English To Speakers of Other Languages
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

1.1 The Matter of Teacher Professionalism

This study aims to explore English language teachers' perceptions of their professionalism in Oman. Furlong et al. (2000) define the traditional notion of professionalism as follows:

> The three concepts of knowledge, autonomy and responsibility, central to a traditional notion of professionalism, are often seen as closely interrelated. It is because professionals face complex and unpredictable situations that they need a specialized body of knowledge; if they are to apply that knowledge, it is argued that they need the autonomy to make their own judgements. Given that they have that autonomy, it is essential that they act with responsibility – collectively they need to develop appropriate professional values. (Furlong et al., 2000: 5)

However, this view of teacher professionalism has recently been challenged and transformed as a result of educational reforms that have included neo-liberal education policies.

The literature in the field of teacher professionalism is quite consistent in stating that reforms in many parts of the world have changed teacher professionalism. Although the content and pace of these educational reforms tend to differ between contexts, according to Day and Smethem (2009) they also have common features. Day and Smethem (2009) believe that they all challenge teachers' practices, result in an increased workload, and fail to recognise teachers' identities, which are central to motivation, efficiency, commitment, job satisfaction, and effectiveness.

The literature points to a growing number of instances of professionalism being affected by state politicians' control, restrictions, and lack of support (Day, 1999;

Hargreaves, 2000). Day and Smethem (2009) argue that teachers' work internationally is now more transparent, its quality more closely monitored, and teachers themselves are held to more public account for students' progress and attainment. Though state politicians have exerted such control over education in order to raise educational standards, in many cases the opposite has happened. Day (1999) asserts, for example, that the current wave of educational reforms has hindered teachers' professionalism, and teachers across the globe have raised concerns about their affected motivation and sense of professionalism. Goodson (1997) supports this view and argues that "the national Curriculum is seen as the major agency for teachers' sense of losing control and for the dramatic increase in stress levels, the collapse of teacher morale and the flood of early retirements that have been noted" (p.37). Thus, the current reform policies may weaken, rather than strengthen, teachers' sense of professionalism and affect their professional identities with regard to autonomy, commitment, and retention (Skinner et al., 2019). Another negative result of the aforementioned reforms is that they subject teachers to public attacks, which in turn leads to shortages of capable teaching staff as teachers leave the job (Hargreaves, 2003).

Shore and Wright (2015) argue that "quality assurance and control", "discipline" and "accreditation", "accountability" and "transparency", efficiency", and "effectiveness" (p.559) are all "political audit technologies for introducing neo-liberal systems of power" (p.558). These audit technologies are "used to measure teaching performance and institutional effectiveness" and are "packaged in terms such as empowerment, accountability, and quality" (p.557), thus presenting reform as an emancipation from something "bad" (Hall and McGinity, 2016; Show and Wright, 2015; Whitty, 2006). This has resulted in the emergence of an audit

culture, which has had negative effects on teachers (such as stress and frustration), schools, and higher education institutions. Moreover, several scholars have argued that these processes represent the actions of an authoritative and coercive government (e.g., Evans, 2007; Evetts, 2009; Hall and McGinity, 2016; Shore and Wright, 2015). This audit culture has demanded more professionalism from teachers and has grown exponentially – as has the concomitant administrative work. This culture involves multiple pressures, such as testing, appraisal, quality audit and accountability, school reports, statistical analyses, and reports to parents and/or higher authorities such as head teachers and social workers regarding individual assessments of special needs. For teachers, working under such conditions is more exhausting than one may initially anticipate (Day, 2002; Evetts, 2003, 2009; Hargreaves, 2005; Johnston, 2015; Shore and Wright, 1999). They have faced radical re-inventions as their performance and productivity are placed under constant scrutiny and audits. Their sense of agency, autonomy, and work commitment have also been affected (Johnston, 2014; Pearson and Moomaw, 2005; Skinner et al., 2019), which results in teachers leaving the profession (O'Brien et al., 2007 cited in Johnston, 2015).

As further discussed in Chapter 3, many professional teachers have been resistant to organisational control and managerial interventions by their governments (Gaus and Hall, 2015; Pearson and Moomow, 2005), mainly because of the affected sense of autonomy (Evetts 2003, 2009; Shore and Wright, 2015). Additionally, the imposition of targets and goals on teaching has resulted in teachers over-relying on these targets, which affects other non-measurable tasks and duties (Evans, 2007). Furthermore, standardisation of

activities is also believed to affect creativity and innovation (Johnston, 2014), and encouraging competition among teachers leads to changes in the way they relate to their workplace, to authority, to each other, and to themselves (Shore and Wright, 2015). This in turn may affect the relationships between teachers in a given institution as well as teachers' commitment to their workplace (Groundwater-Smith and Sachs, 2002; Pearson and Moomaw, 2005).

1.2 The Case of England

England offers a useful case study of the effects of educational reform on teacher professionalism. In this study England is chosen as case of comparison to Oman because England has experienced lots of policy changes that have affected on teachers' sense of professionalism (Day and Kington, 2008; Day, 2000 & 2002). In other words, in England there has been an effort to reform teacher professionalism into a more organizational form of professionalism (e.g. Day and Kington, 2008; Evetts, 2009; Furlong, 2013; Gewirtz et. al, 2009; Hall and McGinity, 2015; Neumann et. al, 2016). This offers potentially important insights into some of the developments that have occurred recently in Oman particularly in the Colleges of Technology.

In England, neo-liberal policies were initially pursued during the Thatcher era and subsequently, in a different format, in New Labour's Third Way (Furlong, 2013). These reforms were justified as a response "to a common problem – how to raise achievements for all in order to meet the challenges of globalization" (Furlong, 2013: 31). As Furlong further explains, education "had to be modernised to meet the needs of the modern state" (32). Another reason was "teachers' perceived lack of accountability" (33), with the government arguing that teachers need to be more accountable to the government, students, parents, and the whole

community. From Hoyle and John's (1995) point of view, this reflects the growing notion that teacher professionalism cannot be achieved by an individual teacher because it is no longer based on the traditional idea of a professional with individual knowledge, individual autonomy, and individual moral responsibility. Instead, "teachers needed to accept a more externally managed vision of their own professional expertise" (Furlong, 2013: 34). This new idea of professionalism, which was meant to challenge the traditional notion of individual teacher autonomy, was exemplified by the implementation of a number of educational policy changes, including the National Curriculum, the National Assessment, and the Office for Standards in Education (Furlong et. al, 2000). Scholars (e.g., Day, 2000, 2002; Day and Kington, 2008; Neumann et. al, 2016) have argued that continuously increasing standards can lead to an increase in teachers' workload and a failure to consider how the changing conditions of teachers' work have affected their sense of professionalism and professional identities. For example, the UK's decision to publish national results and rankings forced schools to compete with each other to attract more students, which in turn had negative effects on teachers' work (Day and Kington, 2008; Gewirtz et. al, 2009). Evetts (2009) argues that this policy shift was also characterised by features such as marketisation, managerialism, and performativity. She asserts that these changes incorporated managerial identities, where professional teachers were turned into managers with a discourse that leaned towards professionalism and leadership. This created tensions amongst many teachers, who could not reconcile their values and beliefs with the encroachment of private enterprise into the national curriculum structures (Hall and McGinity, 2015).

Whitty (2006) argues that educational solutions to problems in schools were defined by the organisation and not by ethical codes, and teachers were regarded as obstacles to the concept of marketising the educational sector. As a result of these changes, teachers' autonomy and status were greatly affected. Trust towards teachers has also been affected, and these professionals gradually became mere employees in the chain of command (Barton et al., 1994). In essence, these changes "de-professionalised" the teaching profession and took teachers back to the conditions of the pre-professional period (Barton et. al, 1994: 534) where teachers were controlled by managerial and technical work (Haregreaves, 2000). However, proponents of these reforms argue that the process is more accurately defined as "re-professionalisation" of the teaching profession in order to keep it in line with the needs of the twenty-first century (Whitty, 2000: 282).

1.3 The Context of the Study

Regarding the context of Oman specifically, problems related to teacher professionalism can be traced back to the 2011 Omani protests that occurred as part of the revolutionary wave commonly known as the "Arab Spring." Protesters demanded a salary increase, lower living costs, the creation of more jobs, and a reduction in corruption (Bakri, 2011). Sultan Qaboos's political response on 27 February 2011 was to create 50,000 public sector jobs, with immediate effect, in all government departments (Fuller, 2011). The decree specified that the typical selection process was to be bypassed; proof of degree would be the only hiring criterion. This resulted in a large number of appointments in government departments without consideration of the standard recruitment process aimed at

ensuring the professionalism of new employees. The new employees were appointed to roles based exclusively on their educational degrees.

Within the teaching profession, the majority of candidates had obtained their degrees by correspondence from institutions in neighbouring states where, according to Ar-rahbi, the Director of the Department of Qualification Equivalence and Recognition of the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman, the programme standards were weak (cited in Al-Shabiba newspaper, 2015. See details in Appendix 1). As a result, these teachers were incapable of meeting the traditional standards set by the Ministry of Education or the higher education institutions. This resulted in a lower quality of teaching that was noticed by students, their parents, and the wider society (Ar-rahbi cited in Al-Shabiba newspaper, 2015). It soon became clear in Omani society that these teachers lacked necessary skills, knowledge of teaching methodology, the required level of English, work commitment, and ethical training.

The above issues, combined with other identified weaknesses of teaching quality in Oman (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of these), resulted in the government taking control of schools and regulations regarding the teaching syllabus, teaching methods, textbooks, and teachers themselves (Al-Jabri et al., 2018). With this intervention came regulations, policies, and time-consuming administrative duties that limited the time that teachers spent on teaching. It also involved frequent visits to schools by Ministry of Education committees, as well as reports, administrative work, statistical analyses, and additional remedial work plans for lower achieving students. Teachers became discontent with this bureaucratic approach as well as the new responsibilities that increased their workload. The intensification of administrative controls, coupled with the lack of

teacher involvement in the decision making process (Al-Riyami, 2016), led to 1,013 experienced and qualified Omani teachers leaving their jobs in the first six months of 2016 (Civil Service Employees Pension Fund, 2017). These teachers raised concerns that their professional identity was affected by these new changes.

1.4 Teacher Professionalism in Oman

Although there seems to be no Omani-specific research into the impact of reforms or managerial policies on teacher professionalism and identities, some studies of the education system in Oman have mentioned various challenges faced by teachers in this context (e.g., Al-Issa, 2006; Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi, 2012; Al-Mammari, 2001; Al-Riyami, 2016). Al-Issa (2006), for example, argues that teachers in Oman are overloaded with administrative paperwork and other activities in addition to their normal teaching tasks. According to Al-Riyami (2016), these teachers work within a framework of accountability and are held accountable for “more than what goes on within the four walls of their classroom” (Eraut, 1998: 13). Such intensification of teachers’ work was found to have an impact on teachers’ personal lives, and the increased administrative tasks have decreased the time allocated for teaching (Al-Issa, 2006; Al-Mammari, 2001). Other challenges discussed in the literature are large class sizes, which make the task of classroom management even more difficult (Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi, 2012; Al-Mammari, 2001), and the lack of support and cooperation from students’ parents (Al-Issa, 2006). This study has attempted to explore this gap in the literature on teacher professionalism in the Omani context.

1.5 Developing Interest in the Research

During the pre-thesis phase of my doctorate program, in a module called "Perspectives on Professionalism," our tutor asked us to read, discuss, and reflect on Horn's (2016) "Profession, professionalisation, professionality, professionalism; historical and systematic remarks using the example of German teacher education."

In this article, Horn (2016) asserts that although academic education is considered a prerequisite to becoming a professional, it is not sufficient in and of itself and should be complemented by the experience of practice. In the discussion of the text, most of my colleagues agreed with this definition, but I argued against it. In my opinion, without a code of ethics, neither a degree nor lengthy service will deliver professionalism either individually or collectively. I explained to my colleagues that throughout my career history, I had come across teachers who had both high academic and teaching qualifications and a reasonable number of years of work experience. However, their teaching practices or behaviours did not necessarily reflect the professionalism they claimed. There are a variety of explanations for this inconsistency, but it principally occurred because of their perception that they did not have to adhere to the institution's regulations or professional code of ethics. Following Horn (2016) and Lam (1983), they seemed to define professionalism as simply holding a high degree in education and spending a number of years in teaching. Troubling incidents that I witnessed during my professional practice included teachers being found guilty of serially leaking exam papers to students for personal profit and inviting them to their flats to purchase the exam papers, which is strictly forbidden by the CoTs (Colleges of Technology) regulations. Others were caught

having fake qualifications (more details on this in the next chapter) or reproducing materials owned by the College for their own purposes and benefits, without the necessary permission.

The group discussions on Horn's view of professionalism and the incidents I encountered raised a number of questions in my mind, such as: what precisely does the term "teacher professionalism" mean? Are we (teachers) professionals? If so, what determines our professionalism? How do teachers nowadays perceive their professionalism and professional identities? Thus, both my academic and professional experiences stimulated me to reflect on the nature of professionalism and use the aforementioned questions as a guide to review the literature about professionalism and teacher identities and examine what previous research has indicated as significant.

1.6 Statement of the Problem, Research Aims and Questions

In order to begin exploring these questions, I first examined the specific context of the teaching profession in Oman, especially in relation to recent educational policy changes. As a result of several policies that aimed to improve the quality of education in Oman by ensuring that the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of the educational system meet international standards, a number of changes to the organization of teaching in individual educational institutions were made. However, the teachers themselves were not involved in the development of these policies, and notions such as teacher professionalism or teacher professional identities were not considered in this process.

As far as changes in educational policy are concerned, Barkhuizen and Gough (1996) and Holliday (1992) argue that teachers have their own perceptions and beliefs, agendas, philosophies, and culture, all of which affect policy development

and implementation. In the same vein, Woodrow (1991) stresses the active role of teachers in the process of changes and implementation of new ideas, as their beliefs and attitudes may either foster or hinder the success of any educational policy. Teachers are, therefore, the most powerful interpreters of educational policies, especially those concerned with the curriculum and instructions regarding the teaching practice (Baldauf, 1990; Dove 1986). For this reason, Baldauf (1990) considers teachers' professionalism to be fundamental for education policy interpretation and places teachers at the heart of any education reform. Barkhuizen and Gough (1996) further argue that since teachers are the main actors of educational policies, their beliefs are important and should always be acknowledged and considered. Therefore, in light of the current changes in policies at the CoTs (Colleges of Technology) in Oman and the aforementioned importance of considering teachers' perceptions of these changes and their impact on teachers' sense of professionalism, the aims of the current study are as follows:

1) To explore English language teachers' interpretations and understanding of the notion of teacher professionalism.
2) To understand whether and how changes in policies may influence teachers' sense of professionalism and professional identity.
3) To explore teachers' responses to policy changes that pose a threat to their sense of professionalism and professional identity.

In order to achieve these aims, the following research questions have been formed:

1) How do English language teachers at the CoTs interpret and define teacher professionalism?

2) What challenges and threats to their sense of professionalism do English language teachers at the CoTs experience?
3) What effects do these challenges and threats have on teachers' sense of professionalism?
4) How do English language teachers respond to these challenges and threats?

1.7 Significance of the study

While there exists a considerable body of publications on the topic of theoretical and political perspectives on professionalism in teaching (e.g. Evans, 2007, 2011; Evetts, 2013, 2016; Fox, 1992; Furlong, 2013; Hargreaves, 2000; Horn, 2016; Hoyle, 1980, 2008; Sachs, 2001, 2003; Whitty, 2000), little is known about the views of teachers themselves (Bair, 2016; Dahghan, 2020; Swann et al., 2010), especially in the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). Additionally, although a number of studies have explored the impact of reform policies on teachers' professionalism and professional identities (e.g. Day, 2011; Edstam, 2001; Hassan, 2014; Neumann et al., 2016; Skinner et al., 2019; Smethem, 2007), few studies have investigated individual teachers' responses to managerialism (Anderson, 2008). This current study was also a response to Hall and McGinity's (2015) call for research into how compliance to managerial policies is being established and why resistance is ignored. Finally, research into teacher professionalism and resistance in the context of Oman is scarce, and as no teaching context is the same, it is neither feasible nor desirable to make claims about the experiences of teachers in Oman based on studies that predominantly focus on other national contexts.

Hence, this study sought to address these gaps in research by exploring English language teachers' interpretations of teacher professionalism at the CoTs in Oman, the challenges and threats to teachers' professionalism, as well as their responses to these challenges.

1.8 Organisation of the thesis

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 discusses the development of the educational system and teacher professionalism in Oman, where the current study took place. It is argued that inadequate teacher preparation and in-service training led to further regulations on education and teaching practices. Background information about the CoTs and changes in policies and practices implemented since 2014 is also provided.

Chapter 3 (Literature Review) defines and outlines key studies on the topic of professionalism and resistance. It also discusses the theoretical framework that was developed and used in this study to explore teachers' perceptions of their professionalism and their responses to managerial policies.

Chapter 4 (Methodology) begins by discussing the underlying philosophical approach of this study. Subsequently, key methodological procedures and considerations are described, including the methods of data collection and analysis, the participants and their recruitment procedure, the ethical considerations, the steps taken to ensure the research quality, as well as limitations of the study.

Chapter 5 (Results) presents the results of the analysis of both phases of the study, and these results are discussed in Chapter 6 (Discussion of the Results). Finally, Chapter 7 (Conclusion) summarizes the key findings of the study and explores their pedagogical implications. It also addresses the key contributions

of this study, outlines certain limitations of it, and concludes by making suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two: Contextual Background

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two main sections describing the context of this study. Section 2.2 discusses the development of education system and teacher professionalism in Oman. It outlines several stages of the development of education since 1970, efforts made by the government to professionalise the teaching profession, and teacher education in Oman. It also argues that despite the rapid development of Omani education system and in-service teacher training, students' performance remains low. Several possible reasons for this are put forward, including the quality of teachers' initial preparation, their dedication and commitment to teaching. Subsequently, it is argued that these issues are also the reason behind the government's regulations that have not only affected teacher professionalism at the general education schools but also in higher education institutions.

Section 2 provides background information about Colleges of Technology (CoTs) in Oman. It also discusses the status of English language teaching (ELT) in these colleges and changes made by MoM in 2014/2015 in terms of policies that were aimed to improve the quality of education in CoTs.

2.2 The Development of Education and Teacher Professionalism in Oman

The Sultanate of Oman is located in the south-east of the Arabian Peninsula, and it borders Saudi Arabia in the east, Yemen in the south and the United Arab Emirates in the north. Oman is one of the largest countries in the Gulf

Cooperation Council (GCC) (Al Kharusi & Atweh 2008). According to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) (2020), its total population in 2020 was around 4.46 million (including 2.73 million Omanis and 1.73 million expatriates).

According to Al Najar (2016), the development of education in Oman can be divided into two main phases - the pre- and post-1970 phases. Before 1970, there were only three elementary schools in the country, with a total of 909 pupils, all of whom were boys (Ministry of Education & United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNISEF), 1999). Most parts of Oman had no educational infrastructure, and Quranic schools in mosques, which mainly taught Islamic studies and Arabic language, were the only institutions providing education (Ministry of Education, 2010). In 1970, his Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said took power and that year is considered a crucial landmark in the development of Oman's history in general, and the education system in particular (Ministry of Education & UNICEF, 1999).

The phase that took place after 1970 can also be divided into two periods. The first period, between 1970 and 1998, focused on issues related to access and provision of education across the country for both boys and girls (General Education System (GES). In the second period, between 1998 and 2007, the focus shifted from the *expansion* of education to improving *the quality of education* (Al Najar, 2016; Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi 2012) and this reform called Basic Education System (BES). The following sections discuss these periods/systems respectively.

2.2.1 General Education System (1970 – 1997)

When the Sultan took the power in 1970, education has been free for all and the spreading of education became one of his main interests. Thereby, the government made great efforts and huge investments to expand the education and address issues such as building the required educational infrastructure; developing a teacher recruitment programme (with ideas mainly imported from abroad); and developing a national curriculum (World Bank, 2013:4). To meet these demands the General Education System (GES) was introduced in 1970 and consisted of three stages. The first stage is the elementary stage and stretched for six years from grade one to grade six (ages 6 to 11 years) whilst the second stage is the preparatory stage and stretch for three years from grade 7 to 9 (ages 12 to 14 years). The last stage called the secondary stage and stretched for three years from grade ten to grade twelve (ages 15 to 17).

During the 70s students were taught under tents and by 1980 the government started to build schools in all the country regions. These schools were equipped with chalk and blackboards and basic furniture. Schools operated into two shifts –morning from 7:30-11:30 and afternoon from 12:00-4:00 pm. As a result of education dissemination efforts, the number of schools increased from three schools before 1970 to 838 schools for both boys and girls with 364, 997 students in 1990/91 (Ministry of Education & UNICEF 1999; Ministry of Education, 2016).

English language teaching (ELT) has been introduced to the Omani education system since 1970 to serve a number of purposes such as; “science and technology acquisition, pursuing higher education, travelling to non-Arabic and English-speaking countries, finding a white – collar job and cultural analysis and

understanding" (Al-Issa 2002 cited in Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi, 2012:142). For this, English was taught from grade 4 and the textbooks were designed in England.

With regard to teachers' payment, according to the UNESCO 2010/11 report teachers at that period were employed in the public schools under conditions similar to those of other government employees who hold the same qualification and experience. However, teachers' gross salaries, including allowances are higher than other employees' salaries because of their teaching allowance. Chances to promotion were available to all staff and teachers were promoted according to their experience and performance stated in the inspection report.

2.2.1.1 Weaknesses of GES

Despite, the speedy expansion of education during the General Education System (the period from1970 -1997), several problems were found related to the teachers' qualifications and training, teaching quality and students achievements.

Teachers' qualifications and training

According to Mullis et al. (2016), due to the rapid expansion of education after 1970 and the resulting need to recruit a big number of teachers, many teachers with low qualifications were recruited between 1970s and 1980s. According to Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2012) some of these teachers lacked proper academic and educational qualifications and training, and hence would travel all the way from their respective regions to attend in-service training sessions in Muscat. Although most of these teachers were expats, Omani citizens who had completed their secondary education abroad and those who had completed their preparatory education inside Oman were also being recruited (Mullis et al. 2016). Regarding English language teaching, before 1977 anyone who spoke English, regardless of their national background or qualifications, could easily be appointed to a

teaching position, due to the belief that “if you can speak a language, you can teach it” (Johnston, 2003: 107). As a result of these practices, in 1972 nearly 50 percent of language teachers employed in Omani schools held qualifications lower than the equivalent of a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), and only 8 percent held a university degree (Muliss et al., 2016). In 1977 Teachers Training Institutions were opened and these institutions were then transformed into Intermediate Training Colleges in 1984.

Students’ performance

With regard to students’ performance, Al Najar 2016 reviewed some previous studies that have been conducted on the effectiveness of GES (E.g. Al Barwani, 2002; Al-Ghassani, 2010) and found that these studies indicated a number of weaknesses involved in GES, particularly the secondary education stage which neither prepared the pupils for higher education nor the job market. These studies specifically indicated that students were weak on their English language, communication, critical thinking and study skills required for higher education studies. They were also lacking the necessary skills to meet work demands such as personal skills (self-confidence), problem solving, public speaking and teamwork.

Al Najar (2016) further reported that the MOE had reviewed the above studies on GES and the above weaknesses were attributed to the over-reliance on the teacher-centred approaches to teaching that had dominated the teaching in the GES. Accordingly, it is reported in UNESCO & Ministry of Education (2004) report that the ministry used those studies’ results as evidence to improve the quality of education. Thereby, in order to achieve such quality aim, a new uniformed basic education system/curriculum was designed for grades 1 to 10 and introduced in

1998 as one of the major reforms established to replace GES. This then followed by the introduction of a new post basic system/curriculum for grades 11 and 12 in 2007 (World Bank, 2013; Ministry of Education & UNICEF 1999). The next section describes the BES in detail.

2.2.2 Basic Education System and the efforts to improve teaching

In 1998, viewing the reform of education as an investment, Oman decided to adopt a national reform project called Basic Education System (BES) to replace GES. BES was mainly adopted to promote the efficiency of education in light of the challenges and requirements of this era and Oman's aspirations for the future, as well as to link theoretical and practical aspects of education (Al-Farsi, 2002). This was to be achieved mainly through introducing English language at Grade 1 instead of Grade 4 to encourage its more efficient usage, as well as through updating teaching methods, assessment and evaluation system, decreasing emphasis on theoretical concepts in education and increasing emphasis on practical applications, reducing class size to ensure the provision of more care and guidance to students, and providing in-service training opportunities for teachers and other personnel involved in the project (Al-Farsi 2002). Another premise of BES was to design a new textbook based on needs analysis, *English For Me* (EFM), to replace *Our World Through English* (OWTE).

BES was divided into two cycles. Cycle 1 involved Grade 1 to 4 and Cycle 2 involved Grade 5 to 10. Additionally, Grades 11 and 12 constitute a so-called Post Basic Education. To meet the requirements of BES, all schools were required to operate from 7:30 am to 1:40 pm, and the afternoon shift was to be abandoned. Cycle 1 schools consisted of boys and girls and the instruction was to be provided by female staff only. A large number of new schools has been built

throughout the Sultanate since 1998 and, as a result, there were 2046 schools with the total of 843598 students in 2020, as compared with 838 schools in 1990 (Ministry of Education 2016; NCSI, 2020). In addition, more Omani teachers were recruited, and they gradually started to outnumber their expatriate counterparts in most disciplines. As a result, according to the Ministry of Education (2016), the number of teachers employed in government schools grew from 56586 in 2016 (including Omanis and expatriates) to 71469 in 2020 (NCSI, 2020).

2.2.2.1 The efforts to improve teaching

In addition to the above infrastructure efforts, and in an attempt to professionalise teaching and as well as to meet the demands of the reform, starting from 1997 only Bachelor holders were accepted for teaching positions, and all Intermediate Teacher Training Colleges (ITTC) were replaced by Colleges of Education that award Bachelor instead of Diploma. Therefore, teachers who have graduated from what was called Teacher Training Institutions (TTIs) and Intermediate Teacher Training Colleges (ITTCs) were enrolled in special programmes to help them upgrade their skills. Additionally, in 1998 the Ministry of Education signed a $25 million contract with the University of Leeds, UK, to design and conduct a 3-year in-service B.A. programme for 1016 ITTCs English language teaching (ELT) graduates. The course materials, handouts and reference books were provided by the University of Leeds. However, according to Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2012), the programme lacked language improvement, research methods and assignment writing modules. As many teachers exited ITTCs on Band 5 on IELTS, they found the programme too difficult. As a result, some teachers refrained from attending and others failed to continue partly due to the linguistically and technically demanding nature of the programme.

Additionally, as part of the overall reform for improving education and the efforts to professionalise teaching, the Ministry of Education launched a national project to raise the standards of teachers' professional development (Ministry of Education 2009). This project also involved the newly appointed teachers (both the Omanis and expats) who were provided with different in-service training programmes in their respective regions. Additionally, senior/master teachers were appointed to assist the less experienced teachers in their professional development through keeping portfolios and conducting action research. Moreover, experienced, qualified Omani teacher trainers were appointed in the different regions of the Sultanate to conduct in-service teacher training courses (Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi 2012).

2.2.2.2 Weaknesses and challenges of BEC

The development of educational infrastructure in Oman is so unique that The World Bank described the education system progression in Oman as “massive” “unprecedented”, and “unparalleled” by any other country (Ministry of Education 2008, 18). Despite the massive development of the Omani education system and the efforts put into teacher training and professionalisation, students’ performance has remained disappointingly low, as discussed in the next section.

Students’ performance

(Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi, 2012; Al-Jabri et al., 2018). Four studies were conducted between 1993 and 2001 by The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in the Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) programme. In grades 4, 6, and 9 the attainment levels were examined in Arabic, mathematics, science, and life skills, while in grade 10 pupils were evaluated in Arabic, Physics, Mathematics, Biology and Chemistry. The findings demonstrated low student

achievement in all subjects. Another study was carried out in 2003 that involved testing over 7000 grade 4 pupils in English, Arabic, mathematics and science, and the findings indicated that the students were on average approximately one year behind international standards. Although the most recent results from TIMSS 2015 indicate an increase in learning outcomes, the results of Omani students remain significantly lower than the average international level (Mullis et al., 2016a, 2016b).

Further research revealed that in addition to the above, students' abilities to analyse and synthesise information or to evaluate and discuss an argument were poor due to rote learning system that relies on memorisation (Ministry of Education and World Bank 2012; Al-Issa 2009b, 2010b). This, in turn, led to a rapid increase in private tutoring in Oman, as teachers attempted to prepare their students for the exams' purposes.

Teacher professionalism

Al-Jabri et al. (2018) attribute the unsatisfactory student learning outcomes to the quality of teaching, listing specifically the teachers' initial training, their dedication to teaching profession and the "sporadic and poorly planned" in-service training (p.86) as the problematic areas to be addressed. Regarding the teacher training, they argue that it ultimately affects the students' learning outcomes and the quality of the entire education system. The quality of teacher training, in turn, depends on the institution from which the teachers graduate (World Bank Report, 2012). Although the institution with the highest status in the field of teacher preparation in Oman is believed to be the College of Education at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), only about 15 % of newly qualified teachers graduated from

this college. The rest come from a mix of Omani institutions and institutions abroad with varied standards (Al-Jabri et al., 2018).

Regarding SQU itself, it was found that its teacher preparation courses raised some concerns. Firstly, educational supervisors' field visits revealed strong reliance on teacher centred approach as the main instructional method among the graduates who enter the teaching profession (Al-Jabri et al., 2018). They were also found trainee teachers to have limited knowledge of the syllabus and to rarely use technology in their teaching (Al- Jabri et al.; World Bank, 2012), as well as to generally have a limited knowledge of teaching methodologies (Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi).

Regarding the graduates from the neighbouring states institutions, it was reported in Al-Shabiba newspaper (2015) that a large number of new teachers recruited between 2000 and 2011 after the Arab spring protest were not sufficiently qualified and considered the teaching profession as an easy path to employment (Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi 2012). According to Ar-rahbi (cited in Al- Shabiba newspaper, 2015) the majority obtained their degrees by correspondence from institutions in neighbouring states where their programmes' standards were weak (see details in Appendix 1).

Ar-rahbi (ibid.) further stated that those teachers who accessed the system in this way during that period were incapable of upholding the standards of either the Ministry of Education or the higher educational institutions. This resulted in a decrease of teaching standards, which was noticed by students, their parents and the wider society (Ar-rahbi cited in Al- Shabiba newspaper, 2015). This resulted in a nationwide lack of respect for teachers, and eventually the Minister of Higher Education decided to remove the neighbouring institutions from the list of

accredited universities and discontinue Omani students' enrolment in these institutions (cited in Al-Shabiba Newspaper, 2015- see Appendix 1 for details).

Regardless of which specific teacher training programme the teachers completed, the in-service training provided by the ministry was also not adequate to improve the teachers' teaching competence. Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi's (2012) study of English language teachers' teaching methods suggested, for example, that teachers are not familiar with new teaching methods due to the lack of training. Al-Rasbiah (2006) criticised the ELT in-service sessions held by the Ministry of Education, arguing that they fail to meet the teachers' needs and are outdated in terms of their content. Another problem with the in-service training in Oman was the "top-down procedure in which decision makers were also the organisers and the planners of training" (Al-Jabri et al. (2018: 87) which resulted in a lack of teachers' motivation and enthusiasm. Al- Jabri et al. further argued that "teacher preparation does not produce the skills required for the teacher profession, and in-service training has been sporadic and poorly planned" (p.88).

To solve the above problems of teacher training, several initiatives were put forward by the Ministry of Education in 2014. These initiatives included developing and modernising initial teacher preparation, selecting the most talented and motivated young people to be prepared as teachers, and improving and updating teachers' professional development (Al-Jabri et al., 2018). To improve their professional development, the Specialized Centre for Professional Training of Teachers (SCPTT) was established, aiming to "build a critical mass of teachers, school principals and supervisors who believe in, and practice, the methods and approaches required to raise student attainment" (Educational Council, 2012 cited in Al- Jabri et al., 2018: 88). In addition to more "traditional"

components of teacher training, programmes such as “school leadership”, “educational supervision” and “English language experts” were established (SCPTT, 2020). The aims of these programmes were to upgrade and qualify these groups with current theories and practices in leadership and supervision. A noticeable difference between the new and the old system of teacher professional development is “the monitoring of the in-service training programs” (Al- Jabri et al. 2018:89) that involves “continuous data collection and analyses (…) to monitor the experiences of the trainees and the impact of the programs” (ibid.).

Effects of policy changes

The new developments, however, led to increased governmental control of schools and regulation regarding the syllabus, teaching methods, textbooks and the teachers themselves and resulted in an increase in the number of administrative duties that limited the time spent on teaching. The requirements were exercised by the introduction and frequent school visits by the Ministry of Education officials, as well as the requirements to submit reports, administrative work, statistical analyses, and work plans for under-achieving students. Consequently, Al Khaifi’s (2017) enquiry into teachers’ reasons for leaving the profession revealed teachers’ dissatisfaction with the increased regulatory requirements and work pressure, the increasing gap between the management and the teaching staff, the absence of rewards and encouragement, and the approach of the inspection visits. As a result of the decrease in job satisfaction, as many as 1013 experienced Omani teachers left the profession in 2016 (Civil Service Employees Pension Fund (CSEPF), 2017).

2.2.3 The situation in higher education

The problems faced by the general education in Oman are also experienced by higher education sector, with the common issue being graduates who lack skills and competencies to face the demands of the labour market (World Bank, 2012). In 2013, the Education Council mandated Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) to establish a national project called "The harmonization of higher education outputs with the needs of the labour market" (Al-Subhi, 2017). A survey was distributed among recent graduates and employers, and it was found that the graduates lack skills that are needed in the highly competitive private sector, including critical and logical thinking, analytical thinking, English language oral and written communication skills, and the implementation of tasks on time. As a result, recommendations were made to review the higher education policies in accordance with the requirements of the market and growth of the society (Al-Subhi, 2017).

Another problem that emerged in 2015 was the phenomenon of fake certificates. A number of teachers at several institutions, including CoTs, were found to be using fake certificates from non-existing institutions. According to Al-Ruqaishi, the assistant director of the Qualification Equalization Department at the Ministry of Higher Education, there were 1250 such cases in 2016. As a consequence, all employers, including higher education institutions, were advised not to accept any qualifications issued abroad unless they have been approved by the Omani Ministry of Higher Education (Al-Shabiba Newspaper, 2015). Additionally, all staff in all higher education institutions were urged to submit their documents and educational certificates for review and approval.

These events and the increased scrutiny of teachers and teaching standards resulted in increased pressure to improve the quality of higher education and to review its education policies. As a result, a number of policy changes were introduced by the Ministry of Manpower (MoM) in CoTs across the country. These changes involved a range of managerial practices, including the centralisation of all policies, curriculum, textbooks and assessment, as well as the process of staff recruitment and teacher appraisal. The management in colleges were also instructed to carry out unscheduled classroom inspection visits, and teachers were asked to document their activities more thoroughly. Day (1999) argues that this increased control of teachers and the intensification of teachers' work has often resulted in increased workload and can pose a threat to the teachers' professional identity. The following section discusses these changes in more detail.

2.3 Colleges of Technology in Oman

This section introduces the context of the study. It first provides an overview about the CoTs. It then moves to the describe the status of the English language teaching and the factors that can affect teachers sense of professionalism at CoTs

2.3.1 Introduction

Technological education was established in Oman in 1984, and this field of education contributes to developing high quality national human resources by preparing and qualifying General Diploma graduates based on the requirements of the labour market. The Ministry of Manpower (MoM) currently overlooks the governance and development process of all seven CoTs in the country. These colleges are distributed geographically across the Sultanate and they offer

Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Bachelor in a range of specialisations, including Engineering, Information Technology, Business, Applied Sciences, Pharmacy, Photography and Fashion Design (Higher College of Technology, 2017).

The CoTs aim to be leading technological institutions that offer high quality teaching and learning that produces professionals who would contribute to national socio-economic development. Each year an average of 9,000 male and female General Diploma graduates, who make up 32, 2% of the students enrolled under the Omani Government expenses, are admitted to CoTs (Higher College of Technology, 2017).

All CoTs are subject to the authority or chief administrator, or the Dean of the college. There are also three Assistant Deans, namely Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and Assistant Dean for Financial Affairs. There are also different departments and each department has a Head of the Department and two Heads of Sections. The departments function as individual units and work in sync with other departments when the issues of inter-departmental work arises. All heads of department report either to the assistant deans or to the Dean.

2.3.2 English Language Teaching (ELT) at CoTs

Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA), which was established to monitor and supervise accreditation and quality control of higher education institutes in Oman, ruled in 2007 that students enrolling in any higher education institution in Oman are required to attend a General Foundation Programme (GFP) as a compulsory entrance qualification. The GFP contains English, Math, Computing and General Study Skills. Regarding English, the students are expected to develop their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills that would

help them communicate effectively in everyday situations and understand academic texts. The GFP standards require students to achieve English language competency at a level equivalent to IELTS 5.0 before they can commence their chosen programme of study (Al- Riyami, 2016; Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi, 2012).

The GFP is offered by English Language Centres (ELCs) in each of the CoTs. At the beginning of each year, students are placed in four levels based on their scores on a placement test which is delivered centrally by the MoM. The ELCs also offer other English courses to the students during the specialisation stage. These so-called post foundation courses are designed to help students cope with the linguistic demands of their field of study. Thus, the courses include Technical Writing-1, Technical Writing-2, Technical Communication and Public Speaking (Higher College of Technology, 2017).

It is worth mentioning that because the GFP standards are set by the OAAA, since 2014-2015 the ELCs have implemented various quality assurance procedures to ensure that the teaching and learning processes meet objectively predefined standards. These quality assurance procedures require teachers to fill in forms to record their activities, so that they can show evidence to audit committees that they are meeting these standards. The ELCs, in turn, are required to inspect the teachers' attendance, teaching and marking procedures. According to Al-Riyami (2016) and Al Shari (2014), these additional administrative tasks may have a negative impact on the teachers, as they can feel stressed and overloaded with work.

2.3.3 ELT materials at CoTs

Before 2014, English language teachers at CoTs were using in-house prepared materials for teaching all English language skills. These materials were prepared by a group of teachers guided by course coordinators in each of the ELCs and were based on objectives set by OAAA for the GFP. However, starting in 2014, the MoM ruled that the syllabus is to be centralised and "Anglo- American or Anglo-Western" materials are to be used (Al- Riyami, 2016: 64).

At present, the *Pathways* series is used for levels 1 to 4. The package includes the class book, workbook, CDs and a teacher's book which contains very detailed instructions for how to conduct each lesson. Whilst there is no doubt that such instructions can be a helpful guide for the teachers, some have raised concerns that the regulations requiring the teachers to follow these instructions closely deprive these professionals of autonomy (Al-Riyami, 2016) and hands it over to elites at the ministry level "who do the thinking while teachers are reduced to doing the implementing" (Giroux, 1988: 124). Al- Riyami (2016) also raised concerns that this results in the teachers not being able to flexibly design and conduct their classes based on their students' specific needs.

2.3.4 ELT teachers at CoTs

ELCs attract English language teachers from a variety of national and cultural backgrounds, including Indians, Pakistanis, Tunisians, British, Canadians, Americans, Australians, South Africans, Pilipino, Uzbek, Kazakh, Armenian, and Lebanese, and there are few Omani ELT teachers employed by CoTs. Regarding the teachers' qualifications, most hold a master's degree in ELT or relevant subjects. Also, some hold a bachelor's degree accompanied by an ELT qualification such as the Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

certificate. According to Chirciu (2014), as a result, in these colleges, “one can find highly qualified academics holding PhDs and MAs with extensive teaching experience and impressive scholarly records alongside native speakers whose degrees are not necessarily related to the language education filed” (p. 53).

ELT teachers are employed either directly by the government or through recruiting agencies. The recruitment procedure used to be done locally by the ELC management in each college, but in 2014 the Ministry took charge of the process. The teachers are admitted on a one-year contract which can be renewed based on their performance.

Regarding the workload, each teacher is contracted for 18 teaching hours per week and two office hours to support individual students. In addition, the teachers’ duties include marking, exams, and remedial classes for low performance students, as well as QA related tasks and accreditation work.

Although all teachers have the same workload, according to Al-Riyami (2016) there is a discrepancy between the salaries of the government staff and those employed through agencies, with some government staff’s salary being around 10 percent higher than the company staff’s. In addition, the government-employed staff have more benefits than those employed through agencies. These benefits include annual allowance, accommodation inside the college campus, health insurance and allowance for furniture. In addition to differences between the salaries of staff employed through the government and through agencies, native and non-native English speakers are also known to receive different salaries.

ELT teachers’ performance is being assessed on the basis of classroom observations and students’ feedback. The observations are carried out by

members of the ELC management and are based on standardised criteria such as time management, lesson delivery and classroom management. The observations take place at random times and the teachers are not informed about them beforehand, unlike the scheduled observations that were the case prior to 2014. Another significant change is that all teachers are to be observed and assessed, which is a change from the previous policy that stated that only newly appointed teachers and those with serious concerns are to be observed. According to Al- Riyami (2016), classroom observation at CoTs are an evaluative procedure imposed by the ministry in which the teachers have no say. Cosh (1999:23) argues that "unless they are accepted by the staff, the only relevance of these schemes is likely to be accountability, rather than for genuine teacher development". As a result of these observations, a teacher's contract can be terminated without notice or further observations (OAC Audit Report, 2010). Finally, only the teachers appointed directly by the Ministry are given promotion opportunities.

The second way to assess the teachers' performance is based on their students' feedback. According to Al-Riyami (2016), the teacher-student relationship was reduced to the quality of the teacher's performance and the satisfaction of the students and can be described as a relationship between client and customers. The students' feedback also has an influence on future decisions regarding the teachers' contract renewal.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the development of education system in Oman. It set out the context and presented the contextual factors that can affect ELT teachers'

professionalism in Oman, as they are the main concern of this study. The next chapter reviews the literature relevant to teacher professionalism and resistance.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This current study aimed to explore English language teachers' perceptions of their sense of professionalism and their professional identity in the Colleges of Technology (CoTs) in Oman. Specifically, the aim was to understand the teachers' views on regulations and policies that affect these two constructs. Further aims were to explore tensions resulting from these polices and the teachers' reactions to them to understand whether the teachers resist these policies or comply with them.

In this chapter, the two concepts that are central to this study, namely teacher professionalism and resistance, are discussed. Several related concepts are also presented, and relevant studies are outlined and discussed.

The chapter is further divided into four sections. Section 3.2 defines and discusses the notion of professionalism and answers the question of whether teachers are professionals. It is also argued that research into teacher professionalism is scarce and more research that explores the concept from the teachers' perspective is needed. Subsequently, Section 3.3 discusses the notion of professional identity and Section 3.4 reviews the literature related to the impact of managerial policies on teachers' sense of professionalism, as well as their professional identities, autonomy and motivation. Section 3.5 discusses the notion of teacher resistance and outlines various forms that it may take. Research into teacher resistance is also discussed in this section. Finally, Section 3.6 presents the theoretical framework on which this current study is based.

3.2 Teacher professionalism

3.2.1 Defining teacher professionalism

Defining professionalism is not a straightforward task, and much of the debate regarding its meaning is "clouded by unstated assumptions and inconsistent and incomplete usages" (Freidson, 1994: 169). "Professionalism means different things to different people" (Fox, 1992: 2), as it is a "historically changing and socially constructed concept" Holroyed (2000: 39). Evetts (2006) also raises concerns about the vague nature of the term, and argues that:

> "the discourse of professionalism is being constructed and used by managers, supervisors and employers of workers rather than by the practitioners themselves, and it is being utilised in order to bring occupational change and rationalization as well as self-discipline workers in the conduct of their work" (2006: 523).

Regarding *teacher* professionalism, Sachs (2001) noted that "definitions of 'professionalism', what constitutes a profession and so on, have been sites of academic and ideological struggle between union leaders, bureaucrats and academics that are currently being played out in a variety of settings" (p.150). Although she did not explicitly mention the role of teachers and their involvement, she did note that the stakeholders are "acting in the best interests of teachers individually and collectively" (p.150).

When discussing teacher professionalism, however, it is important to highlight the distinction between the terms "professionalism" and "professionalization". Professionalization refers to "promoting the material and ideal interests of an occupational group" (Goodson, 2000: 182), and professionalism "focuses on the question of what qualifications and acquired capacities, what competence is required for the successful exercise of an occupation (Englund, 1996: 76). Halls

(1968 cited in Aun Toh et al., 2006) further divided the concept of professionalism into two levels. The first level is where the individual determines his/her own professionalism and is his/her own boss, and the second level is where the professional is subordinated to either professionals' organizations or hierarchical administrations. Whilst the first level of professionalism strongly depends on the teacher's autonomy, where the teacher is responsible for setting his/her own standards of professionalism, the second level is determined because control is exercised by a hierarchical regulator over teachers. David (2000) also believed that a key element defining professionalism is the degree of autonomy. Thus, he argues, it is crucial that practitioners are given autonomy to ensure effective practice. Pearson and Moomaw (2005) supported this view, and added that the teachers' sense of autonomy is something that they cannot achieve by themselves, but rather they need to be given it by the social actors (Pearon and Moomaw, 2005). This, in turn, results in teachers feeling more confident in their practice.

However, the view of teacher professionalism as something relying solely on the degree of autonomy contrasts with Hoyle's (2001) definition of professionalism as a term used "to describe enhancement of the quality of service" (p. 146). Sockett (1996) also believes that professionalism "is about the quality of practice and the public status of the job" (p. 23), and Horn (2016) defines the term as "a certain quality of practice that makes it possible to distinguish professionals working professionally from professionals not working professionally" (p.137). Horn (2016) further adds that the "quality of practice" is ensured by both the relevant education and the professional experience. This view, in turn, is in line with previous studies (e.g. Christensen et al, 1983; Sikes et al, 1985; Goodson,

1992) that have pointed to the relationship between qualifications, the years of experience and professionalism. Goodson's (1992) study indicated, for example, that experienced teachers have a higher level of teacher professionalism than those with less teaching experience. By contrast, however, Aun Toh et al.'s (2006) study of 338 high school teachers from 11 schools in Singapore suggested that there is no relationship between academic qualifications, teaching experience and teacher professionalism. This was evident, for example, in teachers with a bachelor or postgraduate qualification not necessarily having greater professional competence or displaying more commitment to the profession than diploma graduates. It was found that teaching experience per se is neither a determinant nor does it contribute to teachers' professionalism, which contradicts previous findings from studies of teacher professionalism (e.g. Christensen et al, 1983; Sikes et al, 1985; Goodson, 1992).

Campbell (2007) and O' Neill and Bourke (2010) also argue that neither a degree nor long service without a code of ethics will deliver professionalism either individually or collectively. Campbell (ibid.) believes that the teaching profession is a "thoroughly moral business" (2007:605), and points to the unique and responsible nature of the profession due to the fact that teachers are entrusted with shaping the future of the society's children in their most vulnerable, dependable and involuntary state. Teachers are expected to be role-models and examples of ethical behavior, they should do "right" and be "good" (O'Neill and Bourke 2010).

In addition to above, Phelps (2006) argues that teacher professionalism involves "three Rs", namely responsibility, respect and risk taking. Regarding *responsibility,* teachers should be obligated to students and the students'

families, to colleagues, to their schools and to the society in general. They will project professionalism as a byproduct of their commitment to using responsibility as their guide. *Respect*, in turn, should be the hallmark of their professionalism and should be evident in all their actions. The teachers should also be prepared to take risks and to commit themselves to assisting the students in confronting hindrances which they might be exposed to.

Hargreaves (2000, 2005) described four phases of teaching professionalism; (1) pre-professionalism, (2) professional autonomy, (3) collective working and (4) post-professionalism.

Initially emerging as means to educate the masses, in the early 20th Century teaching was perceived as easy, low-status occupation that lacked professionalism (Alexander et. al 2019). In this pre-professionalism phase, with no formal training teachers were isolated, with large class sizes, few resources and reluctant learners (Alexander et. al 2019; Hargreaves, 2000). Government control and authoritative superiors prevented teacher autonomy, and teaching methods of recitation and lecturing dominated, with individual student needs largely overlooked. Despite impacting education quality, rote learning is evident in some classrooms today.

Professional autonomy evolved when teachers challenged conventional methods and taught to students' needs (Hargreaves, 2005; Day, 2002; Day 2011). The growth of in-service and university education placed teachers firmly as experts, enabling salary rises. Parents were expected to trust teachers as professionals to best educate their children (Whitty, 2000). Teacher isolation continued, however, with coordination and cooperation among teachers, parents, educational authorities and governments lacking, impacting education quality.

Isolation fostered individualism and ultimately prevented innovative benefits of in-service education from being realized (Alexander et. al 2019; Hargreaves, 2000). Teachers were poorly prepared for the 1980s change in education, and newly acquired autonomy was viewed as requiring government intervention (Whitty 2000).

In Oman, a particular form of professionalism was evident in the period between the 1970s to the late of 1980s. During that period the majority of teachers were expats (see Chapter 2) occupying an elevated status with trust and respect from students and society (Al-Najar, 2016). Derived from the status of Sciences and Erudition, teachers were viewed as autonomous, career professionals, which was fostered by the religious education, instruction and upbringing of many (Al-Kindi, 2007). Although teaching was resource-limited and based on traditional methods, teachers were autonomous in their classroom decision-making, including student discipline, with minimal administrative tasks (Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi, 2012).

However, that period not without its problems. A large proportion of Omani society were illiterate and uneducated, and unable to assess teaching quality (Al- Najar, 2016). Thus, teacher professionalism was assessed narrowly—being disciplined and conservatively dressed, for example. Teachers were able to conceal their lack of competence and, in some cases, excessive use of corporal punishment. While there was a general expectation by parents that teachers discipline their children using the cane, its liberal use was difficult to question, with teachers often above reproach. By the 1990s, the narrow perception of professionalism persisted as the *modus operandi,* with multi-talented or unusually skilled teachers, such as in music or touch-typing, viewed as more professional. Strict

discipline continued, with rote learning the gold standard of teaching excellence (Al-Abri, 2003 cited in Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi, 2012).

Collective working emerged with increased teaching complexities, demands and uncertainties, due to rapid reform in the school system and a change in teaching trends (Evetts 2009). Such rapid change prompted collaboration, professional learning cultures and the creation of teachers' unions. The idea of mutual assistance and collegial work relations opposed the competitive, managerial or hierarchical control that previously dominated the profession. Instead, a strong professional culture emerged, with common responses towards challenges and complexities (Hargreaves 2000 & 2005).

The post-professionalism stage is underscored by the questioning and redefinition of school and the teaching profession. Governments integrated market principles into the education sector, instigating radical changes to the teaching profession. Cutbacks and rationalization stimulated competition among schools in search for students who were regarded as clients or customers (Hargreaves, 2000 &2005; Whitty, 2006; Sachs, 2001).

Sachs (2001) view teacher professionalism as a dynamic concept that "gradually evolves over time and contexts as a response to external power" (Sachs, 2001, cited in Tansem 2018:145). Thus, new forms of professionalism regularly emerge in response to interests and needs of different groups (Evans 2007). Teaching professionalism can be broadly categorized into hierarchical (lacking autonomy) and community and relationship-orientated.

Hoyle (1980) proposed the form "*restricted professionalism*", where teachers rely on their own teaching experience in daily classroom management practices (Hoyle, 1980). Teacher autonomy is limited to classrooms, where they teach in

isolation and have little control over, or influence on, school goals, policies or administrative tasks (Helsby, 1995). Evetts (2009) proposed "*organizational professionalism*", which occurs within hierarchical organizations and, similarly, management assign responsibilities and conduct decision-making. Regulations and rules are established externally, and pre-established structures and standardized procedures are used to review organization performance (Evetts, 2009). Operational professionalism focuses on external powerful forces, and market and managerialist logics of organizations (Hall and McGinity, 2015). Concomitantly, Sachs' (2001) "*managerial professionalism*" is defined by managers as decision-makers, authorities encouraging teachers' accountability and system effectiveness, with limited autonomy (Pollitt, 1993). Teachers "work[ing] efficiently and effectively in meeting the standardized criteria set for the accomplishment of both students and teachers, as well as contributing to the school's formal accountability processes" (Brennan 1996 cited in Sachs 2000:80). As a result, the professional identities of teachers operating under managerialism stand to be considerably impacted (Ferguson, 1994).

Contrary to the hierarchical form of professionalism, Hoyle (1980) first proposed a more community-based and autonomous form. "*Extended professionalism*" is a form where classroom activities are placed in a broader educational context through colleague collaboration on problem-solving and decision-making (Hoyle, 1980). The extended professional values research and professional development activities, and are actively involved in school goal setting, administrative tasks and education as a whole (Hoyle, 1980; Helsby, 1995). Building on Hoyle's (1980) collaborative and relationship-focused extended professional form, Evetts (2009) offered "*occupational professionalism*", characterized by collegial authority

enabling classroom autonomy (Hall, & McGinity, 2015). This form of professionalism is resistant to organizational change and emphasizes teacher-colleague relationships and those between teachers and students' parents. Similarly, Sachs (2001) proposed the "*democratic professional*", which opposes managerialist control and aims to encourage cooperation in decision making among teachers, students, their parents, the community and university academics. The teachers' responsibilities extend beyond classrooms and include contributions to communities as a whole (Brenan, 1996). Community-orientated forms arguably have positive effects on both the students' learning and the teachers' well-being (Whitty, 2006), and have expanded into "*activist professionalism"* (Sachs, 2000; 2001, 2003; Whitty, 2000; 2006). Tackling inequality and oppression and developing innovative inter-school links through activist professionalism has enabled strategic collaborations with universities and an elevated sense of value (Sachs, 2000).

3.2.2 Teacher professionalism in second language teaching

Literature on second language focuses on three aspects of teacher professionalism, namely teachers' knowledge, teacher autonomy and teacher professional development. Regarding teachers' knowledge, Shulman (1987) proposed seven types of knowledge that a professional language teacher should have. These are; pedagogical content knowledge, general pedagogy, knowledge of curriculum, educational goals, content, education content, educational context and learners. By contrast, Oder (2008) believed that professionalism in language teaching refers to the overall quality of being a subject matter specialist. In his opinion, being a subject matter specialist means being equipped with qualifications that meet the requirements, target language competence (e.g.

knowledge of the language grammar and syntax) and pedagogical competence (knowledge of how teach). Oder (ibid.) also adds that in relation to language teaching, professionalism also means that an effective teaching strategy should be adopted and integrated with full ability and competency into the pedagogical competence in relation to a motivational environment for students. Thus, professionalism in language teaching refers to the knowledge of the language itself, the knowledge of how to teach it and the ability to adopt and adapt appropriate teaching methodologies that suit the learners' needs.

Teacher's ability to adapt teaching materials is also emphasized by Leung (2012), who argues that "since no teaching strategy or teaching technique would work for all topics and for all students" (p. 18), professional teachers need to be able to adjust their teaching to the students' needs. This, in turn, as Hardy (2011) points out, involves knowledge of language acquisition theories and language teaching methodologies, which are as important as the teacher's target language proficiency. Leung (2012) shares this belief, and explains that to be able to flexibly adjust teaching methodologies to the learners' needs, one needs to be aware of the constantly changing and developing teaching methodologies and theories. Thus, as he explains, continuous professional development is essential to teacher professionalism.

From the above discussion of the notion of teacher professionalism, it can be concluded that, according to the existing literature, teacher professionalism is a complex construct that involves different meanings, forms and phases as well as several characteristics, skills and types of knowledge. These are the knowledge, autonomy and responsibility – occupational or democratic professionalism (Furlong et al., 2000; Evetts 2009; Sachs, 2001), control, accountability and

compliance – organizational or managerial professionalism (Furlong, 2013; Evetts 2009; Sachs; 2001), respectability status of the occupation (e.g. Hoyle, 1980; Kennedy, 2007), professional autonomy (e.g. David, 2000; Forsyth and Danisiewicz, 1985; Halls, 1968; Leung, 2012; Pearson and Moomaw, 2005; Oder, 2008), improvement of service quality (e.g. Hoyle, 2008; Horn, 2016; Sockett, 1996), qualification and experience (e.g. Horn, 2016; Oder, 2008), self-control (e.g. Barber, 1965), code of ethics (e.g. Campbell, 2007; O' Neill and Bourke, 2010; Swisher and Page, 2005), responsibility, respect and risk (Phelps, 2006), professional knowledge e.g. content knowledge subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge (e.g. Hardy, 2011; Shulman, 1987), and continuous professional development (e.g. Leung, 2012). The definitions of teacher professionalism in the framework (see Figure 3.1 on page 79) provide the basis for my understanding of teacher professionalism.

However, as previously noted, most of the available discussions and definitions of these concepts are theoretical in nature, and although few would disagree that the views of teachers, as key actors for implementing educational changes cannot be ignored (Griffiths 2007), research into these individual perceptions remains scarce (Bair, 2016; Dahghan, 2020) particularly in the field TESOL, which highlights the gap in research that this study aimed to address. Some research into teachers' perceptions of professionalism has been conducted, however, and this research is reviewed in the following section.

3.2.3 Teachers' perceptions of teacher professionalism

In a study conducted in England, Helsby (1995) aimed to explore teachers' construction of teacher professionalism through interviews with 15 secondary school teachers. The findings suggested that whilst structural factors do play a

role in constructing the teachers' sense of professionalism, it is their individual perceptions and beliefs that remain central to this process. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that the teachers' sense of professionalism consisted of "being a professional" and "behaving professionally."

Regarding the theme of being a professional, 15 interviewees identified various factors which relate to it. The most dominant was the significance of training in imparting knowledge and skills that a professional should have. Autonomy was one of these factors, and it was argued that a professional should be able to make his/her decisions regarding their work instead of simply implementing the orders of other professionals.

While describing what they believed to be features of professional behavior, the teachers mentioned the importance of teachers' dedication and commitment to work, which manifested itself in being willing to work long hours and to do additional work at home. Another discussed element of professional behavior was developing and maintaining relationships with the learners and paying attention to their individual needs.

In a cross-sectional comparative study of teacher professionalism conducted in Canada, Osmond-Johnson (2016) interviewed members of two Canadian teacher associations, the Elementary Teacher's Federation of Ontario (EFTO) and the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA). The findings revealed that the participants perceived teacher professionalism as a concept that involves the teachers assuming various roles, including the roles of learners, mentors, advocates and collaborators. It was also found that professional teachers have access to self-directed learning opportunities, feel respected and enjoy a great degree of autonomy.

Kurowski (2018) conducted a study to examine what and whose model of professionalism should be followed? Professionalism and professionalisation of TESOL and TESOL teachers through autonomy or accountability. Kurowski adapted the traditional professional model from Evans (2010) which is shown below.

Table 3.1: The traditional professional model; adapted from Evans (2010)

The Traditional Professional Model
• Extended and rigorous training, • High prestige, • High levels of authority and autonomy, • A professional organization and community, • A good salary, and • An overall ethic of serving the public good.

Eight English language teachers from a private university in Oman were interviewed, and based on the results, Kurowski suggested that professionalism involves two "modes", namely the traditional mode of professionalism and managerial mode of professionalism. The latter is defined by Bodman et al. (2012, cited in Kurowski, 2018) as

> "top-down control, increased surveillance, competition for teaching roles with assistants and non-teachers, increased marketisation, commercial approaches to education, reductions in funding, failing respect or recognition of the professional knowledge of teachers reflected in media reports taking up the standards agenda and perpetuating the governmental view that teachers are directly responsible for standards, [undermining] teachers' professional agency".

Although the researcher anticipated that the participants of the study might lean towards the traditional mode of professionalism, the results indicated the participants' inclination towards the managerial mode of professionalism developed through training and work experience. It was also suggested that

management and government control of the teachers' autonomy is seen as a de-professionalization of the teaching profession and results in stress and anxiety experienced by the teachers. The professional behavior identified by the teachers included personal experiences, gaining feedback, dedication, accountability, professional knowledge, proficiency, and ethical values. Professionalism was perceived as a state of being prepared, and proficient enough to apply theory acquired through rigorous training to practice in a flexible way that takes into the account the characteristics and demands of a specific teaching context. This also highlights the importance of qualifications and continuous professional development for constructing professionalism.

Although all three studies described above were similar in that they attempted to explore characteristics and skills that constitute professionalism, each of the studies contributed to understanding this notion in a unique way. While Helsby (1995), for example, explored differences between "being professional" and "behaving professionally", Johnson (2016) attempted to understand the role of teachers' perceptions and beliefs in establishing their sense of professionalism. The study conducted by Kurowski (2018), in turn, contributed to understanding teacher professionalism through the lens of traditional and managerial forms. All of these findings were explored further and that they all contributed to developing the framework used in the current study.

3.2.4 Establishing whether English language teachers are professionals

In trying to distinguish between professionals and other groups of workers, Day (1999) suggested that professionals are characterized by the following traits and characteristics:

1. A specialized knowledge base;

2. A commitment to meeting client needs;
3. A strong collective identity; and
4. A collegial as against bureaucratic control over practice and professional standards.

Some might argue, however, that teachers, as opposed to such professions as doctors or lawyers, for instance, are not considered to have any power or control over the professional values that they stand for (Day, 1999). Due to this, the teaching profession has been termed a semi-profession (Tsui, 2003).

Sachs (2001) argues, in turn, that due to the struggle between social and political factors that influence the perceived power of teachers in the wider sense of education as an enterprise, rather than treating teachers as autonomous professionals, most governments prefer that there is direct regulatory control over teachers.

Regarding Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), there have been attempts to professionalize the language teachers (Richards, 2008). For example, Tsui's (2003; 2009) work has focused on raising the status of the teaching profession by demonstrating to the general public that teachers do, in fact, have a solid knowledge base that is equal to knowledge that experts in other professions are expected to demonstrate. Regarding the issue of L2 teacher competence, Johnson (2009) points out that there have been attempts in the past few years to standardize practices in the field of TESOL (see also Katz and Snow, 2009) to develop a specialized knowledge base in teacher education. The new knowledge base, according to Johnson, focuses not only on what L2 teachers need to know but also on how they should teach (i.e. the pedagogies) and how they learn to teach.

In Oman, prior to 1986 any speaker of English, either Omani or non-Omani, could be appointed as a teacher of English based solely on their English language competence. This was the result of a widely shared assumption that "if you can speak a language, you can teach it" (Johnston, 2003: 107). This assumption, however, reduces teachers' knowledge strictly to knowledge of the language and leads to further assumptions about native English-speaking teachers' superiority over their non-native counterparts. These assumptions started to be questioned, however, which led to policy changes that required all English language teachers to obtain professional qualifications that demonstrate their competence in English language teaching in addition to linguistic competence (Barduhn and Johnson, 2009).

In addition, recent years have seen an increase in the number of TESOL organizations, professional journals, magazines and conferences that aim to encourage knowledge exchange within the international community of English language teachers (Richards, 2008). In Oman, for example, English Language Teaching Professional Network (ELTPN) was established to help teachers exchange information and share best practices, as well as find working partners and collaborate on projects (British Council Oman, n. d.).

Amidst this increasing movement to professionalize ELT, Johnston (2003) raised concerns that attempts to do so by making comparisons between teachers and other professionals are likely to prove "partly unproductive" (p. 84) and may result in the teachers' increased accountability and workload, as well as the increase in monitoring the teachers' work. This, in turn, as Day (2005) explains, may, in fact, result in the de-professionalization of teaching. Johnston (2003) suggests that rather than making such comparisons, more attention needs to be paid to values

underlying teachers' work and to their conflicting identities. This call represents an overall shift from merely making comparisons between the teaching profession and other professions to examining the thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, practices, personal goals, behaviors and commitment of the professionals themselves (Borg, 2012; Day, 2011; Richards and Lockhart, 2007). This view is supported by Strike and Ternasky (1993 in Campbell, 2003: 3) who add that comparing teachers with other professionals will not lead to increased respect towards the teaching profession, and that instead attention should be on the teachers' professional code of ethics, their intellectual and moral values, as well as their contributions to the society.

So far in this chapter, the notion of professionalism, including its definition, phases and forms, has been discussed along with the question of whether teachers are to be perceived as professionals. The following section discusses the notion of professional identity, as this construct is believed to constitute an element of professionalism (Day, 2002).

3.3 The importance of understanding identity

Understanding teacher professional identity and the association between identity, retention and commitment (Tsui, 2007) has gained growing emphasis with the 'social turn' in education (Lea & Nicoll, 2002 in Reinders and Lazaro, 2011). Professional identity refers to "the way we make sense of ourselves to ourselves and the image of ourselves that we present to others" Day (2011: 48) and is related to teachers' sense of professionalism and how they are treated and perceived by others (Johnston, 1997; Edstam, 2001). As the phases and forms of teacher professionalism indicate society's perception of teachers, how

teachers align themselves within them and external discourse surrounding them, has the potential to greatly influence teacher identities.

Professional identity is closely related to personal identity, with individual factors such as experiences and subject matter having an influence, with teaching drawing on both emotional and cognitive characters. The high personal investment that teaching demands also influences professional identity. Such individual factors are culturally embedded within society's perception (e.g. professional and autonomous) and external discourse of teaching. Day and Kingston (2008) acknowledge the unavoidable interrelationship between personal and professional characters, pointing out that the identity-defining elements of experiences, practices, lives, and beliefs are integral to each other. Even so, in scholarly literature, a teacher's professional identity is defined as the broader social conditions in which he or she works. As such, this may be influenced by professionalism form e.g. authoritative occupational professional verses community-orientated democratic professional. Day and Kingston (2008), however, demonstrate that teachers construct their professional identities through focusing on modalities of raising standards, as opposed to creating their professional identities according to the prevailing trends and changes (Day et al. 2007).

3.3.1 Forms of professional identity

Waring and Evans (2015) argue that how teachers view their profession identities in being compliant with regulatory requirements falls into two categories.

The first category is an "incorporated professional identity" where teachers have follow a compulsory curriculum developed by the state. An incorporated teacher is an accountable, responsible and efficient teacher who complies with

administrative policies and provides consistent, high-quality service. These qualities are supported by external performance indicators, which often leads to characterizations such as regulative, controlling, individualistic, led by standards, or competitive.

The second category is an empowered professional identity which is driven by collegial professionalism rather than a hierarchical position. Sachs (2003) called this type of professional identity “transformative activist identity” which balances professional autonomy with public accountability and is seen as a new professionalism incorporating the ability to balance professional autonomy and public accountability through collegial cooperation and embracing the culture of accountability. According to Sachs (ibid) the activist is driven by the idea that teachers should serve the best interest of the student, to teach and improve the conditions of learning. The primary objectives of activists are to create and enforce standards and processes designed to provide a democratic experience for the students.

3.3.2 Challenges to teacher professionalism and identities

Several studies exploring teachers’ professional identities in the context of both the mainstream teacher education and ELT in particular (e.g. Day, 2011; Day, et al, 2005; Hassan, 2014; Hall and McGinity, 2016; Kelchtermans, 2011; Lasky, 2005; Neumann et al. 2016; Skinner et al., 2019; Smethem, 2007) have concluded that teachers experience various tensions that affect their sense of professionalism and their professional identities. The following sections will discusses these tensions in details. The following accounts discuss these challenges in detail.

3.3.2.1 Accountability and working conditions

Skinner et al. (2019) sought to understand the experiences of teachers who experience workplace stress and to examine the way managerialism relates to loss of commitment, self-confidence and professional identity, as well as to susceptibility to stress, depression and anxiety. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers who had suffered from mental illness and stress. The interviews covered themes such as management at work, work relationships, changes at work, workload, support systems at work, and effect on self-esteem, identity, stress, health issues, and professionalism. The first phase of the interview process entailed 25 female and 14 male teachers from secondary and primary schools, and the second phase included three deputy head teachers, six senior leaders, one assistant head teacher, and two head teachers.

One of the findings was that taking part in performance review can result in stress. Many teachers argued that the demands of the school result in a mismatch between the school's expectations and personal motivation, and this seems to have affected both their overall well-being and their teaching performance. Furthermore, the institutional focus on results and target achievement was believed to have a negative effect on the teacher-pupil relationship. Regarding leadership and climate, many of the teachers reported that micro-politics of the school had a negative impact on teachers, including the lack of resources, lack of trust, lack of administrative support, and decision latitude. Other reported challenges were the school leaders exhibiting authoritarian, controlling behavior and unrealistic workload. This contributed to the sense of inadequacy and failure among the teachers and reduced their sense of autonomy and personal agency,

leaving the teachers with a sense of guilt and doubts about their role, as well as affected their self-esteem.

Neumann et al.'s (2016) study, in turn, explored the effects and consequences of introducing the Key Stage 4 curriculum, which also involved accountability and assessment changes. A further aim was to explore implications of the curtailed curricular offerings, the effects this had on classroom practice, pedagogy and social justice and the redistribution of the financial resources to the core subjects on offer. In this mixed methods study, 1800 members of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) across three London secondary schools were surveyed. Among the key findings was that the pressure to perform, as well as the intensification of workload were the result of the introduced changes. Secondly, this was also found to have affected a number of stakeholders, including the students, teachers, parents, schools and the community as a whole. This was also found to have an effect on the teachers' confidence in the system and on students' and their parents' motivation. Thirdly, the disruptive effect the policy changes had on the teachers' professional accountability further led to the teachers doubting their own teaching competence. This, in turn, affected the support the teachers provided to students, which proved particularly damaging to lower achieving students. Affected mental wellbeing of both the students and teachers was also reported in this study, with stress, anxiety and depression being common themes.

Finally, a sense of job insecurity was a common theme, and the teachers reported threats of being made redundant as a common occurrence. As much as "77% of the teachers strongly disagreed with the statement that the reforms have increased their job security" (p.27).

What the teachers' responses highlighted was that these reforms encouraged a culture of pressurized, data driven policies which created an atmosphere of confusion and uncertainty amongst the teachers. In addition, the increased workloads and accountability issues, coupled with decrease in classroom autonomy, ultimately affected the teachers' professional identities and forced some teachers to plan to leave, or to leave the profession.

Similar results were reported by Smethem (2007), who investigated 18 secondary teachers' beliefs about teaching constructions of professional identity in light of increasing accountability. The results suggested that the increasing accountability and intensification of teachers' work were found to affect the teachers' sense of professional identity and their intention to remain in the profession. Similarly, in a nationwide study of stress among UK teachers (Travers and Cooper 1996), it was found that 66% of those who reported work-related stress actively considered leaving the profession.

Whilst Neumann et al.'s (2016) and Smethem's (2007) studies focused on tensions experienced by secondary school teachers, Harley (1995), Smyth (1995) Nixon (1995, 1996) are among those who investigated the experiences of academics in higher education. Nixon (1996), for example, explored tensions experienced by 13 university lecturers from two universities, with the aim of establishing what standards enable good practices, and how to establish these standards. The participants raised concerns about the crisis of their professional identities, and attributed this to the decrease in their autonomy and status.

In the context of Oman and other middle east and north Africa countries (MENA), several studies have reported the increase in administrative workload (e.g. The World Bank Development Report, 2008; The World Bank & Ministry of Education,

2012; Al-Habsi, 2009; Al Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2012). According to both The World Bank & Ministry of Education (2012), the increasing workload results in less time being available for teaching. Similarly, to the previously discussed studies, this, in the long run, seems to affect the teachers' motivation and their mental well-being.

Regarding teachers' incentives and rewards, according to the World Bank Development Report (2008), insufficient effort is being made in this regard in MENA countries. This, and World Bank's (2015) reports stress that the teachers' get low salaries when compared with other government employees and civil servants who annually get guaranteed increments. Al Habsi (2009) argues that opportunities for promotion, or lack thereof, are linked to teachers' ambition and motivation, and that it is imperative to have transparent and clearly defined scheme for promotions in order to avoid teachers losing interest in teaching and leaving the profession.

Regarding teacher promotions, both the World Bank Development Report (2008) and the World Bank (2105) study indicated that the teachers' seniority (i.e. the years of service), rather than performance is taken into account when promoting teachers in MENA countries. This system, in turn, results in the teachers' frustration and demotivation (Al-Habsi, 2009).

In ELT contexts, recent years have seen an increase in studies exploring the connection between teachers' professionalism/professional identity and their work conditions (e.g. Hassan, 2014; Edstam, 2001; Liu and Xu, 2011). Hassan (2014), for example, explored the relationship between English language teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning and their constructions and understanding of their professionalism. Also, contextual factors, including the

recent educational reforms in Bahrain, were explored from the perspective of their effects on the teachers' professionalism. Twelve teachers from different schools were interviewed, and it was found that their sense of professionalism was influenced mainly by intensification of teachers' work, marginality of teachers and control in education. It was also demonstrated that although these factors significantly impacted the teachers' autonomy and commitment, the consequences of these factors on the teachers' professionalism varied from teacher to teacher and from context to context, which emphasized that this impact was largely mediated by the teachers' values and their sense of professional identity.

3.3.2.2 Recognition and respect

According to Hassan (2014), "the way teachers perceive themselves and the way they are perceived by others [is] likely to have an effect, either positively or negatively, on their identity, motivation, commitment and retention" (p.31). This is supported by Edstam's (2001) study which 53 ESL elementary school teachers' self-perceptions and beliefs about other people's perceptions of them. It was found that those teachers who believed that they were valued and respected by others were more likely to perceive themselves as legitimate professionals than those who believed that they were not respected and seen as professional teachers. Al-Habsi (2009) also drew attention to the importance of self-perceptions and the perceived perceptions by others, and raised concerns that in Oman "only a minority of teachers felt they received appropriate recognition from parents…[hence] teachers responses showed they want more recognition and status from the outside community in order to develop high self-esteem and feelings of self-worth"(p.238).

3.4 Teachers resistance

This section discusses the concept of resistance and the various forms it may take. Subsequently, relevant studies into teacher resistance are reviewed.

3.4.1 Forms of resistance

Hollander and Einwohner (2004) suggest that in order to understand the concept of resistance, it is useful to think of it in terms of its distinct types. Hoyle and Wallace (2007) propose compliance, non-compliance, and mediation as additional forms of teacher's resistance. *Compliance* denotes the adoption of the objectives and means used by a movement to implement reforms. The term *conformity* is analogous to the term compliance, and they refer to a teacher's acceptance of changes in his or her professional ideology, allowing for greater control, which is desirable or perceived as acceptable.

According to Hoyle and Wallace (2007), compliance involves "a range of teachers' responses, from 'true belief' to 'getting by' accepting the goals and means of reform without enthusiasm or positive commitment" (p.18). A *compliant* teacher will enable changes to affect them and their teaching approach. Compliance means working by the book and an uncompromising rigidity towards service delivery. *Non-compliance*, in turn, ranges from defiant rejections to disengagement and retreat. This typology represents teachers who continue practicing for as long as possible with the hope that reforms will eventually fade away. Finally, *mediation* is the response integrated into the wit of work, manifested by real attempts from various managers (managers) to influence the adaptation of policies dependent on the needs of students. Mediators recognize the gap between practice and policy, they are principled and do not seek to outwit logical argument. These characteristics of the mediator are referred to as

principled infidelity, which means that the role of the mediator is not to submissively meet expectations, but to sustain their professional values (Mahony, 2006). While teachers who are "'leaving' the system or 'sinking' beneath it" (Hoyle & Wallace, 2007:19), as well as those who feel disillusioned and less valued are referred to as *diminished teachers, protective mediators* define teachers who protect the interests of the student(ibid.). *Innovative mediators* are teachers who go beyond statutory requirements to develop enhanced ways of teaching congruent with professional values. Hoyle and Wallace (2007) assume that mediators are principled skeptics, but not cynics. Thus, mediators tend to adopt reforms that match their educational and personal beliefs, which is referred to as principled pragmatism.

3.4.2 Managerialism and teacher professionalism

A variety of studies of challenges to teacher professionalism have indicated that managerial changes may affect teachers' sense of professionalism and their professional identities (e.g. Hassan, 2014; Neumann et al., 2016; Skinner et al., 2019; Smethem, 2007). These studies also showed that teacher professionalism at educational institutions involves a struggle between different stakeholders, including the government, political parties, and departments of education, parents and potential employers (Hassan, 2014). These different groups have exercised their powers over the curriculum and policies of the educational institutions (Gaus and Hall, 2015:684). However, few studies have investigated teachers' responses to managerialism or considered the ways in which teachers are seeking to resist, accommodate or comply with managerial changes and practices (Anderson, 2008). Although the review of the literature revealed that a few studies have, indeed, examined teachers' responses to reform policies (e.g. Anderson, 2008;

Gaus & Hall, 2015; Hall & McGinity, 2015), neither of these studies explored either TESOL or the Omani context.

Regarding teachers' responses to reform policies, although teachers are generally thought to be rather passive and accepting of these power polices and imperatives (Mahony 2006), some studies have reported on certain forms of resistance (e.g. Anderson, 2008; Gaus and Hall, 2015). Anderson's (2008) study, for example, which involved interviewing the total of 30 academics from ten universities in Australia, found five types of academics' resistance, namely *protests, critiques, refusal, avoidance, and qualified compliance*. In most cases, *avoidance* is triggered by elements of the traditional work culture, such as shared distaste for some departments or refusing to actively manage others. *Protesting,* in turn, is the act of 'going public' on several politically charged issues (Anderson, 2008, p. 257). *Critiques* are forms of resistance expressed behind the back of those in power. While critiques are found in the 'hidden transcript' domain, refusal occurs in the 'public transcript.' Nonetheless, Anderson describes *refusal* as "less public, less confrontational type of academic resistance to power, which may take many forms (Anderson, 2008, p. 260). Finally, *qualified compliance* occurs where avoidance is not possible. In this form of resistance, subordinates conform to change through strategic, pragmatic, or minimal ways (Anderson, 2008, p. 264).

Gaus and Hall (2015) also studied resistance among academics in light of educational reforms imposed on an Indonesian higher education institution. This case study involving semi-structured interviews with 30 respondents revealed that the academics resisted the changes inconspicuously and in a disorganized and non-confrontational manner to avoid any redress from their government. The study found that the resistance may take form of *strategic compliance, conditional compliance* and *discursive, hidden strategies*. *Strategic compliance* involves

individually defined ways of coming to terms with reforms. For example, one of the respondents explained how he adopted managerial roles through learning them by himself using books, seminars, and training programs as aids. *Conditional compliance* denotes the expectation that facilities will be provided, as well as a remorse for past resistance for the sake of academics. For instance, a university can request additional facilities to improve the quality of learning. *Discursive, hidden strategies* help teachers provide ambiguous responses that make it hard to differentiate what teachers say from what they mean. For example, even though lecturers tend to have a lot to say, as reforms emanate from a university's central authority, the lecturers cannot resist stipulation regardless of whether they agree or disagree. Gaus and Hall's (2015) study also suggests that policy makers should take into account the extent to which the recipients accept these polices, as well as their intellectual and psychological readiness for such changes. Additionally, for a policy to be successful, recipients should be involved from the initial stages and through the implementation and evaluation of the policy. Finally, it was suggested that policy implementation should be based on evidence-based practice and involve piloting before the implementation.

In addition to studies which revealed these active resistance strategies, other studies have found cases where compliance was preferred by the involved teachers. Hall & McGinity's (2015) study, for example, which involved 21 teachers, 5 parents, 7 school leaders, and 18 students from two schools in England, found high level of compliance to New Public Management. Little evidence of resistance was found, and the teachers in both schools supported the changes, viewing them as a way to improve and maintain the schools' position in the local education market. Thus, compliance was the chosen reaction for the

sake of the schools' reputations and status. Resistance, on the other hand, was seen as being counter-productive to the schools' goals and, therefore, was believed to hinder both the students' progress and the teachers' promotion opportunities. The study concluded that resistance and compliance are still UNDER-researched, and this current study was an attempt to fill this research gap.

3.5 The theoretical framework of this study

As previously mentioned, the literature shows there are different meanings attached to teacher professionalism (Fox, 2016). These definitions do not always prioritise teachers' interpretations of the concept (Bair, 2016; Dahghan, 2020) particularly within the field of TESOL (Kurowski, 2018) suggesting the need for a framework that would help in analysing and understanding English language teachers' interpretations of teacher professionalism. Additionally, the review of literature and context chapter show that there have been changes in the policy environment in various countries including Oman and therefore, there is a need for a framework that would help in exploring English language teachers' perceptions of these changes and their impact on teachers' sense of professionalism within this changing context. The diagram in Figure 3.1 (also, see Appendix 2) presents a framework that represents and links between concepts related to teacher professionalism such as meanings and forms. As seen in Figure 3.1, the framework is based on explanations of professionalism which represent how this concept was has been conceptualised (Furlong, 2013; Furlong et al., 2000; Evett, 2009; Waring and Evans, 2015). The framework also presents how notions of teacher professionalism have shifted in changing policy environments emphasising increased control, accountability and compliance

(Furlong, 2013). This, it is suggested, has resulted in shifting identities (e.g. Day & Kington 2008; Gewirtz et al., 2009; Goodson 1997, Darling-Hammond, 1990; Neumann et al., 2016; Skinner et al., 2019; Smethem, 2007) including teachers with “incorporated identities” (Waring and Evans, 2015) who are more compliant to managerial policies. The framework is also based on Evetts (2009) and Sachs (2011) models of managerial and democratic/occupational and organizational forms of professionalism as well as Waring and Evans (2015) categorization of professional identity- empowered and incorporated identity. All of these were believed to be clear explanations of teacher professionalism and suitable categorizations that can be used to guide the understanding of English teachers' interpretations of teacher professionalism and their perceptions of the impact of the policy changes on their sense of professionalism at the CoTs. Additionally, these categorizations can be used to guide the identification of the forms of professionalism existing in Oman.

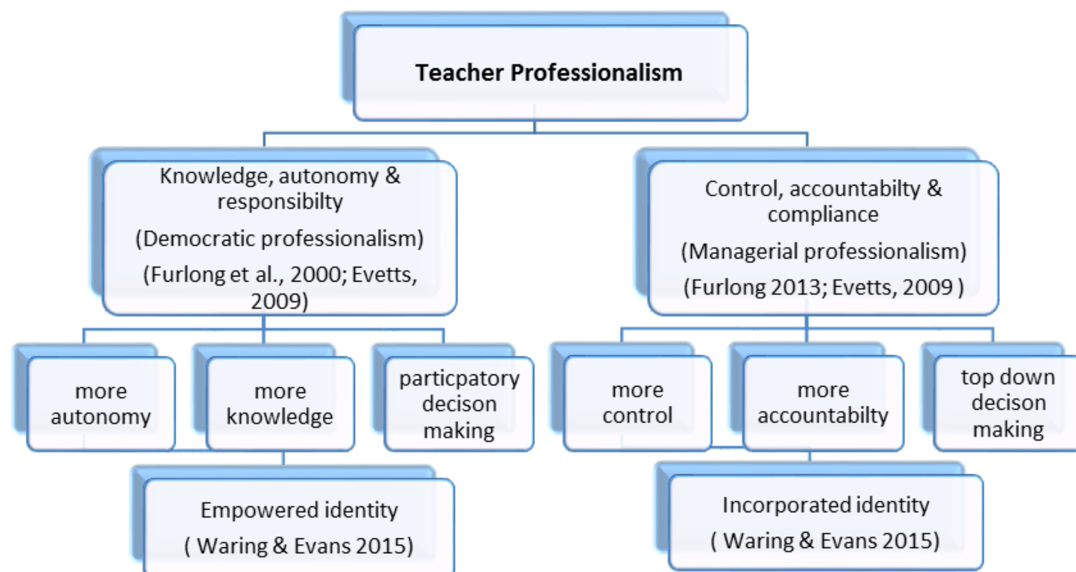

Figure 3.1: The Study's Theoretical Framework Diagram

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature on teacher professionalism, its forms and features, as well as the various challenges that may undermine teachers' sense of professionalism. The literature on teachers' responses, or lack thereof, to these challenges was also discussed.

As noted in this chapter, the concept of teacher professionalism is not straightforward and its definitions vary (Evans, 2008). It was also noted that little research has been conducted to explore the teachers' views of professionalism (Bair, 2016; Dehghan, 2020), particularly within the field of TESOL (Kurowski, 2018). Thus, this study proposed a theoretical framework based on Furlong et al., (2000), Furlong, 2013; Evetts (2009) and Waring and Evans (2015) explanations of teacher professionalism. The framework will be used to inform the data analysis of English language teachers' interpretations of professionalism at the CoTs in Oman. Moreover, although considerable body of research into the impact of managerial policies on teacher professionalism and identities exists (e.g. Hall and McGinity, 2016; Hassan, 2014; Neumann et al., 2016; Skinner et al., 2019; Smethem, 2007), few studies have investigated the teachers' responses to these managerial policies (Anderson, 2008). Also, as Hall and McGinity (2016) point out, few studies to date have explored teachers' compliance to managerial policies. Finally, studies into any of the above topics are particularly scarce in the Omani context, and this current study attempted to address these gaps.

The aim of the study was to explore English language teachers' perceptions of their professionalism in the Colleges of technology in Oman (CoTs). Specifically, the study aimed to identify and explore English language teachers' interpretations

of teacher professionalism, as well as their beliefs about policies that affect their sense of professionalism and their professional identities. Further aims were to explore tensions experienced by teachers as a result of these polices, as well as their responses to these tensions and policies.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore English teachers' interpretations of teacher professionalism and the tensions they experience at the colleges of technology in Oman. In order to achieve this aim, the following research questions were developed to guide the study:

1) How do English language teachers at CoTs interpret and define teacher professionalism?
2) What challenges and threats to their sense of professionalism do English language teachers at CoTs experience?
3) What effects do these challenges and threats make on teachers' sense of professionalism?
4) How do English language teachers' respond to these challenges and threats?

It was hoped that answering these research questions would help to understand the English language teachers' interpretations of the notion of teacher professionalism, the policy practices that challenge their sense of professionalism and professional identities and their responses to these policies and the effects of these challenges on their professional lives. Finally, the long-term aim was to draw implications of these findings for future policy planning.

This chapter describes the methodological decisions that were made, and procedures that were applied to answer the above research questions and achieve study objectives. It starts with a discussion of philosophical worldviews

underlying the study. Subsequently, methods of data collection, as well as analysis procedures are described in detail. The issues of research quality and ethics are, then, discussed, and the chapter concludes with a discussion of limitations of this current study.

4.2 The informing paradigm

This section discusses the philosophical worldviews underlying this study. It is divided into four sub-sections. The first section introduces the notion of paradigm whilst the second explains the two contrasting philosophical worldviews (positivism and interpretivists) and the assumptions underlying each. The third section discusses the paradigm underlying the current research whilst the final section outlines the researcher’s positionality, personal assumptions and roles in the research.

4.2.1 The notion of paradigm

According to Filstead (1979 in Mustafa, 2011), a paradigm is a “set of related assumptions about the social world which provides a philosophical and conceptual framework for the organised study of that world” (p. 24). The limitation of this definition, however, is that it does not emphasise the role that the researcher’s *theoretical* assumptions have in determining the more concrete, methodological decisions in a given study. Burrell and Morgan (1985), however, do stress that, ultimately, a research paradigm influences the research design, including most of the methodological considerations ranging from the choice of research methodology and data collection methods to the procedures guiding the data analysis. Overall, it does seem that a paradigm, being a set of philosophical beliefs and assumptions that a researcher holds, determines the overall research design, including the decisions as to *what* to research and *how*.

These beliefs, in turn, about what can, and should, be researched, and about how it should be researched, are referred to as ‘ontology and ‘epistemology’, respectively (Grix, 2004; Howell, 2013; Mustafa, 2011). In short, ontology is concerned with the study of the nature of reality and what there is to know about it. Certain ontological beliefs may hint at the underlying research paradigm. Thus, the belief that there is an external social reality which exists independently of people’s beliefs and interpretations of it may reflect a positivist paradigm, for example. On the other hand, the assumption that there is no reality existing independently from human interpretations, and that reality is dependent on an individual’s understanding of the social world (Guba and Lincoln 1994), aligns with beliefs characteristic to interpretivism.

Whilst ontology asks questions about the nature of reality, epistemology refers to beliefs about “the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality” (Grix, 2004:63). In other words, it is concerned with how to investigate the ‘reality’ that one’s ontological beliefs indicate. However, some scholars argue that rather than being limited to considering the *ways of acquiring knowledge,* epistemology is also concerned with the *relationship between the investigator and what can be discovered* (e.g. Howell, 2013; Lincoln and Guba, 2011). With regard to the knowledge gathering aspect of epistemology, Ritchie et al. (2014) introduce two different perspectives of knowledge acquisition. The first perspective argues that knowledge is acquired inductively, in a ‘bottom up’ process through which patterns are derived from observation of the world. This means that empirical evidence is collected first, and knowledge and theories are then generated based on this evidence. The second perspective argues that knowledge is deductive and is achieved through a ‘top down’ process in which existing theories and

hypotheses are tested in a research process. In other words, a hypothesis is first developed, and then evidence is gathered to either confirm or dismiss this hypothesis (Ritchie et Al., 2014). However, other scholars, including Blaiki (2009), argue that neither 'pure induction' nor 'pure deduction' exist because researchers are always influenced by their assumptions and knowledge derived from their previous work and observations, as well as their knowledge generated through their immersion in the academic field.

Concerning the issue of relationship between the researcher and the researched phenomena, one perspective sees that the researcher should be objective in his/her investigation and should remain independent of the studied phenomenon which, in turn, must not be affected by the researcher's behaviour and interpretation. These beliefs are typically associated with a positivist (will be explained in 4.2.2) worldview. By contrast, interpretivists (will be explained in 4.2.2) argue that in the social world the relationship between the researcher and the researched phenomena is inherently interactive; the researcher and the studied phenomenon cannot be separated, and it is inevitable that the researcher and the study participants are constantly interacting and, thus, influencing each other. Thus, "findings are either mediated through the researcher (value mediated) or are negotiated and agreed between the researcher and the participants" (Ritchie et al., 2014: 8). In practice, this means that, rather than making efforts to remain objective and independent of the studied context, researchers should accept and openly *acknowledge* their potential impact on it; rather than trying to *dismiss* the possibility of having this impact, they should make efforts to *control* and *minimise* it (ibid). Finally, some scholars suggest that another position, called "empathic neutrality'" (Ritchie et al., 2014: 8), or reflexivity

(Mann, 2010), should be adopted as a perspective that finds balance between the previously discussed two perspectives.

To sum up, every person undertaking a research study inherently holds certain beliefs about the nature of knowledge and how this knowledge can be gained. That he or she decides to investigate a certain topic, and to do so by applying certain methodological procedures, usually indicates a set of epistemological and ontological beliefs which, in turn, can be attributed to the wider philosophical worldview. The paradigm underlying this current study which aimed to explore teachers' understanding of professionalism and the tensions they experience at the Colleges of Technology in Oman is usually referred to as interpretivism.

4.2.2 The Interpretive Paradigm

Prior to the discussion of what interpretive paradigm entails, it is important to provide a brief overview of contrasting worldviews associated with a positivist paradigm. Positivism is represented by a deterministic philosophy where outcomes are determined by causes (Creswell, 2003). Positivists might to some extent believe that the social world can, and should be studied in the same way as the natural world (e.g. Mertens, 2005; Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). Positivists aim to "test a theory or describe an experience through observation and measurement in order to predict and control what surround us" (O'Leary, 2004:5). Positivists' realist ontology involves a view that there exists one single, 'observable' and relatively stable reality which is an object in a physical space. As positivists seek objectivity, their epistemological beliefs hold that the only way to seek knowledge is through scientific methods that enable the researcher to remain independent of the observed reality. Thus, they favour data collection methods such as quantitative surveys, tests or structured observations.

By contrast, the interpretivist paradigm emphasises the importance of being able to understand human problems, thoughts, feelings and moral which positivism fails to acknowledge (Goodsell, 2013). Interpretivists view the reality (truth) as a product of subjective experience, and believe that knowledge is socially constructed (Guba and Lincoln 1994). They also believe that this reality is dependent on the individuals' constructed understanding, which implies that the social world is extremely complex and the best way to understand it is through understanding the points of view of the individuals who are part of the investigated phenomenon or context (Klein and Myers, 1999; Ritchie et al., 2014).

Understanding is at the core of this paradigm, and both Martineau (1989) and Goodsell (2013) assert that the key methodological difference between human science and the natural science lies in how understanding and interpretation are defined and established. Dilthey (cited in Goodsell 2013:7) defines 'understanding' as "recognizing inner content from signs received by the senses" and 'interpretation' as "systematic understanding of recorded expressions". Thus, the interpretivist researcher attempts to understand and interpret the complex and often multiple interpretations of reality from the perspectives of the participants, which requires him or her to become immersed in these interpretations by interacting with the participants in "deeply meaningful ways" (Lodico et al., 2010). Only by doing this will the researcher have the opportunity to "see the world through the eyes of the participants" (Robson, 2002: 25), which is a prerequisite to being able to conduct a study through the interpretivist lens.

As noted in Section 4.2.1, interpretivists believe that knowledge is subjective and socially mediated through interactions between the researcher and the participants (Mustafa 2011). In order to gather this knowledge, an interactive

relationship should be established with the participants. Importantly, however, some scholars argue that although interpretivists claim that they rely on their relationship with the participants, the participants “rarely engage in deliberative activity about their actions” (Mustafa, 2011: 25).

Interpretivists also recognise that research is value laden. Thus, the researcher and the participants have perceptions and pre-conceived ideas (prior knowledge), values and concerns which inevitably play a major role in guiding the research design, the understanding of the phenomena and the outcomes (John 1999). This contrasts with the positivist view that such subjective values and beliefs are a source of bias, pose a threat to validity of the study and hinder the process of gaining ‘true’ knowledge (Guba and Lincoln 1994). Although interpretivists do recognise that these subjective views may, in fact, affect validity of the study, they argue that rather than dismissing or ignoring them, the researchers should recognise and acknowledge them openly and make their philosophical assumptions as transparent as possible (Klein and Myers, 1999; John, 1999). Admittedly, this “reflexivity” (Mann, 2011) is not easy, as “no single method can completely filter out widespread social biases that are deeply inscribed in language and culture” (John, 1999: 155). Mann (2011) reviewed a number of published studies within Applied Linguistics and TESOL and found that many of these publications lack detail and transparency when it comes to the researcher’s reflexivity, calling for more reflexive and transparent approaches to reporting and representation of interview data.

4.2.3 The Interpretive Paradigm and the Current Research

The goal of this current research being to explore teachers’ understanding of professionalism and how they perceive their professional identities reflects my

belief that the nature of reality (ontology) of the teachers' professionalism and identities is inter-subjective and that individual teachers have their own diverse meanings of them. The aim of this investigation was to understand and interpret how these individual teachers understand professionalism and how they perceive, and make sense of, their professional lives. As such, the aim of the study was to generate, rather than to verify, a theory about teacher professionalism. From this perspective, knowledge is not seen as an objective reality which the researcher describes scientifically. Rather, the personally constructed nature of all knowledge is recognised (Klein and Myers, 1999; Goodsell, 2013). The study also assumed that to understand the teachers' professional experiences and subjective meanings that they attach to these experiences, interaction with the participants is crucial (Klein and Myers, 1999; Wahyani, 2012). In order to establish this dialogical understanding, I immersed myself in the research context and built relationships with the participants that enabled me to gain in-depth insights into their perceptions of the studied phenomena (Goodsell, 2013).

4.2.4 Researcher positionality

My role as a researcher was, above all, to establish meanings that the teachers attached to the concept of teacher professionalism and to interpret the accounts of their professional working lives. In this process, my own background and position from which I entered this research site cannot be overlooked.

I am an Arab Omani Muslim who was raised with a set of ethical values, such as commitment, dedication, and respect to others. I have taught English in both government schools and tertiary education for 27 years, and before I got my doctorate scholarship, I worked as a head of English language centre in one of

the Colleges of Technology. During my experience in both the government and tertiary education, I have experienced a number of changes in educational policies aimed to improve the quality of education in Oman, but which also often had a negative impact on teachers' professional lives. Therefore, I acknowledge that the values and assumptions that I hold, and my dual role as both the former head of the English language centre and the researcher undoubtedly had an effect on this study. Being an 'insider' enabled me to gain access to teachers and to establish a good rapport and trust between me and the participants due to our shared knowledge and experiences (Taylor, 2011). At the same time, however, I was also aware that it is precisely this shared knowledge that may lead to assumptions of shared experiences, which, in turn, could limit the accounts provided by the participants (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). I addressed this by openly expressing this issue to the participants prior to the interview and, by skillfully asking questions and asking the participants to carefully frame their responses.

Since approaching educational reality often reflects the researcher's background, to avoid personal bias, I first detached myself from the imposition of my own perceptions on teachers by acknowledging my personal assumptions. My perspective is that ethics should be involved in our understanding of professionalism and should play a role in the teaching profession. I also believe that teachers' professionalism and professional identities at CoTs are being compromised by a number of unnecessary managerial practices and requests that ultimately hinder the teachers' ability to respond to their students' needs. However, I believe that teachers' individual constructions of professionalism, and

their perceptions of the policy changes and the consequences of these on their professional lives, may not necessary coincide with my own experiences.

During the interviews, I was careful not to express my personal views, to allow the teachers' alternative voices to be presented as individual, authentic realities. Also, as it will be noted in the research quality section, to avoid missing or over interpreting the data and to ensure coding reliability, I first sent the transcripts to the individual participants to ensure that their verbal accounts were accurately transcribed. After that I requested a colleague's assistance to maintain an inter-coder agreement (Lombard et al., 2002), and also employed critical subjectivity, resisting the temptation to look for data that confirms my assumptions or expectations about the data.

It has been emerging throughout the above discussions, that my belief was that in order to gain access to, and later understand and interpret, the teachers' individual and subjective professional experiences, a qualitative approach that builds on the interpretivist paradigm was needed. The following section discusses the qualitative research approach that I employed, including the overall design of the study, as well as the study sample and the data collection and data analysis methods.

4.3 Qualitative research methodology

As the study explored teachers' professional experiences and understandings of professionalism, an exploratory qualitative research methodology was adopted for the purpose of this study. This approach was chosen as a methodology for the study to generate a depth of understanding and interpretation of the teachers' verbal commentaries and participants' lived experiences in the context of the colleges of technology in Oman. By qualitative research I mean research that

seeks to understand rather than to explain. Research that emphasises words, emotions and feelings (as the case in this study) rather than quantification and that lead to data which is analysed using thematic exploration (O'Leary 2004 cited in Mackenzie and Knipe 2006: 6). Thus, in this study the term qualitative is used to refer to methods of data collection, analysis and reporting. In this qualitative research I attempted to study teacher professionalism in its natural settings through teachers' experiences and professional life stories and attempted to make sense of, or interpret teacher professionalism in terms of the meaning teachers bring to it (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

According to Ernest (1994) phenomenology is one philosophical position that is very close to the interpretive research paradigm. This research also drew on phenomenological methodology since the interest is to study the phenomenon of teacher professionalism and specifically what professionalism means to the English language teachers and how they make sense of their professionalism at the colleges of technology. Drawing on this methodology this study has considered human beings' subjective interpretation, their perception of the world as the starting point in understanding the phenomenon of teacher professionalism at the colleges of technology (Ernest 1994). In addition the researcher considered making of meaning is a central human feature in this study. Furthermore, the researcher described the lived experiences of the individual teachers who have experienced the practices of managerial policies (Giorgi, 2009 cited in Creswell 2014).

The study was divided into two phases. Phase 1 explored teachers' definitions of what it means to be a professional teacher. It also examined the challenges to teachers' professionalism and teachers' response to these challenges. Phase 2

was developed based on the analysis of phase 1 data. As it is discussed in the next chapter, the analysis of Phase 1 showed that teacher professionalism at CoTs was compromised by a number of managerial policies and practices. It also showed that teachers' responses to these policies were mostly passive as they were afraid of the negative consequences e.g. losing the job. Therefore, three hypothetical scenarios were developed based on these findings. Each scenario represent a managerial policy or practice reported in Phase 1 (see section 4.5.4 for more details on these scenarios and how they were developed). The scenarios were then presented to and discussed with Phase 2 participants to get in-depth information about their reactions and to see how they would respond to hypothetical scenarios that give them some emotional distance to discuss complex and sensitive issues related to their professional life.

4.4 Research Context and Sample

As discussed in the background chapter, three colleges of technology were chosen as the research site for this study for two reasons. Firstly, these three colleges consist of a teacher population representative of the wider population in the CoTs, where the majority of teachers are expatriates and Omani teachers constitute the minority. Secondly, due to my previous work experience in one of these colleges, it was easier for me to negotiate access to the research site and the participants.

With regard to the recruiting process, the selection for both phases of the study most closely corresponded to purposive (Creswell, 2013; Cohen et al., 2011) and snowball sampling (Bryman, 2012; Auerbach and Silverstein, 2016). It most closely corresponded to purposive sampling as the first thing I did was to obtain permission from the Ministry of Manpower which is responsible for the Colleges

of Technology, as this is the initial and important stage in conducting the research (Punch, 2014). I did that first by sending an official request to the Ministry via an email explaining the purpose and the requirements of the research (See Appendix 11). The Ministry, then, asked for the research proposal, the research questions and the interview schedule in order to approve the request. After that the Ministry sent a letter to the colleges informing them about my research and requesting them to assist me in accessing the participants. Thus, the Heads of English Language Centre in turn sent emails to the teachers requesting them to volunteer. In this email the study's information sheet and my contact details were provided (see Appendix 3).

The selection was also purposive because the study targeted only English teachers who completed at least a year of service at the Colleges of Technology (Cohen et al., 2011; Clarke and Braun 2013; Bryman, 2012). Newly joined teachers were excluded because they may have little knowledge about the policy changes at CoTs.

As it is mentioned above, the second sampling technique was snowball sampling which involved the initially recruited group of participants encouraging their acquaintances to participate (Bryman, 2012; Auerbach and Silverstein, 2016). This strategy was mainly used among the participants from the two colleges in which I had not worked.

As a result of these recruitment procedures, initially over 55 teachers from the three colleges expressed their interest via emails to participate in the study and some of these teachers stated that they were encouraged by their colleagues to participate. Because I was planning to recruit 36 participants for phases 1 and 2 (10 for phase 1, 20 for phase 2 and 6 for the piloting interviews) I reviewed the

emails received and found that the first 36 interested teachers were from different colleges and nationalities, with different experiences and of different gender (11 from college 1, 14 from college 2 and 11 from college 3). Therefore, I decided to recruit these 36 participants and apologised to the rest. Then from the 36 participants, two teachers from each college were selected for the piloting interviews for both phases (total of 6 teachers; 3 teachers for Phase 1 and 3 for Phase 2). After that based on the nationalities, gender and experiences I selected 3 participants from college 1, 4 from college 2 and 3 from college 3 which made the 10 participants for phase 1. The rest 20 participants were left for Phase 2 and all the participants were then contacted individually to discuss a convenient time for their interviews.

Table 4. 1 below presents the number of participants from each college. The number of participants from College 2 was the highest because this college is the largest and the English teachers there outnumber teachers in the other colleges.

Table 4.1: The study participants by college

Colleges	**Number of interviewed teachers**		**Total**
	Phase 1	**Phase 2**	
College 1	3	6	9
College 2	4	8	12
College 3	3	6	9
Total	10	20	30

Regarding the study sample, tables 2 and 3 below provide background information about the individual participants, and what follows is a discussion of certain decisions made when recruiting participants.

Table 4.2: Phase 1 participants

Participant	College	Gender	Nationality	Qualification	Years of experience	
					In the ELT	In the CoTs
1	1	Male	Turkish	PhD	17 years	1 year
2	1	Female	British	MA	20 years	8 years
3	1	Male	Canadian	MA	28 years	12 years
4	2	Male	Indian Subcontinents	MA	20 years	15 years
5	2	Male	Indian Subcontinents	MA	21 years	6 years
6	2	Female	South African	MA	17 years	5 years
7	2	Female	South African	MA	8 years	2 & half year
8	3	Male	Uzbek	MA	9 years	2 & half year
9	3	Female	Omani	PhD	12 years	7 years
10	3	Male	Omani	PhD	10 years	3 years

Table 4.3: Phase 2 participants

Phase 2 Participant	College	Gender	Nationality	Qualification	Years of experience	
					In ELT	In the CoTs
11	1	Female	British	BA	6 years	2 years
12	1	Male	Filipino	IMD	12 years	6 years
13	1	Male	Indian Subcontinents	MA	25 years	6 years
14	1	Female	Armenian	PhD	26 years	4 years
15	1	Female	Algerian	PhD	13 years	3 years
16	1	Female	British	BA	16 years	1 year
17	2	Female	Sudanese	PhD	32 years	8 years
18	2	Female	Iraqi	MA	10 years	5 years
19	2	Female	Armenian	PhD	20 years	4 years
20	2	Male	Indian Subcontinents	MA	19 years	7 years
21	2	Female	Filipino	PhD	27 years	6 years
22	2	Female	Filipino	MA	25 years	6 years
23	2	Female	Indian Subcontinents	MA	35 years	15 years
24	2	Male	Lebanese	MA	10 years	5 years
25	3	Female	Tunisian	MA	10 years	7 years
26	3	Female	Indian Subcontinents	MA	9 years	7 years
27	3	Female	Indian Subcontinents	MA	30 years	10 years
28	3	Female	Filipino	PhD	23 years	6 years
29	3	Female	Omani	MA	7 years	7 years
30	3	Male	Uzbek	MA	10 years	3 years

With regards to the sample size, it was decided that a total of 30 participants (10 for phase 1 & 20 for phase 2) from three colleges would be appropriate. A decision was also made to include participants from both genders, with different nationalities and varied experiences at CoTs. It was hoped that this would help to collect richer data. Thus, the sample in this current study comprised of participants with teaching experience ranging from one to 15 years (see Tables 2 & 3) and from different nationalities. However, this does not suggest that the study sought to compare the data from different nationalities or backgrounds e.g. native to non-native speakers of English.

In CoTs, some teachers are involved in non-teaching duties, such as participating in quality assurance committees, in addition to their teaching workload. Thus, both the teachers with and without such duties were included in the study. This would enable me to explore how those with additional duties were assigned these duties (e.g. whether these duties were imposed or negotiated), what tensions they experienced, or how they managed to find balance between their professional and personal lives. On the other hand, exploring the other group of teachers, provided me with an insight into the reasons why they did not have these non-teaching duties. Another decision was made to include participants from both of the Omani teacher recruiting systems; the government and private companies. This enabled me to see how the differences between the two systems affect teachers' professionalism.

4.5 Data Collection

The study was divided into two phases, and in both phases semi-structured interviews were used for the method of data collection. This section explains what is meant by semi-structured interviews and provides the rationale for using them

in this study. It also discusses how the interviews in this study were developed and piloted. The use of scenarios in qualitative research is, then discussed, and the three scenarios used in this study are described in detail.

4.5.1 Semi-Structured interviews

Semi-structured interviewing is a middle path approach between structured and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews involve a list of questions asked in the same order for every participant with little room for changing the question order (Blandford, 2013; Adams, 2015) whereas semi-structured interviews are conducted with a flexible framework which allows focused, conversational and two-way communication. These interviews often comprise of open and closed end questions. The interviewer follows an outline and is also able to make topical trajectories in the conversation that may occasionally meander away from the guide. At times questions are created during the interview, allowing both the interviewer and the participant flexibility to discuss what is important. (Blandford, 2013; Adams 2015)

According to Onwuogbuzie and Leech (2007) research questions, “in large part, dictate the type of research method and design to be used, the sample size and sampling scheme employed as well as well as the data analysis techniques used” (p. 475). This is true in this research as the central research questions guided this study are exploratory in nature seeking teachers’ meaning attached to teacher professionalism. Thus, semi-structured interviews were seen as the most appropriate method to answer these research questions. This method is commonly used in interpretive research to facilitate sharing the perspectives by the interviewees as well as the stories and experiences regarding the phenomena being researched (in this case teacher professionalism). It allowed me as a

researcher to elicit different views connected to teacher professionalism. I also considered it an appropriate format for this research because some in-depth questions could not be answered briefly and I had to ask for more explanation on the answer given in order to gain deep understanding of the issue (Wahyuni 2012) as for examples in the case of these questions: *“You said that your feedback on the textbook was not acknowledged. “Why do you think so?” How did you feel then?”, “What else about this textbook? “You said everybody is stressful now. Why do you think so?”, “How this affects your social life?”, “How do you manage with these tasks then?” “What do you mean by saying they don’t show any professionalism? “Can you please elaborate more on this point?” “Why do you prefer to complain to your colleagues and not to the administration?* This method was also appropriate for this study because epistemologically the meaning here is constructed between me the researcher and the participants.

However, this study is not without its limitations which also warrant a mention. In this study, semi-structured interviews was used as a single data collection method which is considered a threat to the study’s credibility. Additionally, this research method is time and cost intensive and also requires an experienced and trained interviewer (Kvale, 2007). Therefore, in order to train myself with needed skills for the interviews I have decided to do piloted interviews. These interviews helped me not only in checking the quality of my interviews questions but in gaining more experience in the skills needed for successful research interviews.

4.5.2 The Interview Development and procedure

The semi-structured interviewing consisted of two interviewing phases. The first phase interview questions were developed based on the areas discussed in the literature review and on the theoretical framework (See Appendix 4 for details on

both interview schedules). The first phase interview schedule has eleven questions. The first two questions are introductory questions designed to help participants warm up to the interview. Question three aims to get participants' interpretations of what it means to be a professional teacher. This question was developed based on the arguments made by scholars (e.g. Campbell, 2007; David 2000; Hoyle, 2001; Oder, 2008; Leung 2012) in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 and the research findings (e.g. Helsby, 1995; Kurouski, 2018) discussed in section 3.2.3 of the literature review on what constitutes teacher professionalism. Since there is a paucity of research concerning teachers' perceptions of teacher professionalism, it was hoped that the answer to this question would add to the existing knowledge of the topic. Question four aims to understand teachers' feelings regarding how they were treated and perceived in their workplace by their colleagues, students, and management. This question was developed based on the arguments and studies (e.g. Day & Smethem, 2009, Furlong, 2013) presented in section 1. 2 of the first chapter which have cited ways in which teachers' ability and motivation to feel and behave as professionals have been negatively affected by the current wave of educational reform policies. Question five looks at teachers' experiences of supported professionalism they had with management, and question six is about compromised professionalism. The aim here to elicit examples of teachers' experiences of occasions where they felt that their voices or work was being either acknowledged and supported or compromised by the management. Questions seven to ten look at internal and external managerial policies or practices impacting the participants professionally and their response to these policies. These were developed based on the studies' findings with regard to the tensions (challenges/threats) experienced by teachers' as a result of the top down managerial policies practices (e.g. Skinner et al, 2019;

Hall & McGinity 2016; Neuman, Day, 2011) and the forms of teacher responses (e.g. Mahony, 2006; Anderson 2008) presented in the literature review chapter. These studies draw our attention to the need for researching the tensions experienced by teachers as well as the need for researching the development and perceptions of how compliance has been established as of vital importance and why resistance is ignored.

The second phase interview questions (see Appendix 4) was developed with the findings of the first phase. This phase consists of five questions. The first 3 questions aim to get participant responses to the scenarios and their perceptions regarding the connection between the scenario and their ideas about professionalism. The fourth question is to elicit participants' experiences similar to those in the scenarios. After the development of the interview questions for both phases, my supervisors reviewed them for their relevance and wording before they were used in the interviews with the selected teachers.

The study was piloted with six participants from the three different colleges (three participants for phase 1 and the other three for phase 2). The participants were asked to give their comments on the time, questions, and scenarios (see Appendix 5 for phase 2 piloting questions). The piloting questions for phase 2 were adapted from Koutsouris (2014) study. The participants suggested adding one more question to phase 2 interview questions which is "what possible solution could you suggest to resolve this issue?". It is worth to mention that these piloted interviews were not included in the analysis with rest of the interviews.

In both phases the data collection started by college 1 and ended with college 3. The interviews were conducted in the first week of the second and third semester. In that week the staff at all CoTs were free as the student had not yet reported.

All the interviews were conducted at a convenient time and rooms in the English Language Centres at CoTs. Each interview lasted between 45 to 60 minutes and they were audio recorder with the participants' permission. Before I started each interview I briefed the participants with study objectives and clarified that they can withdraw from the study at any time they wish without having to provide a reason for their decision. I also asked them to go through the consent form and if happy to sign it. A copy of the consent form was then given to the participants.

4.5.3 Scenarios in Qualitative research

According to Jeffries and Maeder (2004-2005 cited in Stravakou and Lozgka, 2018: 1188) Scenarios are "short stories that are written to reflect, in a less complex way, real life situations in order to encourage discussions and potential solutions to problems where multiple solutions are possible". In these stories participants are invited to respond to descriptions of a person or situation based on fact or fiction and to draw on their own expediencies, how the central character in the scenario will or should behave. These stories act as stimulus to extended discussion of the situation in question (Jenkins et al., 2010).

As a data collection method, in general, scenarios can be either used alone or with other research methods. However, in qualitative research especially, scenarios are usually implemented within interviews of various types (Stravakou and Lozgka, 2018; Jenkins et al., 2010).

One of the advantages of scenario technique is its effectiveness in exploring complex issues that in some way are difficult for the researcher to investigate and for the participants to answer. Another advantage of scenarios is their flexibility as they allow the researcher to adapt them according to the research purposes and respective sample. In fact, generally, research (e.g. Schoenberg & Ravdal

2000; Jenkins et al., 2010; Stravakou and Lozgka, 2018) has indicated that scenarios have strengthened the use of the semi-structured interviews and participants find scenarios “a fun and an enjoyable process” particularly when researching attitudes, behaviours and perceptions (Stravakou and Lozgka 2018: 1191).

Despite the above advantages, Stravakou and Lozaka found that the development of the scenarios can take considerable time. Additionally, some researchers (e.g. Nygren and Oltedal, 2015 cited in Stravakou and Lozaka, 2018) argue that “the inconsistency between respondents’ true behaviour and what the data of vignettes reveal” is considered as one of the main difficulties with the use of scenarios as a research technique. Therefore, in order to overcome this problem researchers are advised to “to provoke first answers for the hero's reaction in scenarios and then for the reaction of research participants” (Barter & Renold, 2000, p. 312) the issue which was considered when preparing the interview questions for Phase 2 in the current study (see Appendix 4 for Phase 2 interview schedule).

Stravakou and Lozgka (2018) reviewed the literature on the use of scenarios in qualitative research and found that researchers from various fields such as education, psychology, and sociology have used scenario technique (e.g. Humphreys, 2005; Hughes and Huby, 2004; Jenkins et al. 2010; Schoenberg and Ravdal, 2000). However, Stravakou and Lozgka asserted that few scholars have assessed the effectiveness of this method particularly in the educational domain. Therefore, the aim of this study is to contribute to this growing area of research about the use and assessment of scenarios as a methodological data collection

tool by investigating the English language teachers' perceptions of professionalism at the Colleges of Technology in Oman.

4.5.4 Scenarios in the current research

In this current study scenarios/vignettes are real stories reported by Phase 1 participants. These scenarios were used as a part of the semi-structured interviews in Phase 2 in order to see how participants would respond to hypothetical scenarios that give them some emotional distance to discuss potentially complex and sensitive issues with regards to their professional life. The scenarios helped the researcher to get in-depth information about the English teachers' reactions to the situations/incidents discussed in these scenarios and generated in-depth data about the ways in which these scenarios connect to participants' ideas about professionalism. Additionally, these scenarios encouraged the participants to share similar incidents from their experiences and empowered them to take part and express themselves freely (Stravakou and Lozgka, 2018).

As noted above, the study was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 focused on the policies or managerial practices that challenged or threatened teacher professionalism, the effects of these threats on teachers' professional lives, and the teachers' responses to these threats. Phase 2, in turn, was designed to explore in greater depth the teachers' hypothetical reactions to certain managerial practices that the scenarios depicted. During their discussions in Phase 1, the participants recalled real stories/experiences related to how their professionalism was compromised by some of the managerial policies or practices, and how they responded to these policies/practices (see Appendix Six for an example of Phase 1 semi-structured interviews). Subsequently, based on

the initial analysis of Phase 1 results, a set of scenarios that represent these situations was developed. Three scenarios were selected and further developed that corresponded to the issues of "*classroom observation*", "*limited autonomy to adjust and design teaching materials*" and "*work distribution and planning".* These scenarios were chosen because they were commonly experienced and reported by Phase 1 participants.

The scenarios were sent to the participants prior to Phase 2 interviews, and the participants were asked to read them. During the interview, the participants were asked whether they experienced similar situations and were encouraged to discuss their reactions to these scenarios, and to suggest ways to improve policies in their institution that the scenarios reflected (for more details on Phase 2 interview schedule please see Appendix 4). Having the participants refer to these hypothetical scenarios was believed to offer them emotional safety and comfort, as discussing something merely *in theory* enabled them to distance themselves from this situation, without the burden of having to take the responsibility for discussing their "real" actions. It was hoped that with the help of scenarios the participants would be "braver" to discuss the reactions to these scenarios, as it will be discussed in Chapter 5 results, in most cases there seemed to be a lack of formal response to the managerial policies and practices and compliance was the most preferable form of reaction reported in Phase 1 of the study.

The first scenario represents a number of dilemmas and concerns reported mainly by Phase 1 participants from colleges 1 and 2 with regards to "random classroom observation" policy. This unscheduled classroom observation in the scenario is carried out by the management to evaluate individual teachers'

performance for the purposes of teacher retention or termination. The scenario also represents other issues, such as the top down managerial policies demonstrated by the control of teaching approaches and the marginalisation of teachers' voices. In this scenario "Ms. Hanna", who "found that teaching grammar in isolation is more adequate for the students than the integrative approach", is having her class observed. Importantly, however, the observer arrived without notice, halfway through the lesson. He, then, asks the teacher for the lesson plan and goes around the class asking the students for feedback on Ms. Hanna's teaching methods. In the post-lesson discussion, the observer raises concerns about her teaching approach, pointing to the fact that it is not in line with the methods recommended in the teacher's guide, and criticises Ms. Hanna for falling behind with her professional progression. At the same time, Ms, Hanna is not given a chance to defend her methodological decisions (see Appendix 7 for the whole scenario).

The second scenario represents a concern reported by some of Phase 1 participants from the three colleges' and relates to teachers' limited autonomy to adjust and design teaching materials as well as the marginalisation of their voices in the selection of the textbook. As the phase 1 findings revealed, despite certain limitations of the required textbook, the teachers' concerns were not acknowledged and the teachers were not allowed to prepare their own materials to compensate for the limitations of this textbook (see Chapter 5). In this scenario, therefore, "Ms. Shazia" prepared her own teaching materials in addition to using a recommended textbook, as she felt that the available materials were not sufficient for her students. As the Level Coordinator learned about this, Ms. Shazia received a warning from the Level Coordinator for not having sought the

management's approval prior to using her teaching materials in the classroom. As the teacher was afraid of losing her job, she agreed not to design any more materials, although she did believe the currently used materials were not sufficient to address her students' needs" (for more details on this scenario see Appendix 7).

The third scenario depicts a concern raised by most of Phase 1 participants, and particularly those from College 2. It relates to the practice of distributing and planning extra-curricular tasks, such as quality assurance and other administrative duties that increase teachers' work intensification. As the findings in Chapter 5 showed, there is hardly any explanation or negotiation when assigning these tasks to the teachers although the tasks are known to significantly intensify the teachers' workload. In the scenario shared with Phase 2 participants, a group of English teachers, including "Mr. Don", were assigned several administrative tasks "without prior consultation, knowledge or consent". The teachers felt that this additional workload, as they were also asked to work on two Saturdays, and having to do something they did not feel competent in "affected them professionally, personally and psychologically", but they were told they would not be allowed to take summer holidays if they refuse to do these tasks. As a result, on the first Saturday, the majority of teachers, including Mr. Don, did not report for work and pretended that they were sick (for more details of this scenario, see Appendix 7).

The rational for designing these scenarios refers to the discussion about teachers resistance and compliance and the research findings presented in the literature review chapter which showed though teachers were accused of their passive roles in dealing with managerialism, there were also evidences where teachers

have exercised different ways to resist and accommodate these polices (E.g. Anderson, 2008; Gaus and Hall, 2015). Another reason also as it mentioned above was to see how teachers would respond to hypothetical scenarios that give them some emotional distance to discuss potentially complex and sensitive issues with regards to their professional life.

4.6 Data Analysis

After transcribing the interviews, I kept them in a Microsoft Word file with numbers from 1 to 10 for the first phase and 11 to 30 for the second. With regard to the analysis process Cohen et al. (2011: 573) assert that “there is no one single or correct way to analyse qualitative data: how one does it should abide by the issues of fitness for purposes”. In other words, the researcher should, above all, be concerned with answering his/her research questions, should be responsive to his or her data and, based on this data and own judgement as to what needs to be done and make decisions about subsequent analytic steps. Having said this, in order to ensure that the data analysis has a structure, I decided to loosely adopt a six-step approach suggested by Clarke and Braun (2013) for thematic analysis due to its systematic nature and clear structure. The steps suggested in this framework involve establishing familiarity with the data, creating initial codes, validation of codes, creating themes, finalising theme definitions and names and writing the report.

The initial familiarity with the data was established through printing the transcripts and reading them several times prior to importing the data into the data analysis software. This step helped me to immerse myself in the data and make a note of some key ideas, general themes and patterns that seemed to answer the research questions (Ritchie and Spencer 2002; Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003;

Clarke and Braun 2013), without worrying about the coding process. Also, making notes about my initial observations and the resulting assumptions later helped me control and recognise these assumptions about what I expected to find in the data, as opposed to what I actually found through the subsequent data analysis.

Initially, Microsoft Word was used to start the coding process and identify themes. The transcripts were inserted into a table that was divided into three columns; coding labels, verbatim transcripts and explanatory notes. However, as it became increasingly difficult to keep track of the constantly increasing number of codes, I decided to use NVivo 10. Among its main advantages, in addition to providing tools for coding the data, is also that clear organisation of the data itself, the applied codes, and even the researcher's notes, are possible in this software.

The coding process started with line-by-line coding. Although, contrary to what the name suggests, line-by-line coding does not have to involve coding each line of the text, it is still a very detailed approach to coding. This is evident in the number of codes generated initially in the coding process, with 144 having been developed for Phase 1 and 103 for Phase 2 (see Appendices 8 & 9 for the final version of the thematic frameworks). The process of line-by-line coding was only applied to the initial few interviews of each stage, after which the goal was to minimise the number of codes before continuing to code the remaining transcripts. First, codes that were not relevant were removed, and some codes that were similar or covered exactly the same kind of content but were named differently were 'merged', or joined together (validation of codes). At this time, the remaining codes were also being put into groups and organised thematically based on the aims and questions of the study (creating themes). After these themes were established were inspected by my thesis supervisors for their

general consistency with the research questions and aims. I also gave the anonymous transcripts to one of my colleagues to see if he would code the data in a similar way, for the purpose of validating my data analysis. The whole process described above was undertaken separately for Phase 1 and Phase 2. Therefore, themes that emerged in Phase 2 emerged strictly from the process of coding and analysing the data, rather than being a Phase 1 thematic framework being applied to Phase 2. In order to demonstrate some of the processes described above, below are examples of how the detailed, line-by-line codes were being merged into more inclusive thematic categories:

“Educational background”, “Current position” → merged into “Educational background”

“Your work being appreciated” → merged into “Promotions and having your work appreciated”, which is under “Being treated as a professional” under “Conceptualizations and definitions of professionalism”

“The importance of professional development”, “planning your career being important” → merged into “Continuous professional development and career planning” under “Conceptualizations and definitions of professionalism”

“Centralised materials”, “Poor quality of teaching resources” and “lack of teaching resources” → merged into “Having to work with poor, inappropriate or centralised teaching and learning resources” under “Control of teaching” under “Challenges and threats to professionalism”

“Discrepancy between personal values and external expectations”, “Identity conflict” and “discrepancy between the teachers’ and the managers’ perceptions” → merged into “Having yourself-perception and identity put on the line” grouped under “Marginality of teachers” under “Challenges and threats to professionalism”

In Phase 2, I also started with line by line coding, and then organised them into "Scenario 1", "Scenario 2" and "Scenario 3" categories. All relevant codes were first distributed among these categories without any further classification, for the purpose of clarity and distinguishing between extracts related to a given scenario. Then, Scenario 1, 2 and 3 were renamed into "Class Observations", "Limited autonomy to adjust and design teaching materials" and "work distribution and planning", respectively. These names were believed to encapsulate the main issues reflected by each scenario, and the main theme under which they were put was named "Policies that undermine the teachers' professionalism", as it emerged that this is, in fact, the case. Subsequently, within each of these three categories, the data was organised thematically into the framework consisting of "Issues", "Effects", "Suggested reactions" and "How to improve the current practices" (Please see Chapter Five and Appendix 9 for Phase 2 thematic framework) in relation to each described scenario.

The data analysis process was mainly deductive – from the theories, concepts and themes discussed in the literature (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003; Clarke and Braun 2013) with an element of inductive – where the codes emerged from what participants said (Miles and Huberman, 2014; Saladana, 2016). The data analysis process was deductive as during the analysis I kept the study's aims, theoretical framework, central research questions and the list of areas/ concepts discussed in the literature review on one page in front of me to keep focused on the coding decisions (Saldana, 2016). This helped me to identify and name the codes and themes (e.g. the skills and traits of the professional teacher). It is inductive because I kept the analysis process open to new codes that emerged from the data (Miles and Huberman, 2014; Saldana, 2016).

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 illustrates how data were analysed to uncover themes relevant to the research areas –challenges to teacher professionalism and effects and consequences of compromised professionalism. As it is mentioned above, in this thematic analysis, I attempted to identify and group all data that fit within pre-existing categories or concepts. These, to some extent, were pre-identified from the literature review and the theoretical framework on definitions of teacher professionalism, challenges to and effects on teacher professionalism. For instance, pre-identified themes and concepts for challenges to teacher professionalism were: intensification of workload, job insecurity, lack of trust and administrative support, decrease in classroom autonomy, marginality of teachers, control in education, and decrease in recognition and respect and low self-perceptions (see first column, Figure 4.1). The pre-identified categories and themes were used as a starting point, and as a way of getting to know the data (Clarke and Braun, 2013; Saldana, 2016). After that, the data was read and reread and relevant themes emerged (Miles and Huberman, 2014) (see column 3, Figure 4.1). Then the relevant themes were categorised in three strands (see column 2, Figure 4.1). In the first strand, teachers' marginality and control of teaching, I describe the following themes: (a) not being trusted, listened to or supported in decisions; (b) having your self-perceptions and identity put on the line; (c) lack of autonomy and not being involved in decisions making; (d) Having to work with centralized materials; and (e) not being given opportunities to raise concerns. These themes are resonant with the "marginality of teachers" challenge mentioned in Hassan (2014), "lack of trust and support" reported in Skinner et al., (2019), "decrease in teacher autonomy" mentioned in Neumann et al., (2016), "self-perceptions and the perceived perceptions by others", "recognition and respect" reported in Edstam (2001) and Al Habsi (2009). The

second strand describes the intensification of workload under the following thematic headings: (a) Being asked to do things not related to your expertise; and (b) unrealistic workload. These challenges are similar to those from previous research (Hassan, 2014; Neumann et al., 2016; Skinner et al., 2019; Smethem 2007). The third strand describes the working conditions under the following themes: (a) poor or unprofessional communication; (b) being disrespected and threatened; (c) constant fear of losing the job; and (c) favouritism, unequal treatment and discrimination; themes which are close to "job insecurity" and "work inequality" challenges mentioned in (Neumann et al., 2016). Themes are defined as units emerged from patterns occurring in conversation topics, vocabulary and descriptions of recurring behaviour and feelings, shown in column 4, Figures 4.1 and 4.2. It is worth to mention that during the analysis not all the themes or concepts discussed in the literature review emerged in the findings of this research. For example resistance was a theme in the literature review but was not strongly considered in the analysis as there wasn't enough data representing different types of resistance.

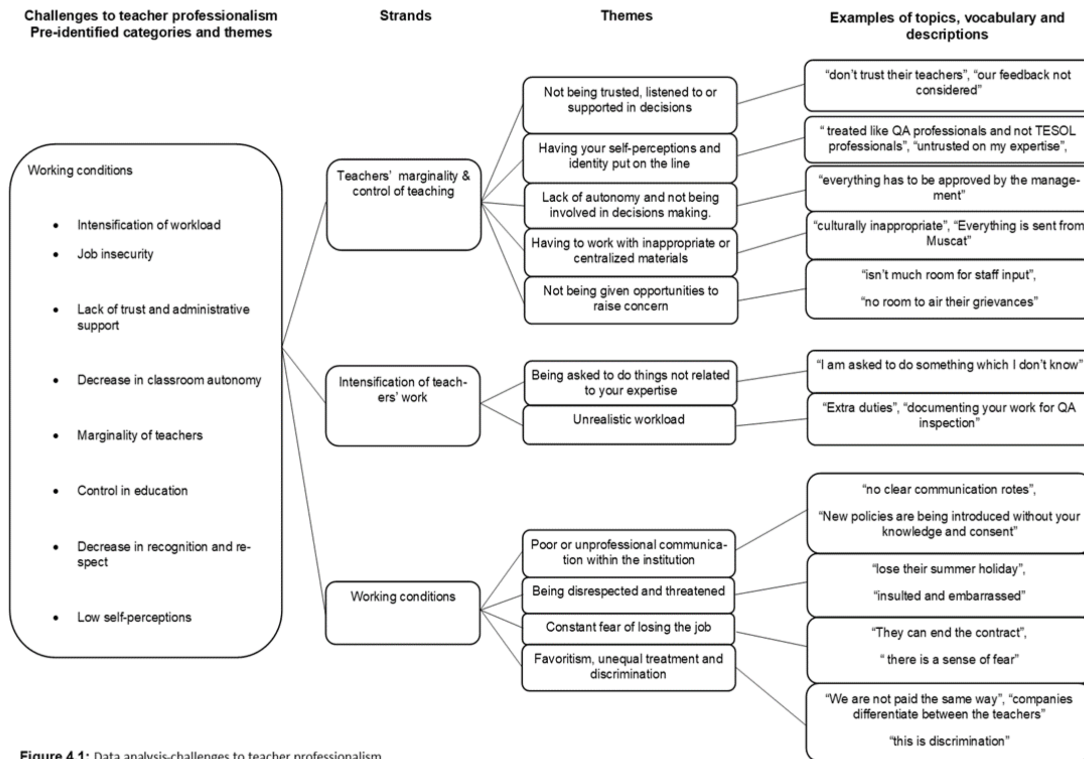

Figure 4.1: Data analysis-challenges to teacher professionalism

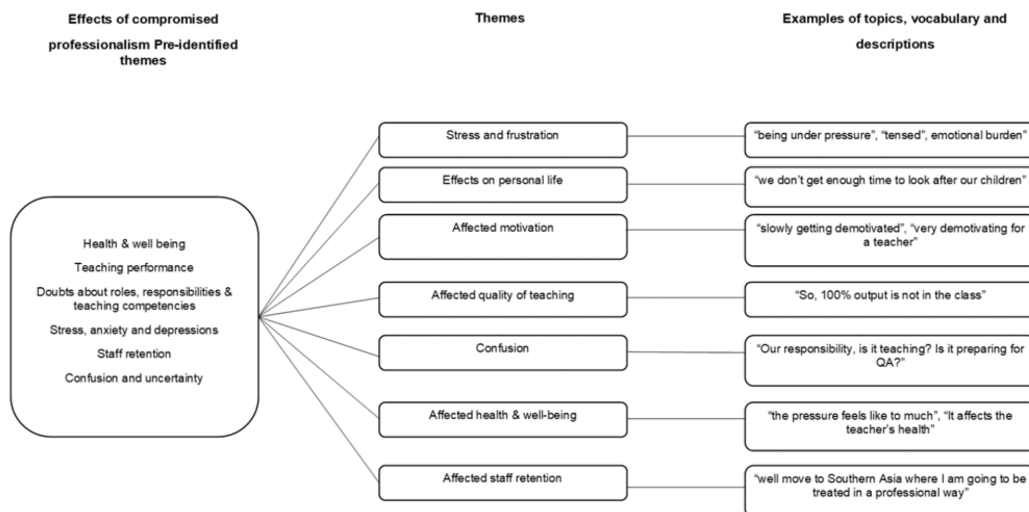

Figure 4.2: Data analysis-effects of compromised professionalism

4.7 Research Quality

In a qualitative phenomenological study that aims to provide an insight into individual people's perceptions, the researcher should attempt to offset his own bias and subjectivity that might creep in through any attempt at making sense of the interview data (Burnard 1991). Therefore, in order to increase credibility of the findings, several techniques to ensure the quality were adopted in this study.

4.7.1 Credibility

Credibility is the researcher's ability to demonstrate a true picture of the phenomena under investigation (Shenton 2004 and Wahyuni 2012). Reflexivity, for example, which, as previously noted, refers to efforts to minimise the researcher's interference and make his/her assumptions and biases transparent (Creswell, 2013), is one of the techniques to increase credibility.

Another way to increase credibility of the findings is through "member checks" (Shenton, 2004; Patton, 2002). After the transcription process a member checking strategy was utilised by sending some transcripts to the individual participants to confirm that the transcription was accurately narrate what they reported in the interviews (Carlson, 2010). Moreover, during the categorisation process, the researcher asked a colleague who was not involved in the study but is familiar with process of category generation to read through the anonymous transcripts and to identify a category system independently and without seeing the researcher's list. The aim of this decision was to achieve inter-coder reliability (Robson, 2002). The lists of categories were, then, discussed and adjustments made. Another validation technique, triangulation, was also applied. In the case of this study, what is known as informants' triangulation method (Wahyani, 2012; Shenton, 2004; Campbell et Al., 2004) was used. As previously noted, a total of

30 participants were interviewed, and such range of informants was considered enough to enable the researcher to gather individual viewpoints and experiences, and rich data was obtained based on a variety of contributions from these participants (Shenton, 2004; Campbell et Al., 2004). For example, one of the challenges to teacher professionalism emerged from this study was the lack of involvement in decision making. From ten participants involved in the 1st phase, eight participants reported this issue as a challenge to their professionalism. Thus, this was useful as such range of informants enabled me to gather a range of individual viewpoints concerning the aforementioned challenge.

Finally, keeping an "audit trail", or the detailed description of all procedures and data related to this study, is considered to be a strategy that increases credibility of the findings (Shenton, 2004). Without these detailed records, it may be difficult for the reader of the final report to determine the extent to which the overall findings "ring true" (Shenton, 2004: 69).

The application of the above methods is believed to have increased credibility of the findings of this study and minimise researcher bias. Notwithstanding these efforts, however, I agree with Ritchie et al., that reflexivity "can never fully be attained-all research will be influenced by the researcher and there is no completely 'natural' or 'objective' knowledge" (2014: 22).

4.7.2 Transferability and dependability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative study can be transferred to other settings (Ary et al., 2013). It can be increased by the researcher's thick description of the research context and the assumptions that were underlying the research (Kvale, 2007; Trochim 2006), the methods and procedures of data collection and analysis, and through thorough analysis of the

data (Collins, 2010). In this study, I have provided a rich and detailed description of the context of the study and the assumptions that were central to it, and a description of the procedures of data collection and analysis. In addition, I have also developed a theoretical framework (see Chapter 3) for understanding teacher professionalism, the forms of professionalism and teachers' responses to managerialism. This framework can be used by other researchers to check whether the findings of this study can be transferable to their contexts.

4.7.3 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or repeated by others. It can be enhanced by documenting the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study and acknowledging own bias and subjectivity, as well as through involving others in confirming data analysis and interpretation.

In this research, the questions for the interviews were developed based on the literature on teacher professionalism and teacher responses to reform policies. These questions for both phases of the study were reviewed by my supervisors and piloted with six participants, and some modifications were made according to the feedback received. During the piloting stage, my interviewing skills were enhanced by reflecting on the way I conducted the interviews. In the process of transcription and data analysis, the entire interviews, rather than parts believed to be 'relevant' to the study and its research questions, were transcribed and analysed to avoid imposing my assumptions and experiences on the data. In addition to these measures, the qualitative data collection and analysis procedures were clearly described and documented. During the research process, I frequently made conscious efforts to step back and examine my own

way of thinking about the data in order to ensure that my beliefs and biases do not influence the way I approach the data and the study as a whole (Shulman et. al, 2006).

4.8 Ethical considerations

According to Denscombe (2002), “ethics concern the system of moral principles by which individuals can judge their actions as right or wrong, good or bad” (p. 175), and in all research, ethics should be taken very seriously by the researchers (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). However, Mustafa (2011) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) agree that ethics are more intrinsic to the interpretive paradigm because it often targets sensitive matters and includes the participants’ values and personal views in the inquiry. Therefore, in order to conduct this research in an ethical way, the principles of access and acceptance, informed consent, respecting individuals and confidentiality and anonymity were applied.

With regard to access and acceptance, I adhered to the ethical protocol for undertaking research set by BERA (2018). Thus, the first thing I did was acquire the ethical approval from the university to carry out this research (See Appendix 10). Then I obtained permission from the Ministry of Manpower which is responsible for the Colleges of Technology, as this is the initial and important stage in conducting the research (Punch, 2014). I did that first by sending an official request to the Ministry via an email explaining the purpose and the requirements of the research (See Appendix 11). The Ministry, then, asked for the research proposal, the research questions and the interview schedule to approve the request.

Regarding the recruitment, it was important that the participants were recruited as fairly as possible and under no feeling of compulsion. In this regard, as it was

noted above access to the participants was established in two ways. The first way was through the Heads of English Language Centre emails to the teachers. In this email, the study information sheet was attached, and this sheet explained the aims of the interview and emphasised the confidentiality, anonymity and the voluntary nature of the study. The second way to negotiate access to the participants was through the initial group of participants encouraging their acquaintances to participate. Both of these ways enabled me to eliminate myself from the process of recruitment and to maintain a level of legitimacy and fairness to the recruitment process. Thus, the participation process was opened to all the faculty and enabled the teachers to participate voluntarily and at a time most convenient to them.

Once the participants were recruited, the next ethical principle was to obtain their signed informed consent. Thus, prior to the interviews, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and how the findings were to be used. They were asked to read and sign a consent form (see Appendix 12), and they could keep a copy of the form. The reason behind this was to ensure the participants' willingness to be involved in the research (Burns, 2010) and to have a clear picture of the research purpose and procedure. The consent form was written in a clear and appropriate language to help the participants understand its contents easily (Lehman, 2015). It was also made clear in the form and in the interviews meetings that the participation in the research was voluntary and that the participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. In this regard it is worth to mention that none of the participants withdrew from the research. I also informed the participants that they were free to ask any questions of any aspect of the research (Dornyei & Taguchi, 2010).

A further ethical consideration is respecting individuals by making sure that there was no harm resulting from them participating in the study. Harm may take different forms, such as physical, psychological or social (Bryman, 2012). Thus, the participants were assured that their participation and the opinions they would express in the interviews would not affect their jobs.

In terms of confidentiality and anonymity, the participants were reassured that whatever information they provided in the interviews would be used for the study as well as for other publication purposes and all printed transcripts was securely stored in a locked cabinet. The digital data was stored on University of Exeter U-drive in the computers at the University of Exeter which uses standard university security measures for data protection. As an example of the confidentiality consideration, one participant in Phase 1 asked me to stop the recording and not to take notes when he told me of a certain experience that related to how he was treated by the management members. Although such information could have enriched the data collected, I respected the participant's rights and did not record this part. The participants were also given the right to review the transcripts before they are published. Anonymity is important to protect the participants' identities and privacy (Whayuni, 2012, Cohen et.al, 2007). For this reason, in this study the researcher assigned numbers to individuals instead of their real names to protect their identities. According to Lahman (2015), pseudonyms are crucial for increasing confidentiality in research, especially in cultures where privacy is linked to one's reputation.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter described the methodological decisions that were made, and procedures that were applied to answer the above research questions and

achieve study objectives. It started with a discussion of philosophical worldviews underlying the study. Subsequently, method of data collection and limitations, as well as analysis procedures were described in detail. The issues of research quality were then discussed, and the chapter concluded with a discussion of the study's ethical considerations.

Chapter Five: Results

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter presents findings from both phases of the study. In order to answer the research questions, the participants were interviewed in two phases, with ten participants in Phase 1 and twenty different participants in Phase 2. After the data from Phase 1 was analysed thematically, the results informed the design of Phase 2 scenarios. Having the second phase of the interviews, in which the participants discussed hypothetical scenarios rather than their own experiences, aimed to help the researcher gather more in-depth responses, as this helped the participants detach themselves from the discussed topics and more openly express their views.

The phase 1 and phase 2 interviews were analysed separately and two thematic frameworks were developed, one for each phase (see Appendices 8 and 9 for Phase 1 and Phase 2 thematic frameworks, respectively). However, as some of the findings related to the participants' definitions and conceptualisations of professionalism were similar, these findings were amalgamated and, to avoid repetitions, reported on together in Section 5.2 of this chapter. Table 5.1 demonstrates the common themes which were merged and throughout the chapter each theme is outlined with all its sub-themes in additional tables for the purpose of clarity.

Table 5.1: The common themes from Phase 1 and Phase 2 frameworks

Theme	**How many participants discussed it**	**How many times the theme appeared across all interviews**
Conceptualisations and definitions of professionalism	30	275
Skills and characteristics of a professional teacher	30	183
Being treated as a professional	24	92

Overall, the findings revealed that the teachers had a very clear idea of what constitutes professionalism. They shared these ideas when discussing their *conceptualisations and definitions of professionalism* (see Appendix 8), as well as their *reasons to become a teacher,* both of which are discussed in more detail in Section 5.2. The results in this section come from both phases of the study, as in both phases these conceptualisations and definitions of teacher professionalism were discussed.

Considering these perceptions and conceptualisations which included not only specific teacher traits, such as passion, dedication or putting the students' needs at the forefront, but also *being treated as a professional*, it is also the case that teachers also felt that their professionalism is being compromised significantly by a number of practices in their institutions. These *challenges and threats to professionalism* are discussed in Section 5.3.1 and this section opens the discussion of Phase 1 results. Section 5.3.2, then, discusses various *effects and consequences of compromised professionalism.* Considering the teachers' idea of what professionalism is, and the fact that their experiences often revealed situations in which they were deprived of the sense of being, and being treated

as, a professional teacher, the teachers' sense of professionalism being compromised resulted in serious consequences, including the overall decrease in motivation, affected work performance or various effects on personal life. Subsequently, Section 5.3.3 outlines findings related to *responding to threats to professionalism* which revealed that, in fact, in most cases there seemed to be *a lack of formal response* to these practices or policies. It was also found that the main reason for the lack of response was the teachers' fear of the consequences.

As noted above, it was hoped that through having the teachers discuss hypothetical scenarios rather than their real experiences the research would be able to obtain a more detailed data, and Section 5.4 is devoted to the participants' discussions of the three scenarios, each of which represents one major issue experienced by teachers. Thus, *class observations, limited autonomy to adjust and design teaching materials* and *work distribution and planning* are discussed in sections 5.4.1, 5.4.2 and 5.4.3, respectively. Within each of the three scenarios, four themes are discussed, namely *issues, effects, suggested reactions* and *how to improve the current practices*.

5.2 Definitions and Conceptualisations of Professionalism (Common Results from Phases 1 &2)

As explained above, in both phases, the interviews started with the participants discussing what the term "professionalism" means to them. Two thematic frameworks were then created, and the common themes were merged to avoid repetition. Therefore, the discussion in sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 are based on common results from both phases of the study. Also, for the purpose of clarity, the participants are reported using a continuous numeration, so that Phase 2 participants were assigned numbers from 11 to 30.

When discussing the notion of professionalism, the participants talked both about certain traits, skills and characteristics that constitute a "professional" teacher and about *being treated as a professional*. Thus, simply speaking, professionalism to them encompasses both the way we *act* and the way *we are being perceived and treated*.

5.2.1 Skills and characteristics of a professional teacher

Table 5.2 demonstrates several dimensions of *skills and characteristics of a professional teacher* (coded 183 times across 30 interviews), which is a sub-theme of the *conceptualisations and definitions of professionalism* theme.

Table 5.2: Theme: Conceptualisations and definitions of professionalism. Sub-theme 1: Skills and characteristics of a professional teacher

Theme	**Sub-theme**	**Dimensions (arranged according to the number of times they appeared across the two phases)**
Conceptualisations and definitions of professionalism	Skills and characteristics of a professional teacher	Prioritising the students' learning over other duties and tasks
		Professional work ethic and values
		Being flexible and responsive
		Having professional skills, experience and qualifications
		Interpersonal skills
		Being a Leader, a Guru and a Mentor
		Continuous professional development and career planning
		Having clear and well-defined professional identity (self-perception)
		Being dedicated to the institution

Regarding *skills and characteristics of a professional teacher*, *prioritising the students' learning over other duties and tasks* (coded 46 times across 22

interviews) appeared to be the most frequent code. Although occasionally it was stated directly as a response to the question about the participants' understanding of "professionalism", most of the times it was *inferred* from the teachers' other accounts throughout the interviews. When discussing certain challenges to professionalism (see Section 5.3.1), for example, it was common for the teachers to express concerns about their students not receiving enough attention. The participants raised concerns, for example, about the unrealistic workload affecting the quality of teaching, "which I feel is the prime role which we should concentrate on" (Participant 1). It was common, in fact, to refer to teaching, and improving the students as the teachers' "main task" (Participant 3) and "prime duty" (Participant 8), and most of the threats to professionalism were discussed in terms of the risk of neglecting the students' needs.

As the participants explained, not only is it important for a professional teacher to put his/her students' needs at the forefront, *teaching* involves more than merely transmitting the content knowledge. In the following extract, for example, Participant 20 explains that he aims to convey some "lifelong skills" to his students, and that he sees his students' failure as his personal failure as a professional teacher:

> Apart from the language skills, I try to inculcate lifelong skills. I don't prepare students only for the examination. No. I know tomorrow this student will step into his practical life. If he fails, I won't forgive myself. I won't forgive myself. I know that something is lacking in my professionalism where I need to improve myself. Why my students fail in this? Where I didn't convey? (Participant 20)

Participant 26 shared similar views, explaining that students "are out future" and, therefore, "every class is important for me". She later explained that she always gives her best and that the students should "always" learn something from each

class. As she further explained, “I do my best to give them something, at least one thing that they can take it away from the classroom”.

Overall, the participants believed that the teacher’s “number one” (Participant 28) priority should always be the students, and that the teacher him/herself, rather than merely being “a teacher”, should also be an “educator” and “facilitator” (Participant 27). These beliefs were evident throughout the whole interviews, including the times when the teachers discussed their various suggested reactions to the three scenarios (discussed in sections 5.4.1 through 5.4.3).

Professional work ethic and values (coded 43 times across 19 interviews) were also central to the participants’ views regarding skills and characteristics defining a professional teacher. As Participant 22 explained, for example, if you are a professional teacher, you are characterised by a “professional demeanour in all your dealings”, and “you uphold that dignity of the profession anywhere you are”, in both personal and professional life. Participant 20 listed a number of values and characteristics that constitute such “professional demeanour”, including “your attitudes (…), you’re a reliable person, you’re honest, you’re independent, a self-starter person, hardworking, dedicated”. A professional teacher should also be “disciplined (…), organised, and (…) transparent to the students” (Participant 26). He or she should also demonstrate “ethical behaviour” (Participant 22) when dealing not only with the students but also their parents or the management, and “should have intrinsic knowledge” (Participant 25) of what is right and what is wrong. Professional teachers should also respect the culture of the students, and “punctuality is a must” (Participant 28). Participant 10 also believed that

> Professional teacher should respect students, should respect his/her colleagues in the school, or in the college. Other things that he needs to be, or she needs to be... punctual; prepared for classes, and so on.

Therefore, being a professional teacher is more than merely *being qualified* to teach. As Participant 2 explained, there are “many teachers who are highly qualified and very well experienced but don’t show any professionalism”. She later explained that “professionalism includes work ethics, passion towards the profession, dedication, punctuality and, especially, integrity”. In addition, as a professional teacher, “you have your commitment to your students (…) and well, other things follow like punctuality, meeting deadlines and detaching your subjectivity when you value something, when you assess something” (Participant 8).

Maintaining such professional work ethic and values is also linked to having *interpersonal skills* (coded 13 times across 10 interviews). This not only means that, as previously noted, teachers should know how to convey knowledge in an effective way, but also that they should be someone the students may rely on with any other issues they may have. Rather than being simply a passive transmitter of knowledge, a professional teacher should also be “a good advisor and a listener too” (Participant 13). Interpersonal skills also mean knowing “how to work with people (…), when to keep silent” and “when to talk” (Participant 17). Importantly, “teaching and professional teaching means cooperating” (Participant 13), and these skills should also be evident in the teachers’ relationships with their colleagues and superiors.

The previously discussed issue of prioritising the students’ needs is also the ultimate purpose of *being flexible and responsive* (coded 18 times across 12 interviews), another characteristic of a professional teacher according to the participants. The teachers should understand that “students are of different mentalities” (Participant 20) and should be able to flexibly adapt to the students’

various needs. Participant 20 compared a teacher to a doctor who "should know about his patients" in order to be able to help them, as well as to a computer app which should frequently be "updated":

> Like a doctor, he should know about his patients, right? Otherwise, how can he treat? If you know that your students are thirsty and you are feeding them with nuts, you are increasing their thirst. So, you should know the need of your students, and you should know how to fulfil it. Then, a professional teacher should be always like an app, computer app, it should be updated (Participant 20).

Therefore, teachers should be good observers, should understand their students' needs and should be able to react to these needs accordingly. This also means that a professional teacher needs to be "good at problem solving" (Participant 20), and should be able to "adjust the pace, methodology and activities on the basis of a current scenario" (Participant 23). Participant 23, for example, "strongly believes" that "I can change my lesson plan anytime I want (…) based on the level of the students, based on the responses of the students". Participant 24 also believed that since "the teacher is the one who deals with the students and (…) understands their strengths, weaknesses and needs", "teachers should be given the freedom to determine the best ways to achieve the learning objectives". As Participant 26 pointed out, "textbook is not a holy book" and can, therefore, be changed based on the students' needs ("you should always think about the students and what they need" – Participant 26). Such flexibility is not without problems, however, and, as Participant 13 pointed out, "a professional teacher (…) should be someone who has the balance of mind, well developed to understand what is right and what is wrong". Such teacher should "judge anything that happens in the classroom" and respond accordingly.

These beliefs about *being flexible and responsive* are particularly important in light of the discussions about the teachers' right to adapt materials and their rights to have autonomy over their teaching methods, discussed in sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2, respectively, as well as the importance of being given autonomy, discussed in Section 5.2.2.

Having skills, experience and qualifications (coded 22 times across 12 interviews) was also discussed, although, interestingly, this was never argued to be *the most important* attribute of a professional teacher in Phase 1 compared to Phase 2. The participants who commented expressed a belief that a professional teacher needs to be qualified "with knowledge of the subject and with the knowledge of how to teach English" (Participant 23), have some teaching experience and "be up to date with the recent additional methodologies and research and inventions" (Participant 26). Therefore, although "doing what your profession demands you to do" (Participant 3), having experience and being qualified for teaching may officially be a characteristic of *a teacher*, being a *professional teacher* involves much more than this.

The important role of teachers in helping the students both learn academic content and develop as human beings was also evident in the belief that *being a Leader, a Guru and a Mentor* (coded 15 times across 8 interviews) is among the main characteristics of a professional teacher. Rather than merely transmitting knowledge, teachers "mould the future generation" (Participant 2) and "sow the seed of desire to achieve something in life" (Participant 4). According to the participants, a teacher "inspires and motivates the student to chase his dream" (Participant 4), and the role of a good, or *professional*, teacher is to "Inspire young people" and teach "values, ethics, kindness" (Participant 8). In the following two

extracts, the participants describe what the role of a professional teacher should be, and it is evident that it involves much more than merely passing knowledge to the students:

> We don't just call them teachers, but Guru. Guru is a Sanskrit term which means someone who leads the pupil towards the ultimate goodness, which is God, in our culture. We say Matha Pitha Guru Deivam. It means first father, then mother, then the teacher, then comes your God. This is a cultural concept of India. So, teachers are highly respected in the Indian society. I always found the urge to become a teacher because of this factor (Participant 5)

> Professionalism in teaching is not something that can be learned from a place. I am a believer that teaching is a calling (…) Also, professionalism has a lot to do with leading by example. As a teacher, you are a leader to your students. You lead them by example, how you carry yourself (Participant 6).

As evident above, the participants believe that professionalism involves a lot of responsibility for the students and, arguably, not everyone may become a teacher, for "teaching is a calling" (Participant 6). This links to the participants' discussions of *reasons to become a teacher* (coded 46 times across 22 interviews, see Table 5.1), in which the participants mentioned "passion" (Participant 2), the desire to "share the knowledge" (Participant 10), passing "the different values of life to the next generation" (Participant 3) and having a "good opportunity to mould (…) the young generation" (Participant 2) as their reasons for entering the profession. These discussions were important in light of the rest of the findings, as it was clear that depriving the teachers of the sense that they can fully commit to the above values poses a threat to their sense of professionalism, affecting their commitment, motivation and the overall performance as a result (see Section 5.3.2 for details of the *effects and consequences of compromised professionalism*).

Seven participants discussed *continuous professional development and career planning* (coded 14 times), explaining that “I should have intellectual honesty to admit that I still have to learn something” (Participant 8) and that “you cannot be a teacher who received their qualification X number of years ago and you’ve never done anything else to improve yourself” (Participant 6). In short, those who commented believed that “you have to continue developing yourself” (Participant 20) and “adapt things” (Participant 27) in terms of additional professional skills. Professional teachers should recognise the areas of improvement, they should participate in professional development opportunities and they should plan their career in advance, which includes planning milestones and professional goals.

Another characteristic of a professional teacher, discussed by 6 participants, was *having clear and well-defined professional identity (self-perception)* (coded 11 times). Similar to the previously discussed theme of *prioritising the students’ learning over other duties and tasks*, this theme was mainly inferred from the participants’ statements, as opposed to them directly discussing their professional identity (self-perceptions) as such. Nevertheless, it appeared to be an important element of their sense of professionalism, which was evident in their discussions of threats to their professionalism in which they raised concerns about situations in which they were not treated as the professionals they believed to be (“we are treated like a QA professionals, and not TESOL professionals” – Participant 2). As Participant 1 explained, for example, “we see ourselves as teachers, mainly as teachers (…) but then the management (…) has a [different] view of the teachers here”. Several other teachers also had a clear view regarding their professional identity (self-perceptions), such as “I’m one of those people that actually [are] very strict” (Participant 6), or “we must see ourselves as a teacher

in a society, so that I keep my students at respectable distance while being with them" (Participant 5), and it seemed that such self-awareness helped them remain consistent and professional in their approach to students. Finally, Participant 28 believed that *being dedicated to the institution* in which one works makes him/her a professional:

> Then, you must contribute to the college, to the institution in your own little way, whether you want to become a part of the college. Show that you are interested in what the college is doing. So, you have to be committed, and dedicated not only to teaching, because there are so many activities in the college. You have to get involved. See, make sure that there's a recall on your name. You have to do something for the college (Participant 28).

5.2.2 Being treated as a professional teacher

As previously noted, it seemed that, for the participants, a crucial prerequisite of being a professional, or for developing *a sense of* being a professional, is *being treated as a professional* (coded 92 times across 24 interviews). This links back to the previously made argument that it seems that a match between the teachers' self-perceptions and other people's perceptions contributes to the teachers' sense of professionalism. Table 5.3 presents various dimensions of this sub-theme of the theme *conceptualisations and definitions of professionalism*.

Table 5.3: Theme: Conceptualisations and definitions of professionalism. Sub-theme 2: Being treated as a professional

Theme	Sub-theme	Dimensions (arranged by the number of times they appeared across the two phases)
Conceptualisations and definitions of professionalism	Being treated as a professional	Being trusted, involved and respected
		Having freedom and autonomy
		Professional development being encouraged
		Promotions and having your work recognised and appreciated
		Clarity about your professional development and career path
		High, but also clearly communicated expectations

Among the main aspects of *being treated as a professional* was *being trusted, involved and respected* (coded 38 times across 16 interviews). Such trust could be manifested, for example, in the management and people in charge taking the teacher's side in situations involving conflict either with other faculty members or students. In the case of Participant 9, for example, this was about a complaint having been made against her. As she explained, contrary to what he expected, the head of department "was supportive", "was not angry with me" and "he didn't take any official decision against me". This resulted in the teacher being "happy" and "motivated". Participant 11 explained in detail multiple other ways in which such trust and respect, which contribute to her overall sense of professionalism, are manifested:

> Many ways. My opinion is asked for. My views are considered relevant. Advice is asked from me. Helping, joining a team, asking for support from

> me. This all kind of shows me that I'm significantly relevant in the institution. So, there is a level of respect and understanding (Participant 11).

She also explained that management should have “faith and belief” in teachers to develop teaching materials.

When answering the interview question asking them whether they believe they are being treated as professionals in their institutions, several participants expressed similar views to the above, suggesting that the fact that they feel “valued [and] respected” (Participant 20) and “the administrators are really supportive of the teachers” (Participant 22) contribute to their sense of professionalism.

Finally, in addition to being trusted in terms of important decisions, Participant 28 also mentioned a more “humane” aspect of trust and respect from both management and work colleagues, namely “[respecting] me for who I am” and treating her in a nice and respectful way:

> I feel that my colleagues also respect me for who I am. They don't belittle you for what you can do or what you cannot do. They still respect you for who you are as a person. As a teacher, I feel I have this, my integrity and dignity, okay, they're intact. That's how I feel. They respect me, and they don't embarrass me (Participant 28).

Reflecting the previously discussed (see Section 5.2.1) views that professional teachers should be flexible and responsive to their students’ needs, as well as the above discussion of being trusted by the management to adapt teaching resources and methodologies, another sign of being treated as a professional was *having freedom and autonomy* (coded 29 times across 13 interviews). The *lack of* freedom and autonomy, in turn, was also at the basis of two of the three scenarios discussed later in this chapter (*class observations* and *limited*

autonomy to adjust and design teaching materials, reported in sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 respectively).

The participants believed that a professional teacher should be trusted to the extent where if he/she decides that certain teaching approaches or materials need to be changed, he/she can change them. As Participant 23 explained when discussing the previously discussed idea of being flexible and responsive to the students' needs,

> A good teacher is always adaptable, and he/ she has to adjust the pace, methodology and activities on the basis of current scenario. It is always advisable to have a lesson plan and it is not necessary that the teacher has to follow it literally (Participant 23)

It is clear from the above extract that not only does a professional teacher need to be responsive to the students' needs, but also, and most importantly, "it is not necessary that the teacher has to follow" a lesson plan closely, which indicates a high degree of autonomy that a professional teacher needs to be given. Participant 23 later explained that it is her belief that "I can change my lesson plan anytime I want". Participant 24, "as a person with decades of experience in teaching", also believed that "teachers should be given the freedom to determine the best ways to achieve the learning objectives". Also, "as its name suggests, the teachers' guide is only a document that gives one of the several ways in which the learning objectives can be achieved" (Participant 24).

When justifying the importance of being given autonomy, Participant 14 likened teaching to driving a car, where "you know the signs, you know how to react, but the accidents happen (…) and you have to react on the spot". Therefore, teachers "have to be autonomous" (Participant 27) and have to be able to do "whatever is necessary to achieve our learning outcome, learning or teaching or whatever".

Participant 27 believes, in fact, that “it is against teacher professionalism to stop them from preparing materials”, and Participant 15 explains that “if you want to reach professionalism, you have to have a certain level of freedom”.

Another aspect of being treated as a professional that the participants discussed was *professional development being encouraged* (coded 6 times across 4 interviews). Thus, similar to the notion of autonomy, professional development is something that both the teachers should aim for and the management should encourage them to engage with. When answering the question of whether they are being treated as professional teachers, three participants described how they were supported in their professional development, and one explained that she was not, justifying her response with the fact that her management does not provide her with opportunities to develop professionally and that “I can’t seem to move to another level for some reason”.

For others, having the management’s trust and support also meant being supported in both methodological and career decisions, as well as having their work recognised. This often results in *promotions and having your work appreciated* (coded 8 times across 3 interviews), which was another aspect of being treated as a professional that the participants discussed. When discussing his previous *work and teaching experience* (coded 30 times across 10 interviews), and then answering questions about his current position, Participant 10 frequently came to the topic of being recognised and promoted as marker of positive experiences. In his previous work, for example, he felt that “whenever I did something, they really appreciated my time, my effort, and it was a good experience working with them”. He, then, moved to his current institution where, after some time, he was promoted for the first time “because they saw my

abilities". Participants 4 and 7 expressed similar views, and directly stated that their work having been supported and appreciated fostered their sense of professionalism.

Two participants believed that *being treated as a professional* involves *clarity about your professional development and career path* (coded 8 times across 2 interviews). Thus, in addition to the previously discussed importance of promotions and career development, "if [progression opportunities and career path] are clearly communicated from the management to staff, (…) that would increase professionalism, and (…) the motivation of the people" (Participant 1).

Clear communication was also a prerequisite for *high, but also clearly communicated, expectations* (coded 3 times across 2 interviews), and those who commented believed that these expectations reflect how one is perceived by the management. As Participant 1 explained,

> I feel that I am treated professionally, in the sense that the expectations from me will be what will be expected from a professional, not from a person with a certificate travelling around the world just to see places which would be the main motive and not teaching (Participant 1).

5.2.3 Section summary

The participants' definitions and conceptualisations of professionalism involved the belief that the notion of professionalism encompasses both a way of acting and a way of being treated. In both cases, the participants discussed characteristics and actions that enabled the teachers to be fully responsive to their students' needs, as well as to develop skills and competencies that would help them address these needs. That to prioritise the students and their needs was the main aim of a professional teacher was also evident in the participants' discussions of their *reasons to become a teacher*, where "passion" (e.g.

Participant 20, Participant 22, Participant 15) and the desire to "impart some wisdom" (Participant 20) and "impart knowledge to others" (Participant 27) were commonly discussed.

Both the ways the teachers *act* and *are treated* seem to be equally important for the sense of professionalism, and this importance was further reflected in the participants' accounts of various experiences in which they felt their professionalism was undermined or compromised. Without understanding the above conceptualisations, it would not have been possible to fully understand why the particular events, reported in the following section, could be interpreted as a threat to the participants' sense of professionalism.

5.3 Phase 1 Results

This section presents the findings of Phase 1. These findings are related to: challenges and threats to teacher professionalism, the effects and consequences of compromised professionalism and teachers' responses to threats to professionalism.

5.3.1 Challenges and threats to professionalism

The accounts coded as *challenges and threats to professionalism* were given during Phase 1 interviews. Although Phase 2 participants did provide accounts that described challenging situations, they were focusing on hypothetical scenarios they were provided with and, therefore, these accounts were coded separately (see Section 5.4 for the discussion of these). Thus, as opposed to the more theoretical and hypothetical discussions of challenging situations that Phase 2 participants engaged in, the following discussion outlines the participants' accounts of "real" events that they experienced.

The participants discussed 13 challenges in total, and these, for the purpose of clarity, have been categorised into challenges related to *marginality of teachers and control of teaching,* those that had to do with *intensification of teachers work*, and those referring to *working conditions* (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Theme: Challenges and threats to professionalism

Theme	Sub-themes
Challenges and threats to professionalism	Sub-theme 1: Teachers' marginality and control of teaching
	Sub-theme 2: Intensification of teachers' work
	Sub-theme 3: Working conditions

The following sections (5.3.1.1 through 5.3.1.3) discuss each of the above sub-themes and their various dimensions in detail.

5.3.1.1 Teachers' marginality and control of teaching

Regarding teachers' *marginality and control of teaching* (coded 127 times across 10 interviews), as the table below illustrates, seven different challenges/threats were identified and the most discussed was *not being trusted, listened to or supported in decisions* (coded 32 times across 10 interviews).

Table 5.5: Theme: Challenges and threats to professionalism. Sub-theme 1: Teachers' marginality and control of teaching

Theme	**Sub-theme**	**Dimensions (arranged according to the number of times they appeared across Phase 1 interviews)**
Challenges & threats to professionalism	Sub-theme 1: Teachers' marginality and control of teaching	Not being trusted, listened to or supported in decisions
		Having your self-perceptions and identity put on the line
		Lack of autonomy and not being involved in decision making
		Having to work with poor, inappropriate or centralised teaching and learning resources
		Not being given opportunity to raise concerns
		Lack of training and professional development
		Lack of praise and acknowledgement of good work

Not being trusted, listened to or supported in decisions reflects the previously discussed importance of having the management's trust and support as part of being treated as a professional. Participant 1, for example, explained how he sought support from the management after he was given a task he was not qualified to do. Despite visiting the head of the centre's several times, however, the latter was not available and "she couldn't guide me" (Participant 1). Ultimately, he felt, this "puts emotional burden" on him (participant 1).

Participants 6, 8 and 9 in turn raised their concerns against the "sudden classroom observation" (Participant 8), which they perceived it as "a common problem" and ""unprofessional practice" (Participant 6) in their institutions because "they don't trust their teachers so they come suddenly to your class without prior notice to see if you are there or not" (Participant 8). Participant 9, described an experience in which she felt the observation of her teaching had been carried out in an unprofessional and disrespectful way as the observer came suddenly to the class, "he then interfered and took over the teaching". After raising her concerns to "the head of department and other colleagues", however, she did not feel she was supported or considered. "They heard me", as she explained, "and, yes, they did hear what I said", but failed to react, which led Participant 9 to believe she was not treated as a professional.

In the case of Participant 10, the issue lied in "the management" not considering the teacher's opinion and feedback regarding the books that should be used, and despite his and his colleagues' recommendation not to buy a particular textbook, this textbook was, in fact, eventually selected by those in charge.

All ten participants described their experiences of *not being trusted, listened to or supported in decisions* that resembled at least one of the three accounts reported above. In most cases, however, it was the sense of the lack of trust and support from "the management and administration" in situations where some kind of conflict occurred that the participants raised concerns about. Also, similar to Participant 10's account, several participants (e.g. Participant 2, 5 and 6) were also concerned about their feedback not being considered. Overall, this resulted in a sense that their voice is not being taken into consideration, which, they felt, undermined their professionalism.

Having your self-perceptions and identity put on the line

This leads to another threat to professionalism, namely *having your self-perceptions and identity put on the line* (coded 38 times across 9 interviews). Reflecting the previously discussed importance of the teachers' self-perceptions and the match between these self-perceptions and the way they were treated and perceived by others, the participants raised concerns about situations in which they experienced a kind of an identity conflict. Often, these accounts were also coded with the previously discussed *not being trusted, listened to or supported*. Such was the case, for example, with the aforementioned situation in which Participant 9's lesson observation was carried out in way which she felt undermined her professionalism. This included not only her not being given the chance to defend certain methodological decisions, but also the "visit to my classroom was sudden without a prior notice" and observant was interrupting and "taking over" the class to explain something to the students. Moreover, "I felt untrusted on my expertise when he criticised me on my teaching approach and insisted on to adhere to the teacher's book methodology" which she believes "is not appropriate to my students learning styles". Participant 9 experienced *having your self-perceptions and identity put on the line* at that point, as she felt her professionalism was openly questioned and undermined. She explained that "I felt like an idiot that day. I was not happy".

Participant 2 reported that as a result of the aforementioned expectation to carry out quality assurance, "we all feel that we are treated like a QA professionals and not TESOL professionals", which also indicates a discrepancy between how the teachers self-perceive themselves and how they are being treated.

Participant 3, in turn, was required to follow certain marking criteria with which he did not agree, and he felt that "my professionalism [was] compromised and my experience has not been acknowledged" because he was not given a chance to object or to suggest a better, in his opinion, way of marking. He described this experience as "one of the worst" experienced he had as a teacher, which indicates the impact of having one's sense professionalism undermined by the management.

Several other participants discussed situations in which they experienced similar conflicts of identity, with Participant 4, for example, reporting how he was given a warning as a result of student complaint, and the fact that he was not given an opportunity to defend himself, and that the management took the student's side, resulted in him feeling that he was not treated as a professional. The whole experience, as he explained, left "a black mark in my life". Participant 5, in turn, had his report on the Institution's Academic Security and Invigilation [Institutional Standard Assessment Criteria 2.9] edited and proofread by a lecturer at the engineering department, which, he felt, was a threat to his status as a professional English language teacher.

Lack of autonomy and not being involved in decision making

Having yourself-perception and identity put on the line in the above situation also links to a broader issue of the *lack of autonomy and not being involved in decision making* (coded 20 times across 8 interviews) which, not surprisingly, was a factor that posed a threat to the teachers' sense of professionalism. In general, the participants felt that "there isn't much room for staff input" (Participant 6) when it comes to decision making. This involved being "not at all involved in decision making regarding the textbook or course material" (Participant 5) that are to be

officially included in the curriculum, as well as not having autonomy regarding the more spontaneous selection of materials, handouts and teaching approach for a particular class. As Participant 7 and 9 explained,

> We are not given the freedom to use any handouts from outside in the course foundation. It's like, stick to the book and if you want to use a handout, but you can make a handout, no problem, but it has to be approved by the coordinator and only then you can use it in the classroom (...) They think we're not that professional enough to make our own handouts or use our own knowledge and skill to give a classroom practice to our own students. Everything has to be approved by the management or the coordinator we can say, for example. So, you're not to be given that much freedom (Participant 7).

> I don’t think we are treated like professionals in this college. Because they don’t trust your knowledge and expertise. We are not allowed to utilise the teaching methods that we think is appropriate for our students and we have to stick to what is in the teacher’s book. I told you about that day when Mr. [removed for anonymity] visited my class. I was teaching present perfect through examples on the board and handout. He was not happy with my approach as I am teaching the grammar in isolation and said “you should not deviate from the teacher’s guide procedures” so I am forced to adhere to the integrative approach described in the teacher’s book which I believe maybe be suitable for other students in other contexts but not here (Participant 9).

As Participant 7 explains above, the feeling is that “they [the management] think we’re not that professional enough”, since “the management” do not allow the teachers to develop their own materials or to use the adequate teaching methodology. Considering the teachers’ previously discussed concern with their students’ needs, as well as their passion for teaching and reasons to become a teacher, such lack of autonomy is, understandably, likely to affect their sense of professionalism. As Participants 7 and 9 later explained, their main concern is that being deprived of autonomy in these situations limits the teachers’ abilities to respond to the needs of specific students in specific classes. Participant 2 expressed similar views, when she commented on “having a common lesson

plan". As she further explained, "every teacher should have his or her own lesson plan", and this lesson plan should be tailored to the students' "level of learning and level of language".

Having to work with poor, inappropriate or centralised teaching and learning resources

As noted previously, when the lack of teacher autonomy was discussed, *having to work with poor, inappropriate or centralised teaching and learning resources* (coded 24 times across 4 interviews) was also reported. Several participants raised concerns about the textbooks and other materials not being suitable for their students and their teaching contexts in general as they are "Anglo American textbooks sold by common publishers" Participant 5. Thus, "they don't know our culture, our students, their background, their difficulties" (Participant 10). The four participants also stressed on the point that some of the materials they had been given are not appropriate for the cultural context in which they teach. As Participant 6 reported,

> The other day I was teaching my speaking practice class and we have pictures the students are supposed to describe. I opened the pictures and some of the pictures have people drinking wine. Culturally inappropriate, completely… As a person who has taught in the Gulf for seven years, I know these pictures are culturally inappropriate… It was like, how do I, as a teacher, as a mother, how do I deviate from this. At the end of the day the coordinator has already said these pictures were sent from Muscat [she means from the ministry]. They are the Holy Grail, we cannot touch them. Everything is sent from Muscat but I can see it's culturally inappropriate. I shouldn't be showing pictures of people having fun and drinking wine to level one students, 18 years old. Unless, I'm in America or any other place where that behaviour is normal way. By the age of 18 they would have had their first drink already, but not in this context (Participant 6).

Thus, not only are these materials simply not relevant, sometimes they are "far-fetched (…) [and] inappropriate too" (Participant 5). Also if you are looking at the

materials and the exams, “in most cases our exams have nothing to do with what we are doing in the book” (Participant 6). Additionally the exams and learning objectives were also reported to be “controlled [and] analysed by the Ministry” (Participant 10). These, coupled with the previously discussed lack of autonomy to introduce changes, results in the teachers feeling that “they are not being treated professionally because of this thing” (Participant 10).

Lack of training and professional development

Lack of training and professional development (coded 6 times across 3 interviews) referred mostly to the lack of instruction on how to conduct the afterward discussed extra tasks, as well as the lack of training for “new teachers” (Participant 5) in terms of general requirements and responsibilities in the workplace.

Additionally, although, arguably, this issue has been emerging in many other discussed issues, one person openly stated that *lack of praise and acknowledgement of good work* (coded once) was a factor that poses a threat to the sense of professionalism.

5.3.1.2 Intensification of teachers’ work

Another sub-theme of *challenges and threats to professionalism*, *intensification of teachers’ work* (coded 127 times across 10 interviews, see Table 5.6), related to how the teachers’ work was organised and what was required of them.

Table 5.6: Theme: Challenges and threats to professionalism. Sub-theme 2: Intensification of teachers' work

Theme	Sub-theme	Dimensions (arranged according to the number of times they appeared across Phase 1 interviews)
Challenges and threats to professionalism	Sub-theme 2: Intensification of teachers' work	Being asked to do things not related to your expertise
		Unrealistic workloads

As the following two sub-sections demonstrate, the teachers raised concerns about the scope of their responsibilities and their timetables. Reflecting the previously discussed findings related to conceptualisations of professionalism, they did not feel that the way their work is organised either reflects how professional teachers should *be treated* or gives the teachers a chance to *act* professionally.

Being asked to do things not related to your expertise

Being asked to do things not related to your expertise (coded 40 times across 9 interviews) was one of the two challenges that contributed to the intensification of teachers work. The participants who commented raised concerns specifically about being involved in tasks related to quality assurance. Not only they reported not being qualified to do this, they were often asked to undertake these tasks outside their normal working hours, often on Saturdays. Reflecting on the previously discussed attitudes that prioritised the students' needs, the participants raised concerns that these tasks affect their "prime duty" (Participant 9), which is to teach. As Participant 1 explained, "I feel almost like a truck driver who's put [in] the seat but [doesn't] have a licence, so I'm going to drive the truck

however I can (…) hopefully not causing an accident”. Importantly, because the participants were aware that unlike “in my classroom, [where] I’m considered as a professional teacher” (Participant 5), they are not considered as such when doing these extra tasks, they felt their sense of professionalism was affected. They were “not very sure of [their] roles” (Participant 7) and felt “dejected” and “ashamed that I am asked to do something which I do not know” (Participant 5).

Unrealistic workloads

Unrealistic workloads (coded 32 times across 9 interviews) were another challenge, and it often, though not exclusively, related to the aforementioned *being asked to do things not related to your expertise.* The participants believed that “because of the extra duties” (Participant 1) on top of classroom teaching, they could not focus on what they believed to be their main responsibility- teaching. They often had to do this work during weekends because there was not enough time during the week. According to their descriptions, these “extra duties” included a variety of tasks, such as “documenting your work and activities for quality assurance inspections ”, “participating in various committees”, including quality assurance, “attending department’s and committees meetings”, “doing one to one tutorials”, “conducting remedial classes for low achieving students”, “preparing students’ progress reports”, “observing, recording and reporting students attendance”. In addition, several participants raised concerns about the previously discussed quality assurance. As previously noted, and as will be evident in the discussion of the *effects and consequences of compromised professionalism* (see Section 5.3.2), the main concern was that they often had to do this on weekends and generally outside their teaching hours. As Participant 5 noted, “many teachers involved in this work come here on Saturdays and work

till very late in the evening, even at night”. In the following extracts, Participants 1 and 5 described their workload and raises their concerns about not having been given any choice as to whether they were willing to take on these additional tasks:

> As I said, I have to come in on Saturday and do this work. Now I'm assigned to be part of this committee to write ethics and biosafety documents for the college. I don't think I was given a choice in the first place. I don't think I'll be given a choice later on. Even if I object, it's not going to change anything. They just need a name there, and they want the job to be delivered somehow (Participant 1).

> In addition to my teaching load, I was appointed as criterion in -charge of Institutional Standards Assessment Criteria 2.9 which is Academic Security and Invigilation, without any prior notification. I was supposed to collect documents from all the college’s departments and to write a report about the last four years. The job was appointed to me by the college management and quality assurance department without my knowledge and consent. When I came to know it from another department unofficially, I informed this matter to my authorities in the English Language Centre, they silenced me rather. I had to comply with it against my will. This is what happened. I felt sad that I am not treated as a professional here (Participant 5).

5.3.1.3 Working conditions

Another challenge that constitutes a threat to the teachers’ professionalism, and one that has been emerging throughout the above discussion were the *working conditions* (coded 71 times across 6 interviews) that the teachers face at the Colleges of Technology. As Table 5.7 demonstrates, the issues related to working conditions, in turn, can be divided into several additional categories.

Table 5.7: Theme: Challenges and threats to professionalism. Sub-theme 3: Working conditions

Theme	Sub-theme	Dimensions (arranged according to the number of times they appeared across Phase 1 interviews)
Challenges and threats to professionalism	Sub-theme 3: Working conditions	Poor or unprofessional communication within the institution
		Being disrespected and threatened
		Constant fear of losing the job - job insecurity
		Favouritism, unequal treatment and discrimination
		Poor scheduling

Poor or unprofessional communication within the institution

Poor or unprofessional communication within the institution (coded 33 times across 6 interviews) was the most discussed challenge related to this sub-theme. Such poor communication was evident in the majority of the described negative experiences, and it involved the general confusion about policies and responsibilities, the teachers' voices not being considered, the lack of respect for the teachers or the lack of platform for the teachers to express their views, to name a few. As Participant 1 explained, "there's no clear communication routes between us and the management", important instructions and decisions tend to be sent through emails, and when he "went back several times to the [Head of the English Language Centre] office to seek clarifications, I wasn't able to see the person who assigned the task". As evident throughout this section, the poor

communication is also reflected in the way the teachers are assigned extra responsibilities and in how their feedback regarding the teaching materials is not being considered. Several participants also explained that new policies are being introduced without their "knowledge and consent" (Participant 5), and the teachers constantly find themselves in situations in which they feel confused at their new tasks and responsibilities because of this. Finally, several accounts coded as *poor or unprofessional communication within the institution* overlapped with the theme of *not being given the opportunity to raise concerns* (coded 6 times across 4 interviews), as the participants felt that, considering all of the above, what was another problem is that "there is no room for teacher to air their grievances" (Participant 3).

Being disrespected and threatened

Not only did the participants not have the opportunity and platform to raise their concerns, including those related to their new tasks that they were expected to undertake outside the teaching hours, six participants explained that they were *being disrespected and threatened* (coded 10 times) in order to accept these responsibilities. A common complaint, made by five participants, was that they had been told they would "lose [their] summer holiday" (Participant 1) if they fail to show up during the weekend. Participant 5 was called to present at the college academic council but "insulted and embarrassed by one of the members" as his report on QA was not adequately written. Additionally, Participant 2 explained that she was threatened not to ask for a pay rise.

Constant fear of losing the job - job insecurity

This links to another challenge, namely the *constant fear of losing the job - job insecurity* (coded 13 times across 6 interviews) that several participants

discussed. In some situations, the participants were directly threatened. Such was the case with Participant 2 above, who was told that “they [the management] can end the contracts” if the teachers ask for a pay rise. In other cases, this was more subtle. Nevertheless, the participants felt that their position is not secure. As Participant 1 noted, “you are not considered like a professional teacher, (…) and you might not have your contract renewed”, and a common feeling was that “I have to comply with the rules of the college, otherwise I will lose my job” (Participant 4). This raises concerns about the way the teachers are being treated, and as Participant 6 put it, “it’s not a healthy environment” and “there is a sense of fear”.

Favouritism, unequal treatment and discrimination

Favouritism, unequal treatment and discrimination (coded 15 times across 4 interviews) was another discussed threat to professionalism. The four participants who commented, discussed different treatment that teachers from different countries received, mainly in terms of how much they were being paid, with native English speakers believed to be paid most as Participants 4 which is from one of the Indian sub-continents put it:

> *I am employed by a company here and I know there are plenty of teachers who work under companies. We are all here to do the same job: teaching. But, we are not paid the same way. Like, our salaries are entirely different. The person who sits next to me, gets 300 to 400 Rials [around $700 to $1,000] more than me. They based this on where you are coming from, which country you are from. This is discrimination. And, it's really frustrating and highly unprofessional (Participant 4).*

Additionally, the participants reported that there are differences in the salaries between them as they belong to different companies as asserted by Participant 5:

> Apart from this [Native via Non-native], companies differentiate between the teachers. My company may give a certain salary for me, and for another staff from my country maybe given a different salary by another company.

> Staff from the same social background or from the same nationality receive different salaries when they are with different companies. The workload remains the same. This is injustice (Participant 5).

Moreover, Participants 9 &10 are Omani teachers employed by a company. They explained that there are also discrepancies between the teachers employed directly by the Ministry of Manpower and those employed through the companies:

> I am local Omani recruited by a company and have some Omani colleagues having the same duties but recruited by the ministry. There is big difference between my salary and theirs. So I think it's very clear for everyone who knows this, it is not fair (Participant 10).

In additions to the above problems the recruiting criteria at CoTs do not only discriminate teachers in terms of whether they are native or non-native, but also on the qualification as Participant 4 stated that, "non-native English teachers require at least an M.A. or Ph.D. to secure a job in TESL/TESOL in Oman whereas for native they only ask for a BA". Two other participants 5 and 6 added that "some qualifications and qualities are set as prerequisite for non-native such as language teaching backgrounds and level of education and training, aspirations and career prospects" (Participant 5). Participant 6 further commented that "this treatment is demotivating and does not encourage innovativeness and creativity in the non-native speakers of English language (Participant 6).

Poor scheduling

Finally, Participants 1, 2 and 3 raised concerns about the *poor scheduling,* particularly the way "sports day" was handled at their institution. This is something important to discuss because as they described it unlike in the past, when teachers were not required to teach on that day, at present this practice is changed as they were required to first participate in various activities and then,

when “everybody will be sweating” (Participant 2), to teach their classes. The participants’ perception was that this alone was a threat to their sense of professionalism for two reasons, first, “as teachers we need to be fresh and tidy in front of our students” (Participant 2). Second, “the change in the practice and the scheduling of this day [sports day] was announced suddenly on the same day and was not communicated clearly to all staff” (Participant 1). Thus, some teachers remained in the playground on that day “but the next day we were found faulty as people who skipped the classes and accused for not having professional integrity and then were asked to conduct the lost classes” (Participant 3).

5.3.1.4 Section summary

It was argued in this section that the challenges and threats to professionalism that the participants discussed could be divided into those related to teachers’ marginality and control of teaching, intensification of teachers’ work and working conditions. It was also argued that these challenges were believed to constitute a threat to the teachers’ sense of professionalism, and throughout the chapter references were made to the previously discussed conceptualisations of professionalism in order to demonstrate why this was the case.

What also emerged in the process of data analysis was that, through affecting the teachers’ sense of professionalism, these challenges also had several other, sometimes indirect, effects on the teachers’ personal and professional life, as well as psychological effects on their well-being. Therefore, to provide an in-depth insight into the extent to which sense of professionalism ultimately affects a professional’s life, the following section discusses these various *effects and consequences of compromised professionalism*.

5.3.2 Effects and consequences of compromised professionalism.

Table 5.8 outlines the various effects and consequences that the participants believed the compromised professionalism to have.

Table 5.8: Theme: Effects and consequences of compromised professionalism

Theme	**Sub-themes (arranged according to the number of times they appeared across Phase 1 interviews)**
Effects and consequences of compromised professionalism	Stress and frustration
	Effects on personal life
	Affected motivation
	Affected quality of teaching
	Confusion
	Affected health and well-being
	Affected staff retention
	Affected work relationships

As Table 5.8 demonstrates, *stress and frustration* (coded 39 times across 9 interviews) were the most mentioned effects of these negative experiences. Although 39 statements made by 9 participants were interpreted and coded as describing stress and frustration resulting from these experiences, these emotions were, arguably, underlying more statements than this, which was evident not only in the content of the interviews but also in the participants' manner of speech when they recollected these experiences during the interviews. As the following discussion will demonstrate, emotions such as "being under

pressure" (Participant 7), feeling "tensed" (Participant 4) and "desperate" (Participant 3), or the sense of "emotional burden" (Participant 1) and "loss" (Participant 5), were commonly reported.

Effects on personal life (coded 32 times across 8 interviews), for example, were widely discussed, and these discussions mainly concerned both the generally heavy workload and the previously mentioned quality assurance responsibilities that required working during weekends. As Participant 2 explained, "we have to sit at home, work at night, we come here during every weekend". Although, as she says, her "official" workday is 7 hours long, there is "not a single day that I have worked for 7 hours". She explained that she often comes to work before 10 am and leaves before 10 pm, and when she goes home, she needs to do some more work there. In the following extract, she explained the extent to which her unrealistic workload affects her personal life:

> I don't have any social life. We don't go out and mingle with our friends. Because even when we go home, we work at home. We have to sit till 12:30, 1:30 at night to finish our work. And every weekend we come here, Fridays and Saturdays, to do our work. Otherwise, we won't be able to finish, or we won't be able to meet the deadlines. So, we don't get time to look after our children. We don't get enough time to be with them. And, it's unfair, actually. We are not doing justice to our family (Participant 2).

Similarly, Participant 1 explained that while the "work/life balance" resulting from teaching tasks is good, the additional extra tasks required of the teachers result in them having no time left for their families:

> I think teaching work/life balance was fine, but with these extra like duties, it's not working anymore…It's already too much to bear, so there's really not so much of a social life to plan for. So the amount of time you plan to spend with your family or the emotional-like relief after work is not there, because people are stressed too much at work that they cannot feel relief when they go back to their families, or spend some time at the weekend, because they

> know a last minute task will be delegated and they will have to come back on Saturday or they might have cancelled their summer holiday.

Other participants provided very similar accounts. Participant 3, for example, also explained how the workload and the unrealistic number of extra tasks the teachers are expected to complete affect, essentially, “everything”:

> And, being with their children or their family, they are devoting time for correcting papers and doing the extra work (...) That's the weekend. They have no time for family, for their social life and also, they may have some medical issues. So, they have to attend to and do all this (…) In profession, in personal life, definitely it's going to affect a lot. It's going to affect family life. It's going to affect social life. It's going to affect your health. Everything. A lot of other things too (Participant 3).

Similar concerns were shared by others who commented on this topic - they had to spend too much time at work, and when they were at home, they still had to do some more work. They reported “missing” their family (Participant 5) and “sacrificing” (Participant 8) their personal life, which may raise concerns about the teachers’ overall psychological well-being.

In light of not only the experiences described above, but also the previously discussed negative experiences, it did not come as a surprise that the participants reported *affected motivation* (coded 22 times across 6 interviews) as one of the effects of the experienced challenges. For Participant 1, the absence of the previously discussed (see Section 5.2) “clear guidelines on how we are to progress in the future” was the first reason his motivation had been affected. Earlier in the interview, he discussed in detail the important, in his opinion, role that the previously discussed (see Section 5.2.1) *continuous professional development and career planning* plays in establishing his sense of professionalism, so it was not surprising to see that he felt his motivation was affected in a situation in which he was not able to carry out such detailed planning.

Participants 10 and 6 also linked the *affected motivation* to the issue of professional development. Participant 6, for example, explained that she was not allowed to attend a conference that she believed would have contributed to her professional growth. She also explained that it is difficult and not practical to receive funding to do research, and even if one would succeed, “why would you want to spend time doing research when you are still going to be overloaded with teaching load”. Thus, although some professional development opportunities are present in theory, in practice it is not feasible to focus on professional growth due to the workload and several other practical challenges. As a result, the faculty are “slowly getting demotivated and not growing” (Participant 6).

Other participants who commented on *affected motivation* also discussed how the way classroom observation was conducted in their institutions affected their motivation (Participants 6, 8 and 9). For example Participant 9 explained how an “unprofessionally and unethically” conducted classroom observation affected her motivation. As previously noted, during the observation, the person conducting the evaluation interfered with Participant 9 and attempted to teach her students, as, he assumed, they had difficulties understanding concepts taught by Participant 9. As a result, Participant 9 felt “ignored”, and she believes such practices are “very demotivating for a teacher and (…) the classroom atmosphere”. Participant 2 also discussed the workload, and how it “affects [teachers] morale”.

Affected quality of teaching (coded 17 times across 5 interviews) was also discussed, and this seemed particularly important in light of the previously cited discussions in which it was clear that teaching, and addressing the students' needs, were the teachers' priorities and aspects of teaching that defined their

sense of professionalism. What the teachers felt affects the quality of teaching the most was both the nature and the volume of the previously discussed tasks not related to teaching. Participant 2, for example, was concerned that "the most important work that I am supposed to be concentrated on [i.e. teaching], I'm not able to do that", and this feeling was shared by other participants. Participant 3, for example, explained that having to do work during the weekends "definitely affects the quality of teaching, because teachers have too many things to do". He further explained,

> They [teachers] have to focus on their teaching, they have to focus on other things. So, 100% output is not in the class. So, teaching is affected (…) Apart from that, they are also asked to do their main profession: teaching. Now, what is happening is, the main task is forgotten, and the secondary task is given more focus (Participant 3).

Participant 4 shared this view, noting that as the result of "introducing six different things, seven different things", "we go literally out of control [and] this affects the quality of teaching and our morale". He then, explains how this unrealistic workload, through affecting the teachers' physical health and motivation to work, ultimately affects the quality of teaching:

> Again, because we don't get enough time for preparing for the classes, number one. Number two, it affects the teacher's health there, because the teacher has to carry the work home, and then it's extra work. Then another one, the next day when the teacher comes to the class, the teacher becomes tired. Because constantly thinking. Another one is when you do something which you don't like, it will affect you and the quality of that work (Participant 4).

For both Participant 3 and Participant 8, what specifically affected the quality of their teaching was the requirement to participate in the previously mentioned sports day. Participant 8 explained that eventually it becomes unclear which tasks to prioritise ("Where is my priority? Is it teaching or participating in the sports?"),

and "it affects teachers as well as students". Reflecting these comments, 3 Participants discussed *confusion* (coded 6 times), about the definition of their role and responsibilities, as one of the results of the changing view of teacher professionalism:

> People are confused about the definition of their role and key responsibilities. Our responsibility, prime responsibility, is it teaching? Is it preparing for the QA processes? Is it writing documents? Is it the administrative tasks that we are sometimes delegated with? What is our role? How is it perceived? Because we perceive ourselves a certain way, but then the management, I understand has a changing view of the teachers here, as I was trying to explain (Participant 1).

Affected health and well-being (coded 8 times across 2 interviews) was discussed by two participants, and it was believed to directly result from the unrealistic workload that was previously discussed. As Participant 1 pointed out, "if the pressure feels like too much, I will, of course, look at other options". Participant 6 made a similar point when she noted that "if I'm going to be subjected to this, I may just as well move to Southeast Asia where I'm going to be treated in a professional way".

Finally, *affected work relationships* were mentioned by 2 participants (and coded 4 times) who believed that the stressful experiences they described affect both the relationships between the management and the employees and between work colleagues ("No socialising here because we don't have time" – Participant 4).

5.3.2.1 Section summary

It was argued in this section that the compromised sense of professionalism, affected by the challenges discussed in Section 5.3.1, has a direct effect on a number of aspects of teachers' personal and professional lives. It can also be

argued, with care taken not to discuss qualitative findings with *quantitative* terms and phrases, that there is a two-directional relationship between being a professional teacher and the affected sense of professionalism, as the effects of compromised professionalism link back to *skills and characteristics of a professional teacher* discussed in Section 5.2.1. It is not difficult to imagine, for example, that a stressed and frustrated teacher, whose health and well-being, motivation or the quality of teaching has been affected, will find it hard to dedicate him/herself to prioritising the students' needs or being flexible and responsive.

Considering a number of threats to professionalism that have been discussed in this current study, as well as the effects of these threats, outlined in this section, it is important to discuss the participants' reactions, or lack thereof, to these threats, in order to draw implications for future practice. The following section discusses the findings related to the participants *responding to threats to professionalism.*

5.3.3 Responding to threats to professionalism.

Eight participants in total discussed the topic of *responding to threats to professionalism* (coded 46 times across 8 interviews). Importantly, however, as Table 5.9 demonstrates, only a small minority of the codes included in this theme covered the accounts describing the actual *responses* to threats of professionalism, as opposed to the codes describing the *lack of response*.

Table 5.9: Theme: Responding to threats to professionalism

Theme	How many participants discussed it	How many times the theme appeared across all interviews
Responding to threats to professionalism	8	39
Reasons for the lack of formal response	8	27
Being afraid of the consequences	8	20
Not believing that this would help	3	5
Not having a platform to raise concerns effectively	2	2
Employing avoidance strategies	4	7
Gossiping and discussing with colleagues	3	5
Addressing those in charge	2	5
Open dialogue with those involved	1	1
Publicising the issue	1	1

Regarding the responses to threats to professionalism, 4 participants discussed *employing avoidance strategies* (coded 7 times across 4 interviews), which involved either deliberately performing poorly in the required tasks or not undertaking these tasks at all and justifying this with the lack of relevant skill. As Participant 1 explained when discussing the former, “this is very well practiced by many staff in this college”. As he further explained,

> If you don't want the extra task, then what you do is you fail the first time. That's what I've learned in my time with institutions. For example, if you ask me to do a task and I do it excellently. That means you are going to come back to me and ask me to do it again, or an extra one. Because I'm capable. Whereas, my next colleague, if he or she fails, then you won't go to him or her, because she's not capable (…) the management knows and remembers that particular staff has the ability to do it, rather forcing others

> to take to take the responsibility of doing certain task. In terms of the teaching, I think people are forming small cliques, and they do sloppy work, just to avoid receiving more (Participant 1).

Participant 6 also discussed how some teachers “will decide, OK, I will do it, but I will not do it well”, and explained that “it’s easier to do that than to reason with the policy makers”. This raises questions about the previously discussed challenges, such as *lack of autonomy and not being involved in decision making, not being trusted, listened to or supported in decisions* or *not being given opportunity to raise concerns*. It appears that that rather than start some kind of a dialogue with the management, the participants find it easier to employ such avoidance strategies.

With regard to the second “escaping mechanism” (Participant 2), “some people are pretending that they are ignorant about these things and so they will not be given any serious responsibility” (Participant 2). In other words, they state straight away that they are not qualified and skilled enough to do a given task, even if this is not true.

Another “reaction” which, however, can hardly be referred to as a “response”, was *gossiping and discussing with colleagues* (coded 5 times across 3 interviews). Three participants mentioned “people questioning and complaining to each other in the staff rooms and in the lounge” (Participant 1).

The minority of participants did discuss “responses” to threats to professionalism, and two participants described *addressing those in charge* (coded 5 times across 2 interviews). When discussing the issue of poor or irrelevant textbooks that had been imposed on the teachers, Participant 2 explained that she and her colleagues “have already given our feedback through the administration (…) to Muscat”. Participant 10, in turn, mentioned approaching “these people in the

Ministry" regarding the aforementioned unequal pay. Apart from these two accounts, however, no participants reported taking formal action involving those in charge.

Participant 10 also provided the only account coded as *open dialogue with those involved.* When recalling an experience of teaching in another institution in the past, he mentioned an "Indian lady [who] was promoted as Acting Director for English Language Centre", and who treated him unfairly, in his opinion. As a result, he directly confronted this person, which resulted in the change in this person's behaviour.

Another reaction that the same participant discussed was *publicising the issue,* which directly referred to the problem of unequal pay mentioned above. Following the complaints to the ministry, he explained, "we didn't have any choice other than using social media (…) to tell the public that there is something unfair here". He explained, however, that this step did not bring about any changes either.

As noted at the beginning of this section, the majority of coded extracts were, in fact, about the lack of reaction, and extracts coded as *reasons for the lack of formal response* (coded 27 times across 8 interviews) explain why "the only chance for teachers is to complain to themselves in the staff rooms" (Participant 3).

The most common reason why, according to the participants, neither themselves nor their colleagues officially responded to the discussed threats to professionalism was *being afraid of the consequences* (coded 20 times across 8 interviews). This reflected the previously discussed (see Section 5.3.1) *constant fear of losing the job* that the participants believed to constitute a threat to their sense of professionalism. Reflecting that fear, the majority of the interviewees

explained that people do not react to the described threats and challenges specifically because “they had to maintain level of income” (Participant 10). Most also agree that “if [the teachers] had an alternative today, they would’ve left” (Participant 10). At the moment, however, “there is no chance of resisting” (Participant 3). People are afraid that if they do resist, or raise concerns publicly, they will either lose their job or “it becomes a black mark on you” (Participant 4), “a person who comes out and speaks first will be always a scapegoat, he will be targeted. So, there's a kind of feeling in everyone who... as the saying goes, "Who will tie the bell to the cat?" (Participant 3). When talking about the low wages, Participant 5 explained that “since I have to continue my job, I comply with it” and that “companies will kick you out if you don’t agree to their norms”, and all who commented shared this view.

Coupled with this fear of the consequences, and of losing the job specifically, simply *not believing that this would help* (coded 5 times across 3 interviews) was another reason for the lack of reaction. Even if the participants did not fear for their job, they thought “the administration doesn’t want to listen” to their concerns and that you “are not taken into consideration” (Participant 3). After having had negative experiences with raising their concerns, it seems, the teachers gave up trying to change the situation, not believing that they would succeed.

Finally, 2 participants discussed *not having a platform to raise concerns effectively* (coded twice), noting that “I don’t think we have a good level of communication about these things” (Participant 1) and that “there is no room for teachers to air their grievances” (Participant 3).

5.3.3.1 Section summary

It is clear from the above discussion that the participants' responses to threats to professionalism were limited. Most of sub-themes of *responding to threats of professionalism* describe the reasons for *the lack of* response, and among the remaining responses the most discussed were gossiping and employing avoidance strategies, neither of which can be argued to be a formal response that one would expect.

When given the above results, one could argue, perhaps, that the teachers' lack of reaction and their limited accounts describing specific ways in which one could react may simply imply their limited awareness of *how to react*. However, that this was not the case became evident when the results of Phase 2 interviews were analysed. As demonstrated in the following sections, it emerged that when speaking *hypothetically* about reacting to scenarios which were, in fact, a reflection of the many challenging situations the participants discussed in Phase 1 interviews, the participants provided long and detailed responses as to how they *would* react to these scenarios.

5.4 Phase 2 results - Policies that undermine the teachers' professionalism

In sections 5.4.1 through 5.4.3 the focus will be on the participants' discussions of the three scenarios that were developed as a result of the initial analysis of Phase 1 results (see Section 4.5.4 in Chapter Four for a more detailed discussion of how these scenarios were developed and why). As noted in Chapter Four, having the participants refer to these hypothetical scenarios was believed to offer them emotional safety and comfort, as discussing something merely *in theory* enabled them to distance themselves from this situation, without the burden of

having to take the responsibility for discussing your “real” actions. It was hoped that this way the participants would be “braver” to discuss the reactions to these scenarios for, as noted in the previous section, hardly any reactions were reported in Phase 1 of the study. It was also hoped to help the researcher assess how the participants think another person would react; or how they would react, if there were no consequences.

Table 5.10 demonstrates *policies that undermine the teachers’ professionalism* (coded 876 times across 20 interviews), each of which represents one of the scenarios the participants were asked to comment on (see Appendix 9 for the detailed version of Phase 2 thematic framework).

Table 5.10: Theme: Policies that undermine teacher professionalism

Theme	**Sub-themes (arranged according to the number of times they appeared across Phase 2 interviews)**
Policies that undermine the teachers’ professionalism	Class observations
	Limited autonomy to adjust and design teaching materials
	Work distribution and planning

The following sections are devoted to the three scenarios, each of which represent one major issue experienced by teachers. Thus, *class observations, limited autonomy to adjust and design teaching materials* and *work distribution and planning* are discussed in sections 5.4.1, 5.4.2 and 5.4.3, respectively. Within each of the three scenarios, four themes are discussed, namely *issues, effects, suggested reactions* and *how to improve the current practices*.

5.4.1 Class observations

In this scenario presented to the participants, “Ms. Hanna”, who “found that teaching grammar in isolation is more adequate for the students than the integrative approach”, is having her class observed. Importantly, however, the observer arrived without notice, halfway through the lesson. He, then, asks the teacher for the lesson plan and goes around the class asking the students for feedback on Ms. Hanna’s teaching methods. In the post-lesson discussion, the observer raises concerns about her teaching approach, pointing to the fact that it is not in line with the methods recommended in the teacher’s guide, as well as criticises Ms. Hanna for falling behind with her professional progression. At the same time, Ms, Hanna is not given a chance to defend her methodological decisions (see Appendix 7 for the full scenario).

Table 5.11 outlines sub-themes of the *class observations* (coded 389 times across 20 interviews) theme that emerged in Phase 2 discussions, and the following sub-sections discuss these sub-themes.

Table 5.11: Theme: Class observations

Scenarios	Themes	Dimensions
Scenario 1 The classroom observation	Issues arising from scenario 1	disturbing the order of the lesson without notice
		belittling and questioning the teacher in front of the class
		teacher not [being] given a chance to defend and explain
		disrespectful attitude
		sending wrong signals about the purpose of the observation
	Effects arising from scenario 1	affected self-esteem and self-perceptions
		affected motivation
		affected trust
	Suggested reactions to scenario 1	request a meeting to discuss, defend and negotiate the teacher's point of view
		confront the observer immediately
		let the observer teach the class
		not let the observer teach the class
		not allow the observer to enter the class late
		leave the classroom once the observer takes over the teaching
		try to explain to students what is happening
		not agree to approve the observation
	Improving the current practices	improve and standardise the observation protocol
		give the teachers a chance to explain and justify their approach
		train the observers better
		be clear about the purposes of observation
		give formal notice about upcoming observations
		get involved in improving the teachers' future practices
		have more than one observer

5.4.1.1 Overview of the problems

The participants first discussed several *issues* (coded 184 times across 20 interviews) underlying the presented scenario, and the most discussed issue was *disturbing the order of the lesson without notice* (coded 61 times across 19 interviews). The first problem with this was that the observer "didn't do much seeing because he came at the end of the lesson" (Participant 11). Apart from the fact that it was simply disrespectful to do so, as he did not have the opportunity to see Ms Hanna's teaching from the beginning, his criticism of her methods was not justified. Therefore, they believed that "it's unprofessional, highly unprofessional on the part of the coordinator" to interrupt the lesson, rather than come at the beginning of it. Most of the participants also believed that the teacher needed to have been officially notified of the upcoming observation, which did not take place in the described scenario.

This leads to *belittling and questioning the teacher in front of the class* (coded 36 times across 18 interviews). The observer eventually started asking the students questions, requested Ms Hanna to show him the lesson plan and, eventually, started to teach the class. The participants believed that this was "unprofessional (…) and unethical" (Participant 22), "highly insulting" (Participant 20) and "very rude" (Participant 11). Participant 20 also compared it to "[taking] gun from the soldier" in a battlefield, and Participant 13 described it as a generally "devastating situation".

Another part of the described scenario that the participants believed to be "very rude" (Participant 11) was that the issue of the *teacher not* [being] *given a chance to defend and explain* (coded 31 times across 17 interviews) her views and methodological choices. Firstly, the participants believed that it "is not fair at all"

(Participant 20) and “very much unprofessional” (Participant 20) that after the lesson the teacher was not given a chance to discuss and justify her teaching methods. Secondly, this theme links to the previously discussed issue of the observer coming late to the class:

> He didn't give the chance to Miss Hannah to give justification as to her methodology and there was no post-conference, so she was not able to discuss what she did in the beginning of the class, what he was not able to observe (Participant 22).

As Participant 22 points out in the above extract, considering that the observer had come late to the class, the participants perception was that “it is crucial that the teacher be given a chance not only to explain the teaching behaviour that the observer had witnessed but also justify the teaching approach in the context of the whole lesson” (Participant 23), including the parts missed by the observer. Instead, the observer was being “authoritative” (Participant 30) and provided feedback without giving the teacher the opportunity to respond.

This links to the observer’s overall *disrespectful attitude* (coded 34 times across 13 interviews) that, arguably, underlay most of his actions during the observation. The participants found the observer’s behaviour to be “crude and rude” (Participant 11), “insulting” (Participant 20) and “ridiculous” (Participant 26), and some believed it was even guided by “some other grudge” (Participant 20) towards the teacher. This leads to *sending wrong signals about the purpose of the observation* (coded 22 times across 11 interviews). The observation procedure described in this scenario was “about scaring [and] intimidating” (Participant 28), and some participants believed the aim of the observer was to “terminate” (Participant 20) the teacher rather than help the teacher develop professionally. Some suggested the observation was about “personal

vengeance" (Participant 13) and the observer's "personal aim is only to tarnish my image in front of the students" (Participant 13). Overall, the problem was both the observer's behaviour and the fact that he never explained what the purpose of the observation was. As Participant 1 pointed out, the observer's "intention is not clear" and "nothing's transparent in that scenario" (Participant 11).

In terms of *effects* (coded 33 times across 17 interviews) of such unprofessional observation, the participants mainly discussed *affected self-esteem and self-perceptions* (coded 20 times across 14 interviews) of the teacher. When discussing this experience, the word "embarrassment" was used 13 times, "humiliation" – 5 times, and phrases about "losing face" – 3 times. The participants believed that the teacher in such scenario "would lose face in front of her students" (Participant 25) and would be "embarrassed" (Participant 26), which would ultimately affect her self-esteem, self-confidence and perceptions of him/herself as a professional. Such experience "is killing the professional development" (Participant 27) of the teacher and "killing my personality in front of the students" (Participant 13).

These experiences also lead to *affected motivation* (coded 4 times across 3 interviews), as they "have a hugely demoralising effect on the teaching and will ultimately result in being merely mechanical in the delivery of her duties" (Participant 24). Another outcome is *affected trust* (coded 3 times across 3 interviews), with two participants feeling that such experience would affect the students' trust towards the teacher, and one pointing out that it would damage the teacher's trust towards the management.

5.4.1.2 Suggested reactions

Among the *suggested reactions* (coded 46 times across 15 interviews), the most common suggestion was to *request a meeting to discuss, defend and negotiate the teacher's point of view* (coded 14 times across 9 interviews), with those nine commenting noting that they would want "a chance to talk, to defend myself" (Participant 27). This was followed by some participants' suggestion that they would *confront the observer immediately* (coded 7 times across 7 interviews). Participant 20, for example, explained that he would "ask this person, the observer, out of the classroom for a minute or two just to clarify what's going on". Some others who commented also described the immediate, and sometimes emotional, reactions in which "I would tell him why I am angry and why I'm not pleased with this situation" (Participant 11), often before requesting a more formal post-lesson discussion. This was also the case with Participant 16 who described the process as follows:

> I think if that happens to me, I would ask the observer to step outside the classroom and speak to me and say to this person that, with all due respect, I didn't think that these actions were in the best interest of the students, and suggest that we meet at an agreed time after the lesson where he could talk through what he obviously thought was not going well (Participant 16).

Although they would *later* request a formal meeting with the observer, six participants would *let the observer teach the class* (coded 8 times) first. They would mostly do so out of respect for the management and the students, as well as because of their sense of professionalism, "because if he's unprofessional, not professional, I cannot be not professional like him" (Participant 25). Three participants, however, would do the opposite and *not let the observer teach the class* (coded 5 times across 3 interviews). Participant 19 "would stop the observer

at the expense of losing my job even", and Participant 22 explained what would happen in the following words:

> I wouldn't let him teach instead of me because I am the teacher. Otherwise, if I did that... I would, I would tell him, "Pardon me sir, but I think I have a good lesson plan prepared for this class, and you can have my lesson plan. This is what I did in the beginning because you were not here, and these are the other activities that I have been lining while you were here, and I would appreciate if you would give me the chance to do it myself instead of you teaching my class" (Participant 22).

In addition, two participants would *not allow the observer to enter the class late* (coded 5 times), including Participant 11 who explained that she would treat the observer like her students who come late for the class.

As opposed to not letting the observer enter the classroom, two teachers would take the extreme measure and *leave the classroom once the observer takes over the teaching* (coded 3 times across 2 interviews), with Participant 13 doing this "in order to fail [the observer] in his attempt" to "tarnish my image in front of my students". Reflecting the previously discussed concerns with the students' broadly defined well-being, Participant 14 would *try to explain to students what is happening*, explaining to them that "we are doing some kind of experimental teaching", in order to avoid the students being confused or anxious about the situation.

Finally, Participant 20 reported that she would *not agree to approve the observation*. She would not sign the required documentation, on the grounds that the observation was not conducted in an ethical manner and would request for a second observation to take place.

5.4.1.3 How to improve the current practices

During the interviews, apart from stating what their immediate reactions to this scenario would be, the participants discussed various ways of improving the current practices (coded 132 times across 19 interviews) in the long run, and the most discussed suggestion was to *improve and standardise the observation protocol* (coded 35 times across 14 interviews). The participants discussed various ways to improve the observation practices, starting with the requirement that the observer should "arrive from first minutes" (Participant 20). That "he has to be there on time" (Participant 29) was, in fact, the most common comment regarding the improvement of specific procedures. Others suggested a generally more subtle and polite way to ask for a permission to talk to the students if it is absolutely necessary, though most suggested that observers should not interfere in the lesson at all. They should "sit silently in the class" (Participant 20) and "just take notes and be just an observer" (Participant 30).

In addition to giving recommendations regarding specific aspects of the observer's behaviour, most commented on there being a need to "come up with guidelines and etiquette for observation" (Participant 20), so that different institutions have "common guidelines" (Participant 20). Participant 14 believed that since "they have criteria for teachers", there "should be also some criteria for the observers" in terms of "what they can do, what they cannot do". Participant 14 believed that "otherwise, it seems that the observer is like God".

Secondly, most of the participants believed that it is crucial to *give the teachers a chance to explain and justify their approach* (coded 26 times across 13 interviews), which was mostly about having a post-lesson evaluation meeting. They believed "we should give a chance to each other" (Participant 24) and that,

rather than interrupting the teaching, “in the post-lesson discussion, [the observer] should have gently asked for the reasons for deviations from the prescribed plan” (Participant 24). Thus, the purpose of such meeting is to both avoid disrupting the class, as evident in the discussed scenario, and for the observer to be able to understand the teacher’s approach. Otherwise, “it’s not professional (…) to just give comments without letting the teacher defend him or herself” (Participant 25). Finally, as Participant 22 pointed out, such meeting would also serve the purpose of giving the *observer* a chance to explain his or her approach. As she explained, “I should understand (…) his intention. Maybe he has good intention of why he did that”.

In addition to developing improved observation protocols, as discussed above, the participants suggested to *train the observers better* (coded 22 times across 11 interviews). According to Participant 20, for example, this involves improving the observers’ pedagogic knowledge in order for them to be able to assess the effectiveness of the teacher’s instruction. As he explained:

> The observer should know, for example if it’s a reading lesson, should know what the reading strategies are there. What are vocabulary techniques? What is schemata, What is skimming? What is scanning, what is fast reading, and then how to observe the scanning of the teacher, and what is post-reading activities? The observer should know that if a teacher is teaching passive skills, it should be followed by active (Participant 20).

According to Participant 20, “all the observers [should] have a training (…) because it doesn’t mean that you are the management, you know everything”. She explained further that the observers should be very familiar with the previously discussed “guidelines and etiquette of being an observer”. The others ten who commented shared this point of view, suggesting that there even should

be “specific courses” (Participant 18) that teach the “management members” (Participant 18) how to observe a lesson.

Nine participants pointed out that it is crucial that the observers *be clear about the purposes of observation* (coded 22 times across 9 interviews), which reflects the previously discussed issue of the observers sending wrong signals about the purpose of observation. It would be beneficial “to discuss with the teacher why the observation is and what is it for” (Participant 30) in order to ensure that it is an experience that benefits the teachers and their professional development. Most importantly, the observers should send such signals during the observation, make it “friendly” (Participant 18) and “smile with the teacher, not smile as if policemen entering into ransacking something” (Participant 13). The participants shared the view that “you must not observe secretly, aggressively” (Participant 19), and Participant 20 pointed out that unless you clearly explain the purpose of the observation, it is assumed that “your aim is to devalue the teacher”.

Also, 8 participants believed that the observers should *give formal notice about upcoming observations* (coded 15 times across 8 interviews), and “the observer and the instructor should agree upon a specific time and the class prior to the class observation” (Participant 13). This would not only help to avoid interrupting the class as in the discussed scenario but would also help make sure that there is, in fact, value in observing a given class. As the participants repeatedly pointed out, the purpose of the observation is the teachers’ professional development and improvement, rather than finding their weaknesses. Therefore, it is more beneficial for them to observe a more dynamic and varying class, for example, than a lesson in which they are drilling one kind of linguistic item.

This links to another suggestion, namely, to *get involved in improving the teachers' future practices* (coded 7 times across 5 interviews). As noted above, the purpose of observations should be to help the teachers improve. Similarly, "post class discussion is not meant for collecting evidences for reasons of 'miscarriage' of a planned lesson. Rather, it should aim to enhance the quality of teaching and learning" (Participant 23). Participant 20 also suggested that he would like to see the observers getting involved in his development and suggesting him what to improve and how:

> Give me some time. Okay, these are the books, please study. These books, study, they're different books. Okay? Show me, give me the books, tell me to read, improve yourself. We are going to observe you again, and we want to that you improve these areas (Participant 20).

Finally, four participants suggested that it would help to *have more than one observer* (coded 7 times across 4 interviews). One observer "may not be objective" (Participant 18), and there should be "a committee for observation, not a person" (Participant 15). According to Participant 20, three different observers should first observe the class, give "marks" and compare and discuss their evaluation forms with each other.

5.4.2 Limited autonomy to adjust and design teaching materials

In the second discussed scenario, "Ms. Shazia" prepared her own teaching materials in addition to using a recommended textbook, as she felt that the available materials were not sufficient for her students. As the Level Coordinator learned about this, Ms. Shazia received a warning from the Level Coordinator for not having sought the management's approval prior to using her teaching materials in the classroom. As the teacher was afraid of losing her job, she agreed not to design any more materials, although she did believe the currently used

materials were not sufficient to address her students' needs (see Appendix 7 for the full scenario).

Table 5.12 outlines sub-themes of the *limited autonomy to adjust and design teaching materials* (coded 206 times across 20 interviews) theme that emerged in Phase 2 discussions, and the following sub-sections discuss these sub-themes (see Appendix 9 for a detailed version of Phase 2 thematic framework).

Table 5.12: Theme: Limited autonomy to adjust and design teaching materials

Scenarios	Themes	Dimensions
Scenario 2 The supplementary materials	Issues arising from scenario 2	not being given initiative and autonomy
		lack of trust and respect
		lack of clear rules and professional communication
		having to work with poor materials
	Effects arising from scenario 2	affected motivation and confidence
		affected dedication and performance
	Suggested reactions to scenario 2	discuss and negotiate one's point of view and the policies
		defend your point of view and support it with evidence
		comply and stop preparing materials
		check if this is allowed first
	Improving the current practices in scenario 2	improve the communication between the teachers and the superiors
		develop a clearer policy for what is allowed and what is not
		train teachers or assign qualified people to develop materials
		give the teachers autonomy
		improve the current teaching materials

5.4.2.1 Overview of the problems

The importance of autonomy for professionalism has been evident throughout this chapter. It was found to be an important element of *being treated as a professional* (see Section 5.2.2) and the lack of autonomy was also discussed in Phase 1 as one of the challenges (see Section 5.3).

Not surprisingly, therefore, the main issue underlying Scenario 2 was also *not being given initiative and autonomy* (coded 22 times across 13 interviews). Participant 20 believed that not giving teachers' autonomy to develop or adjust teaching materials is like "putting cuffs in their hands". They believed "it's not a fair way to treat the teacher [this way], because what the teacher did is for the sake of the students" (Participant 25), which reflects the teachers' previously discussed concern with the students' learning. "It's natural" (Participant 14) to be preparing additional materials, "teachers *have to be* autonomous, (…) adapt and adopt things" (Participant 27). Participant 27 believed that teachers have to do "whatever is necessary to achieve our learning outcome, learning or teaching or whatever". On the other hand, limiting this autonomy "is not professionalism" and is "certainly against the teacher freedom" (Participant 26).

Another issue, and the one that seemed to underlie the above issue of not being given enough autonomy to adjust teaching materials was that of the *lack of trust and respect* (coded 13 times across 8 interviews). Again, it reflected Phase 1 results in which the participants listed not being trusted as the top challenge they faced (see Section 5.3) and *having the management's trust and support* as the top quality of being treated as a professional (see Section 5.2.2). When discussing this current scenario, some participants found the aforementioned issue of the lack of autonomy to be a sign of the lack of trust. Participant 1

believed, for example, that it means that "the admin does not have any trust in their staff (…) and they don't believe the staff is competent enough to be able to make the decision on their own", and Participant 14 asked "if you are trusted to teach, (…) what's the problem with another supplementary material? Why not?" In light of the previous discussions of what it means to be a professional, and *to be treated* as a professional, it is clear, therefore, why this situation may pose a threat to the teachers' sense of professionalism.

Another issue was the *lack of clear rules and professional communication* (coded 8 times across 5 interviews). Some interviewees recognised that the teacher from Scenario 2 may have broken the rules when preparing the materials without having sought approval first, but they believed that it should have been clearer what is allowed and what is not in the first place. Participant 12 explained, for example, that "sometimes without the clear-cut policy, we tend to do all things because we don't have the guide". Moreover, they found it not right that the teacher was instantly given a warning, and they believed that "there is no communication between the teacher and the coordinator" (Participant 13), suggesting that "a warning is a disrespect" (Participant 13) and was not necessary in that situation.

Finally, reflecting Phase 1 findings about challenges faced by the teachers, *having to work with poor materials* (coded 6 times across 3 interviews) was recognised as the problem that was at the core of the described situation. As Participant 23 summarised, "if those books don't help, then we have to think of our own things".

Considering the previously discussed passion for teaching that seemed to underlie the teachers' persistence to do what they do and to prioritise their

students' needs, it comes as no surprise that the participants believed the described scenario would result in *affected motivation and confidence* (coded 16 times across 9 interviews). Limiting teachers' autonomy "does not encourage us to be creative" (Participant 29), "it may affect the teacher negatively, and he or she will feel a bit depressed or discouraged" (Participant 30). It will affect the teachers "psychologically" (Participant 18) and they "will not be motivated to create a new environment, to create a new thing for the students (…) to help them" (Participant 18).

Moreover, doing so may result in the teachers' affected *dedication and performance* (coded 8 times across 6 interviews). The participants believed that autonomy is important to be able to stay dedicated to the job and to perform it to the highest standard. In the following extract, Participant 13 explains how, in his opinion, the discussed situation may in the long run affect the actual quality of teaching:

> It will depress the teacher further and sense of fear of losing the job will further aggravate the person mind, then that innovative teacher can never work in an innovative way, even if she or he is in a professional way, very well trained, the real quality of the teaching of that particular teacher can never be brought out again, because she or he is hurt (Participant 13).

5.4.2.2 Suggested reactions

Similarly to Scenario 1, the most discussed suggestion involved openly facing and addressing the issue with those involved. Specifically, the participants suggested that to *discuss and negotiate one's point of view and the policies* (coded 22 times across 13 interviews) would be their reaction. This meant talking to the coordinator, administrator or the management, usually in this particular order, and explaining the reasons for their actions, explaining the limitations of the existing policies and, in some cases, suggesting changes to these policies.

Participant 14 also suggested to “raise the question in our team meeting” and ask the level coordinator: “why aren’t we given this possibility?” In all cases, those commenting suggested a rather “diplomatic” approach, and rather than arguing, they preferred to “clarify why I prepared such kind of materials, what are the needs of my students, and what’s wrong with [the existing materials]” (Participant 18). Participant 17 would also try to “make them understand”, stressed that she will “never” do it “in front of my students”, which links to the previously discussed notion of prioritising the students’ needs and well-being.

When discussing different ways of approaching the management, two participants suggested to *defend your point of view and support it with evidence* (coded twice across 2 interviews). Participant 26 “would try to gather some evidence, not with my words only, evidence” such as “the students’ results”. Participant 22, in turn, suggested to “write the pros and cons of the policy”, as well as recommendations for improving it, and to present this data, along with feedback from other teachers, to the management.

Some participants, however, would *comply and stop preparing materials* (coded 6 times across 5 interviews). Participant 20, for example, would be “heartbroken” and would “never prepare [the materials] again”, and Participant 20 would apologise to the coordinator and “promise not to do something that is not according to the policy”. Participant 28 would also “obey my boss” and would stop preparing supplementary materials. Participant 13, in turn, while he would initially attempt to negotiate his approach (“step one (…) I would have gone to the coordinator to convince my methods (…) two, asking for post approval (…) three, deciding to apply in the future for prior approval”), explained that if this failed, he would eventually be discouraged and would “get along with the waves”:

> And if all the three steps have failed naturally, the final result will be just to get along with the waves, whatever they say. If they see a cat as a tiger, I will say tiger, if they call the tiger as a cat, I will say cat. And then I will protect... my interest will be protecting my job. Naturally I am pushed to that extent (Participant 13.

Participant 13 extract demonstrates how even the most passionate teacher may eventually be "broken" if he/she is not given the previously discussed autonomy. In addition, two participants suggested that they would *check if this is allowed first* (coded 6 times). Participant 12 believed that "it's a common scenario that some teachers, out of their love, out of their passion to teach (…) somehow cross the line", and suggested that this would not have happened if the teacher had checked what the policies for preparing materials are.

5.4.2.3 How to improve the current practices.

To *improve the communication between the teachers and the superiors* (coded 31 times across 16 interviews) was the most discussed way to improve the discussed issue. Those commenting shared Participant 20's view that "I always believe in communication, that you can solve everything with communication". Therefore, most believed that both parties, the teacher and the superiors, may have taken care of the issue in a better way through more efficient communication. Whilst the administrator may have asked the teacher to clarify and justify her reasoning rather than giving her a warning, the teacher should have asked beforehand what is allowed and what is not, as well as suggested to improve the materials. Participant 20 suggested, for example, that the teachers should have the right to prepare the materials, but there should be a "committee" to review these materials, and "before you take something to the class, somebody at least from the management should see it". He also explained that the coordinator's reaction was harsh, and the teacher should not have been given a

warning. Most of those who commented on this issue shared similar views, noting that "the teacher [is] supposed to prepare her supplementary materials and show them to that coordinator to avoid any blaming or any mistakes" (Participant 24), and the coordinators should "of course discuss the issue with them" (Participant 26) before deciding to issue a warning. Most also agreed that on a wider, institutional level the communication should be improved, and the teachers should be better informed about the existing policies. "The college shouldn't take a policy without discussing to the teacher (…) because [the teachers] know their needs, their students' needs" (Participant 27), and Participant 22 suggested that teachers be involved in developing policies "from their start":

> Well, I think the solution is that, the management should have involved the teachers in any of these policies from their start. Whenever the management writes a policy, they ask a certain committee, like the policy management committee to check the policy, and then it will go through approval and everything, and after that, dissemination. Before the approval, there would be feedback, feedback from all the stakeholders. In this case, the teachers, could give their feedback that this is not a good policy, and it's not doable, it's not practical, so we might as well scrap it (Participant 22).

This relates closely to the suggestion to *develop a clearer policy for what is allowed and what is not,* coded 22 times across 13 interviews. "Guidelines are good, they keep us all in this on the same page" (Participant 29), and the participants suggested that the existing policies should be made clear to avoid misunderstandings. Participant 30 also suggested that there should be "proper induction" and "the teachers have to be given clear instructions on how to act in certain situations". Then, he believed, "if the teachers are instructed well enough, there won't be such cases".

11 participants believed that the solution is to *train teachers or assign qualified people to develop materials* (coded 21 times across 11 interviews). These

suggestions also improved the previously mentioned recommendations that any new materials should first be approved by a coordinator or "a committee of teachers who would prepare instructional materials for different levels" (Participant 22). Participant 15 believed, for example, that "a group of teachers" should be preparing materials because "group work is always better". Thus, "they can revise to each other, they can share ideas, they can come up with the new ways how to deliver things in class".

Additionally, 11 participants believed that to *give the teachers autonomy* (coded 19 times) is essential. Participant 20 believed, for example, that "if a teacher has come to an institution and has been accepted", he or she "should be autonomous and (…) should be trusted on her job". Participant 22 also explained that

> the teacher should be able to have the freedom to prepare all the different kinds of materials, and all the different kinds of handouts, and supplementary worksheets, and everything (Participant 22).

This was a common view, and all the eleven participants who commented equated being able to prepare your own materials with "freedom" and a crucial aspect of professionalism, as evident throughout this and the previous chapter.

Finally, two participants pointed out that to *improve the current teaching materials* (coded 4 times) would solve the problem, suggesting that "the main core material is so weak" (Participant 19), and "if you have a good core material, main material, main textbook, you will not need supplementary" (Participant 19).

5.4.3 Work distribution and planning

In the final discussed scenario, a group of English teachers, including "Mr. Don", were assigned several administrative tasks "without prior consultation, knowledge or consent". The teachers felt that this additional workload, as they

were also asked to work on two Saturdays, and having to do something they did not feel competent in “affected them professionally, personally and psychologically”, but they were told they would not be allowed to take summer holidays if they refuse to do these tasks. As a result, on the first Saturday, the majority of teachers, including Mr. Don, did not report for work and pretended that they were sick (see Appendix 7 for the full scenario).

Table 5.13 outlines sub-themes of the *work distribution and planning* (coded 281 times across 19 interviews) theme that emerged in Phase 2 discussions, and the following sub-sections discuss these sub-themes (for a detailed version of Phase 2 thematic framework please see Appendix 9).

Table 5.13: Theme: Work distribution and planning

Scenarios	Themes	Dimensions
Scenario 3 Work distribution and planning	Issues arising from scenario 3	Having to do extra work outside your expertise
		being forced or threatened rather than asked and trusted
	Effects arising from scenario 3	affected performance
		affected motivation and dedication
	Suggested reactions to scenario 3	negotiate the task first
		officially refuse to do the task
		comply
		do the job, but not necessarily do it well
		investigate if it is legal to be asked to do this
	Improving the current practices	improve the communication between the teachers and the superiors
		train the teachers or employ trained staff for the extra tasks
		improve time management and planning
		reward the teachers for extra work

5.4.3.1 Overview of the problems

Having to do extra work outside your expertise (coded 45 times across 19 interviews) was, according to the participants, the main issue with Scenario 3, and it reflects Phase 1 findings that demonstrated that *being asked to do things not related to your expertise* was the second most discussed threat to professionalism (see Section 5.3). Interestingly, when discussing this scenario, the participants' statements were a combination of hypothetical speech and their real experiences, more so than in the case of the remaining two scenarios. It seems that most of the participants have, at one point in their teaching career, had this particular experience.

The first issue with *having to do extra work outside your expertise* was the amount of current workload that the teachers faced without these extra tasks. Adding to this workload, as Participant 12, explained was "a burden to the English teachers", and to expect the teachers to accept these additional responsibilities is "poor and unprofessional". In fact, nineteen participants believed that this was very unprofessional and "unfair" (Participant 30), and "to overload [teachers] will affect their professionalism" (Participant 25). Participant 17 raised concerns that "we are overloaded with other work, and above that we have [been] given an extra load", and Participant 25 explained that what makes the situation worse is that although the teachers are given extra tasks to complete, they are not given *extra time* to complete them. As she explained, "it is unprofessional from the side of the administration (…) if you are giving more extra work without giving more extra time". Finally, reflecting the teachers' concern with the students' needs that has been referred to many times throughout this and the previous chapter, Participant 29 explained that being asked to do these extra tasks takes the

teacher’s attention off the students. Thus, as she explains, not only does she “have no idea” about the things she is being asked to do because they are not within her expertise, she is also thinking about her students because “this is our job”:

> And I really have no idea. Most of the time, most of the time what they are talking about. And it's so crazy because you know, we're thinking about our students about our classes and this is our job. Okay. And then in between these things [quality assurance tasks and meetings] come out and then we have, we have to do these things. I actually do nothing by the way, but still like, and I keep thinking about this, am I doing it right? I am really confused of what to do and how to do it. Or, at least I tried to attend their meetings, so they don't feel like I'm not willing to do anything (Participant 29.

The above extract clearly demonstrates the second issue with *having to do extra work outside your expertise*, namely that often, including the case in the discussed scenario, teachers are asked to do things that they do not feel they are qualified to do. At the same time, they cannot focus on their main priority – teaching. Participant 24 explained,

> I am a teacher. I have to prepare for my lessons. I have to plan my lessons. I have to deliver these lessons. I have a lot of duties other than teaching, like marking. It should be done (Participant 24).

Participant 29 believed that asking teachers to do quality assurance is “super unprofessional because we are not here for this”, and Participant 22 also felt that doing quality assurance is not the teachers’ “speciality”. Participant 20 likened having to do

> You make me sit in the cockpit and ask me to fly an airplane, and then if 200 passengers are crashed, you're cursing me. Why? I'm not employed for this job. I'm employed to be a teacher here (Participant 20).

Considering that all the teachers opposed the idea of doing quality assurance tasks, for which reasons most of them sympathised with the teacher from

Scenario 3, what they also found problematic was *being forced or threatened rather than asked and trusted* (coded 40 times across 16 interviews) to do these tasks. As "people don't respond well to threats" (Participant 21), the participants found the way the teachers in Scenario 3 were informed about the obligation to do the task "very harsh" and "childish" (Participant 21). It feels "like a punishment" (Participant 22), and "it's actually violating the teachers' professional rights" (Participant 26) to ask the teachers to work during the weekend under a threat of losing summer holidays. Some also felt that the teachers should have been asked first "if they can do it or if they want to do it" (Participant 22). Overall, as Participant 27 concluded, "I don't like to be threatened and nobody would ever like to be threatened. We are not children".

The main effect of the above issues, according to the participants, is the teachers' *affected performance* (coded 26 times across 9 interviews). This results from generally being overloaded with various tasks, from their lack of familiarity with the tasks they are assigned to and the fact that they were threatened and forced to complete these tasks. Firstly, as Participant 11 explained, the resulting workload affects the teachers' ability to focus, which will ultimately affect their performance:

> If somehow, I am forced to do this extra task during my working hours, it affects me negatively in a way where my mind is now occupied with other things that shouldn't be occupied with. So, in English, we say, you spread yourself too thin. So, if you spread yourself too thin, your toast is not going to taste nice. So, if I have to focus on my students in the classroom, that's what I need to focus on. Now, QA equals to quality. So, the quality of the place will actually determine if you get this accreditation or not (Participant 11).

Participant 23 also raised concerns about the quality of work that would result from being overloaded with tasks, noting that "unrealistic deadlines will not help

anyone” and that “I will maintain the deadlines, but will not do the job properly”. Participant 24 was worried, in turn, that these tasks would also affect her *classroom performance,* because she would not be able to prepare her lessons. As a result, “that will affect me and my students at the same time”.

Being forced, rather than asked, to complete these tasks, in turn, would also affect the teachers’ performance, “because they feel threatened, their performance won’t be well, because they’re afraid of doing anything wrong” (Participant 11). As Participant 14 noted, “everyone should enjoy what he is doing” and “if you don’t enjoy, you will not do it in a good way”.

This leads to *affected motivation and dedication* (coded 11 times across 7 interviews) as a result of being forced to complete tasks outside the teachers’ expertise. The participants raised concerns that as a result, “I will not be happy in my work” (Participant 14) and “I will be working without an interest”. This refers both to the regular teaching tasks and to the aforementioned quality assurance tasks. As Participant 29 pointed out, for example, when talking about unfamiliar abbreviations used in quality assurance, “I don’t want to take the trouble to go and search for these things”. In addition, several participants reported teachers pretending to be sick as a “way to escape” their responsibilities, which followed being asked to work during weekends.

5.4.3.2 Suggested reactions.

Reflecting the suggested reactions to the previously discussed scenarios, the most common suggestion was to *negotiate the task first* (coded 16 times across 10 interviews). Those who commented suggested talking to the management in order to explain and clarify what the task compasses, to negotiate the deadlines or to convince the management that they are not suitable people to undertake

the task. Participant 11, for example, would explain that she is not qualified for the task and, therefore, “a perfect result” should not be expected of her. This way, she felt, she would minimise her responsibility and her management’s expectations:

> I would be very honest and blunt and say, you're giving me a duty that I don't have any knowledge about. I don't understand it. I can try but don't expect a perfect result. And if things don't happen the way you want it to happen, I am not responsible, because I am warning you from now that I don't understand this. Maybe I'll try (Participant 11).

Participant 22 also suggested that she would talk to the management, in order to clarify what is expected of her, what the deadlines are and whether she would receive any support in doing these, unfamiliar to her, tasks. She would also ask for an extension to be able to complete all tasks on time, and if she was refused one, she would say “I can’t do it”. Several participants suggested similar reactions. Participant 16 also suggested that she would go to the management “from the very beginning” in order to discuss the “limitations” and “drawbacks of this project”, as well as to explain that it is not “realistic”, and several participants reported that they would explain why they are not a good fit for the task, subtly suggesting not to be involved.

In addition to the above, six participants would *officially refuse to do the task* (coded 14 times across 6 interviews), noting that “if I am in the situation and I feel I cannot do [the task], I will never accept. I would never accept” (Participant 15). Participant 29 would “inform the administration that I am not coming”, and Participant 14 “would have refused, of course after knowing the details and the nature of the work”.

Six participants, however, would *comply* (coded 11 times across 6 interviews) and agree to do the task. They felt that regardless of whether they like it or not,

being a member of the institution's faculty obliges one to accept any task that they are being asked to do. Participant 20, for example, explained that "when my department is in crisis, I won't look whether it's Friday or Saturday, I have to come". He felt that his institution "is not only my working place, it's my family" and that he would always "sacrifice my private time because this is my family". Participant 18, in turn, would *comply, but then discuss afterwards* – she felt that it would be necessary to perform the job, although she explained that she would discuss this afterwards and suggest that she did not like how it was organised. Nevertheless, like the others who commented, she felt that it is a teacher's professional obligation to do what he/she is being asked to do.

Two participants suggested that they would *do the job, but not necessarily do it well* (coded 6 times). They explained that because they are not qualified and skilled to perform it, the outcome of this work would most likely be not what the management expected. Therefore, they would be unlikely to be asked to do it again.

Participant 11 also suggested that she would *investigate if it is legal to be asked to do this,* referring to the threats the teachers received. She noted that "I would start to ask around, are there any legal grounds of their threats?" Finally, Participant 25 explained that she would *quit the job,* because "no one can deprive me from my summer vacation".

5.4.3.3 How to improve the current practices.

Regarding the suggestions for *how to improve the current practices* (coded 108 times across 19 interviews), to *improve the communication between the teachers and the superiors* (coded 47 times across 16 interviews) was the most discussed suggestion. This, coupled with some of the previously described suggestions for

improving the situation described in Scenario 2, several *suggested reactions* to all 3 scenarios and several challenges discussed so far in this chapter, indicates a belief that poor communication is at the heart several issues faced by the teachers in their daily practice. “Nothing can beat communication really” (Participant 22), and most of the participants suggested that both the teachers and the management should change their practices, as “both parties, they didn’t practice professionalism” (Participant 0). The management, as previously noted, should not have forced and threatened the teachers to come do extra work on a Saturday, and the teachers should not have stayed at home, pretending to be ill. Thus, the most common suggestion was that a meeting be held beforehand, during which the administration would have a chance to explain the task and their expectations to the teachers, and the teachers would be able to both ask questions and express their views as to whether they are suitable to undertake the task. Thus, “there should always be like orientation to the teachers that if you don’t like the task that will be assigned to you, say it” (Participant 12). As another participant suggested,

> First [the administration] should ask if the teacher has the skill and the prior experience, and if the teacher is willing to do that, and if they are able to meet the deadline. The teachers should be aware of the gravity, the impact of the task in terms of their teaching, the teaching schedule, plus in terms of their professional, and then personal, and psychological well-being, because working with QA is a big task. They should know the deadline before they accept that (Participant 22).

The teachers, on the other hand, “what they should have done is to talk to the management and tell them that they could not do it so that the management could have a chance to look for some other teachers who can do it and who are willing to do it” (Participant 22). The other participants who commented shared these views, suggesting that a much more flexible approach should be adopted, where

both parties are free to negotiate the deadlines and the way the task is to be completed, and they do it in a polite and respectful way:

> We can discuss it with the admin. If they said, "Please come on Saturdays. We need your extra support to complete the quality assurance tasks." Okay, we can do that, but we cannot do that every Saturday. I have family. I have kids to take to the park. Okay, so is it possible that some teachers come this Saturday, some teachers come the other Saturday and then we complete the goal on Saturday, I don't know, once a month or twice a month? Yes, then it's possible (Participant 30.

Another common suggestion was to *train the teachers or employ trained staff for the extra tasks* (coded 34 times across 16 interviews), with the participants suggesting that the management either “employ someone who is related to this field” (Participant 20) or “send me for some training” (Participant 20). Participant 20 also suggested that the teacher from Scenario 3, Don, should have been assisted in his work by people specialising in quality assurance. “They will help Don this way, and the workload will be distributed. And you will finish the work” (Participant 20). Some also suggested that the management should “designate a certain group for QA” (Participant 22). Thus, “they have to identify the strengths of the staff and then choose the proper ones and release them for training” (Participant 23).

Some teachers suggested to *improve time management and planning* (coded 21 times across 12 interviews), suggesting that the situation described in Scenario 3 “shows that the manager doesn’t know how to work” (Participant 20). In short, the pressure to quickly select some teachers and tell them to work on Saturday resulted from the lack of appropriate planning, and the participants felt that could have been avoided (“this wouldn’t happen if they had planned earlier and planned it properly” – Participant 27). The suggestions were to, as noted above, spend more time selecting the teachers, who would then be trained accordingly. The

participants also felt that if this had been done sooner, there would be no pressure that resulted in the management threatening the teachers to take their summer holidays away ("and suddenly just everything come in a time, we have to do everything, we have to prepare everything…" – Participant 24). Participant 24 also suggested that paperwork for quality assurance should be prepared in advance, because "some documents are there, but because they are not planned, they are not organised, we couldn't find them". Participant 25, in turn, suggested that more time is needed for the decision as to which teachers to ask to perform these tasks, and "if you are giving some more extra attached to the teacher, you have to look back to the teaching load that the teacher has". Thus, the management should analyse the teachers' timetables and decide which teachers to approach. With regard to the overall deadline for the task, there also "should be very realistic action-planning" (Participant 26), "a proper planning, a realistic, meaningful and possible planning" (Participant 26). This would help to avoid tight deadlines and the resulting stress.

Finally, 6 teachers suggested that the management should *reward the teachers for extra work* (coded 6 times), suggesting that if there is "no reward, [there is] no motivation" (Participant 24).

5.4.3.4 Section summary

It was clear from the participants' discussions of the presented scenarios that all the issues discussed had potentially far-reaching consequences that could ultimately affect the teachers' sense of professionalism. The affected motivation, for example, which was reported to be an effect of each of the discussed scenarios, could potentially influence the teachers' ability to act professionally, where being flexible, responsive and proactive were among the top required

characteristics (see the discussion in Section 5.2.1 for details). Equally important are the teachers' confidence, self-esteem and self-perceptions, which were also discussed as something likely to be affected and are likely to affect the teachers' performance and their ability to act professionally. Bearing these consequences of the policies believed to affect the teachers' sense of professionalism in mind, it seems evident that a change is needed.

The reason these particular policies are believed to have an influence on the teachers' sense of professionalism is, most likely, because the most discussed issues with each of the scenarios were, essentially, about the lack of trust and respect towards the teachers. As noted in Section 5.2.2, however, *being trusted, involved and respected* was the most discussed characteristic of *being treated as a professional teacher*, and this trust was also manifested in the second most discussed characteristic, namely *having freedom and autonomy*. At the same time, it is evident, for example, that all issues discussed in relation to the first scenario (see Section 5.4.1) arguably indicated disrespectful attitudes and a clear lack of trust. *Being forced or threatened, rather than asked and trusted*, which was one of the two issues in Scenario 3 (see Section 5.4.3), also clearly indicates that this was the case. Finally, in addition to *not being given initiative or autonomy,* the second most discussed issue in relation to Scenario 2 (see Section 5.4.2) was also *the lack of trust and respect*.

With regard to suggested reactions to these scenarios and ways to improve future practices, a common theme of these discussions was that efforts are needed to improve the communication between the teachers and the management. Firstly, confrontation, negotiation and discussion, in one form or another, were mentioned as the main *suggested reactions* to each scenario. Secondly, efforts

to improve communication and develop clear policies were discussed every time the participants explained *how to improve the current practices.*

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the results that help answer the research questions posed in this study. Firstly, the findings revealed that the participants had a clear conceptualisation of what constitutes “professionalism”, and, in their view, professionalism entails both how a person acts and how he/she is treated. Regarding *skills and characteristics of a professional teacher* (see Section 5.2.1), although having professional experience and qualifications was also regarded as one of these characteristics, it was noteworthy that the discussions predominantly focused on such traits and characteristics as being flexible and responsive, having good interpersonal skills, prioritising the students’ needs or demonstrating professional values. Thus, it was clear that professionalism was defined more by one’s passion and drive to help students than by having formal training or work experience. This was also reflected by the discussions of what *being treated as a professional teacher* (see Section 5.2.2) involves, where the most discussed themes of *having freedom and autonomy* and *being trusted, involved and respected* also suggested that this professional treatment is one that enables the teachers to prioritise their students’ needs and development.

Furthermore, the findings revealed a number of tensions, or challenges, experienced by the teachers (see Section 5.3.1), and these provided even more insight into what professionalism means to the participants. When discussing these challenges, links were constantly made to how given practices, behaviours or experiences can undermine the teachers’ sense of professionalism. In other words, the most discussed challenges were those which directly affected either

the teachers' ability to act in a professional way or whether they were treated as professionals. This was demonstrated, for example, in the fact that *not being trusted, listened to, or supported in decisions* was the most discussed challenge. The participants explained that this was specifically because it posed a threat to their sense of professionalism through affecting their overall autonomy, which meant that they were not able to be *flexible and responsive* in their teaching or to prioritise their students' learning over other tasks. This was also true to the second most discussed challenge of *being asked to do things not related to your expertise* which the teachers found problematic particularly because it hindered their ability to focus on teaching.

The participants' discussions of the *effects and consequences of compromised professionalism* (see Section 5.3.2) provided insights into how the above challenges can affect the teachers' personal and professional lives. Considering how important the sense of professionalism was for the participants, which was also reflected in their initial discussions of reasons to become a teacher in which it was evident that a genuine desire to help students develop as human beings was the most common reason, it was not surprising that a sense of compromised professionalism was believed to affect the teachers deeply. Interestingly, in addition to the previously mentioned challenges directly affecting the sense of professionalism, the effects of the compromised professionalism further affected the teachers' ability to act professionally. Although care has to be taken to avoid making claims about complex relationships that could not be explored in this qualitative study, it did seem that there existed a two-directional relationship, to use a quantitative term, between the sense of professionalism and the effects of having this sense compromised.

With regard to responding to threats to professionalism, the two phases of this study produced different results. In Phase 1, the participants did not discuss many ways to respond to these threats, and focused more on certain avoidance strategies, as well as on explaining why they *do not* respond to these threats, with *being afraid of the consequences* being the main reason. A different approach to interviewing was adopted in Phase 2, however, and the participants were asked to discuss three scenarios which were, in fact, based on real teacher experiences. Shifting the focus from discussing the individual teachers' experiences and ways to respond to threats to professionalism to discussing hypothetical challenges and responses to them enabled the researcher to gather more detailed responses because teachers were freely and comfortable. It was found that the teachers not only were very well aware of certain issues that existed with policies related to class observations, work distribution and planning, and teacher autonomy to develop their own materials, they provided detailed suggestions for how they would respond to these issues, as well as how these policies could be improved.

Chapter Six: Discussion of the Results

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore English teachers' interpretations of teacher professionalism and the tensions they experience at colleges of technology in Oman. Additionally, the aim was to explore the teachers' interpretations of the notion of teacher professionalism and their beliefs about policy practices that challenge their sense of professionalism and professional identities. The long-term aim of the study was to draw implications and make recommendations for future policy planning at CoTs.

This chapter discusses the key findings presented in Chapter 5 in relation to the existing findings from studies of teacher professionalism. The organisation of the chapter reflects the research questions posed in the study. Thus, Section 6.2 addresses the teachers' notion of what it means to be a professional teacher and is followed by the discussion of tensions that the teachers experienced, as well as the effects of these their professional and personal lives (Section 6.3). Section 6.4 discusses the teachers' responses to the threats to their sense of professionalism, and the chapter concludes with a discussion of the teachers' suggested reactions to the scenarios used in Phase 2 of the study.

6.2 How do English language teachers at CoTs interpret teacher professionalism?

It was found that when discussing the notion of professionalism, the participants talked both about certain traits, skills and characteristics that constitute a "professional" teacher and about *being treated* as a professional.

Regarding the former, the teachers' interpretations and definitions of teacher professionalism resembled those found in Helsby's (1995), Kurowski's (2018) and Osmond-Johnson's (2016) studies, all of which were discussed in Section 3.1.3. In particular, the results resembled Helsby's categories of "being professional" and "behaving professionally". However, other characteristics and qualities of teacher professionalism discussed by the participants of this current study have not been previously discussed in the literature (see Section 6.2.1 below for the discussion of these).

Regarding *being treated* as a professional teacher, this emergent finding added to the existing discussions of the term. The existing studies have mainly focused on professional identities (e.g. Sachs 2001) and the possibility that the way one is treated also constitutes a part of it has been emphasized less. The following sub-sections further discuss similarities and differences between the key findings of this study and those from the existing studies, starting with a discussion of the notion of skills and characteristics of a professional teacher in Section 6.2.1.

6.2.1 Skills and characteristics of a professional teacher

According to the participants, a professional teacher is one who: prioritises his/her students learning over other duties, adheres to or demonstrates professional work ethics and values, is flexible and responsive to students' needs, has professional skills, experience and qualification, is a leader or guru, continues his/her professional development and career planning, and has clear and well-defined professional identity.

Prioritising students learning over other duties was one of the most discussed characteristics, and the participants believed that the "prime duty" of a teacher is to teach and respond to students' needs. At the same time, one of the main

concerns was that the unrealistic workload of the administrative duties would affect the quality of their teaching. The teachers believed that professional teachers' main task is to teach and, therefore, their attention should not be directed to other duties that may distract them from this task. This emphasis on prioritising the students as the core theme of teacher professionalism was not found, however, in the previous studies on this topic (Helsby, 1995; Kurowski, 2018 and Osmond-Johnson 2016).

According to Tusting (2009) and Ur (2002), such devotion to the students can be considered as a quality evidencing the commitment and value English language teachers at CoTs attach to their profession. Tusting (2009) asserts, for example, that "teachers drew on a discourse in which the central characteristic of a 'good teacher' was to be responsive to the learner'' (p.10). Additionally, such commitment to the students' needs was described by Ur (2002), who explained that "to say that we English teachers are professionals is to imply that (…) we are committed. We are committed to reaching certain standards of performance, and we are aware of our responsibility toward our learners and their learning" (p. 391).

In addition to prioritising the students' learning, it was found that the demonstration of professional work ethic and values were also central to the notion of a professional teacher. From the teachers' point of view, skills and qualifications are not enough to be considered a professional teacher, and what is equally important are values such as "integrity", "dedication", "commitment", "honesty" and "punctuality'. The importance of professional behaviour and ethics was previously identified in Helsby's (1995) and Kurowski's (2018) studies discussed in the Literature Review chapter. This is also in line with arguments made by Hoyle (1980) and Philip (2006) who both argued that ethics in teaching

is inextricably intertwined and that teachers should reflect morally acceptable and desirable behaviour for the local community. Campbell (2007) also supports this view and describes teaching as a “thoroughly moral business” (2007:605), especially because teachers are entrusted with giving example to the society’s children.

The findings indicated that another important attribute of a professional teacher is flexibility and responsiveness to students’ needs. Professional teachers should be flexible “to adjust the pace and methodologies” (Participant 23) of the lesson to the students’ level. A teacher is “the one who deals with the students and understands their strengths, weaknesses and needs” (Participant 24), and because the “textbook is not the holy book” (Participants 26) the professional teacher should be given freedom to determine what is suitable for his/her students. The requirement to be flexible and adaptive to the learners’ characteristics is consistent with the work of Tusting (2009) who found that “teachers drew on a discourse in which the central characteristic of a ‘good teacher’ was to be responsive to the learners” (p.10).

Being a leader, a guru, and a mentor was another discussed characteristic, and this was in line with Susanto’s (2018) claims that a teacher should set an example to be followed by the students.

Finally, in line with the findings from Helsby’s (1995), Kurowsky’s (2018) and Osmond-Johnson’s (2016) studies, continuous professional development was believed to characterise professional teachers. As Ur (2002) explained when expressing the need for teachers to constantly invest in expanding their own knowledge and skillset:

> We learn. We do not just teach: We also learn, continually – about our subject matter, about teaching methods, and about many other things that make us better educated and therefore better educators. We read, we listen, we reflect, we discuss. (Ur, 2002: 391)

All characteristics and skills of a professional teacher discussed in this section refer, in one way or another, to actions and activities they consciously and willingly undertake. In this sense, professionalism is seen as a quality *in-action* (Hoyle, 2008). In other words, the teacher activities must express the desired quality, such as *being a professional,* through their actions. As previously noted, this view of professionalism is in line with the studies of teacher professionalism discussed in the Literature Review chapter. An emergent finding of this current study, however, was that *acting* professionally was believed to constitute only a part of the overall notion of being a professional teacher and *being treated* as a professional teacher was equally important. The following section discusses this finding in more detail.

6.2.2 Being treated as a professional teacher

The participants believed that a professional teacher is one who is trusted, respected and involved in decisions making. Since, as discussed in Section 6.2.1, being flexible and responsive to the students' needs was one of characteristics of a professional teacher, being given freedom and autonomy that enable him/her to be flexible and responsive was believed to be crucial.

The participants also noted that a professional teacher needs to have a feeling that he/she is appreciated and recognised for his/her work, which also involved being given opportunities for promotions. Overall, according to the participants, being a professional teacher does not merely involve appropriate qualifications and conduct but also the way he or she is being treated. The perceptions of how

they are being treated, in turn, influenced the participants' views of what professionalism entails (Jansem, 2017). Although the existing studies did not distinguish between acting and being treated professionally when defining teacher professionalism, several themes discussed in this current study have been mentioned in discussions of teacher professionalism. Several authors, for example, discussed the importance of trust, respect and autonomy (e.g. Helsby, 1997; Maeroff, 1989 cited in Johnson, 2015: 302; Osmond-Johnson, 2016), and when explaining specifically why teacher autonomy is crucial in order to address the students' needs, Leung (2012) explained:

> "The reality for most teachers is that no single teaching strategy or technique would work for all topics and all students. This is particularly the case when working with increasingly diverse student populations. The choice of teaching strategies and the design of classroom tasks have to take account of what would work with particular groups of students". Leung (2012: 18)

Thus, teachers should be given autonomy to make decisions on how best to establish and maintain a professional teaching pedagogy that enhances learning for their students (Johnston, 2015). Autonomy, in turn, links to other discussed themes, such as trust and respect from the management, for autonomy is not something that the teachers can simply exercise if they are not given it. According to Darling-Hammond (2010) and Johnston (2015), however, in some educational settings it is uncommon for the teachers to be given such autonomy, and this seemed to be the case in the context of this current study (see Section 6.3 for a discussion of the lack of teacher autonomy as one of the challenges that the participants faced).

By pointing to various characteristics, traits and qualities of a professional teacher, this study suggests that there may be a discrepancy between the

teachers' and the policy makers' understanding of teacher professionalism. Thus, whilst policy makers and the local management seem to associate teacher professionalism with efficiency and acceptance of responsibilities that go beyond teaching (Bair, 2014; Evetts, 2003), teachers associate the term with autonomy. Moreover, discrepancies in defining the term were also found among the teachers themselves. As teacher professionalism means "different things to different people" (Fox, 1992: 2; Hoyle, 2008), some participants focused more on the skills, knowledge and characteristics, and others talked more about being treated as a professional.

Osmond-Johnson, (2016) and Sachs (2001 cited in Jansem, 2018) attributed this variation in the interpretations of teacher professionalism to the impact of external and hierarchical power which is "shaping not only what people say, but also what people do" (Osmond-Johnson, 2016:268), a case which seems true in the context of the CoTs. Helsby (1995) further argued that "if the notion of 'professionalism' is socially constructed, then teachers are potentially key players in that construction, accepting or resisting external control and asserting or denying their autonomy" (p.320).

6.3 What Challenges and Threats to Professionalism Do English Language Teachers at CoTs Experience?

In line with findings from the existing studies of teacher professionalism (e.g. Alnefaie, 2017; Breen, 2007; Day and Smethem, 2009; Hassan, 2014; Skinner et al. 2018), challenges and threats to professionalism and identities that the participants discussed could be divided into those related to *teachers' marginality and control of teaching, intensification of teachers' work and working conditions.* The following sections discuss these threats and their effect on the teachers'

sense of professionalism, as these themes were often discussed together during the interviews.

6.3.1 Teachers' marginality and control of teaching

The results suggested that the teachers were often being marginalised and controlled in their teaching. According to the participants, they were not being trusted, listened to, appreciated and involved in decision making, and they were being monitored by sudden classroom visits during which the observers did not act professionally. It was believed that classroom observations were being conducted to monitor the teachers and their performance, rather than for the purpose of the teachers' professional development (Al-Riyami 2016).

With regard to the lack of trust in the teachers' knowledge and expertise, the teachers were not allowed to prepare supplementary materials that compensate the textbook limitations because "[the management] think we're not that professional enough" (Participant 7). Additionally, this was also evidenced when teachers were not allowed to deviate from the prescribed teaching approach to what they believe more adequate to their learners needs because "they [the management] don't trust your knowledge and expertise" (Participant 9) in the use of these approaches. Such perceived lack of trust, however, may affect teachers' sense of professionalism, as it conveys implicit assumptions that the teachers lack professional knowledge and experience in materials design (Johnson, 2015: 299).

The control of teaching also restricted the teachers' opportunities to respond to their learners' needs, a characteristic that they believed to be central to teacher professionalism (see the previous section). Therefore, such "attack on teacher autonomy and teacher creativity, transforming teachers from professionals to

technicians" (Whitty, 2014:11) was seen as a threat to the teachers' professionalism and "constraints on their freedom" (Benson, 2007:71). Whitty (2015) argues that the control of teaching and the restricting of teachers autonomy is an attempt of de-professionalisation that is "the construction of a different type of professionalism" considered by the policy makers at the Ministry of Manpower and the local managements at the CoTs. For Sachs (2003), this reflects the notion of "modern professional" in the eyes of those policy makers which entails working "efficiently and effectively" to contribute to the institution's accountability process. Similarly, Furlong (2005) argues that such restrictions on teachers' autonomy may shift away from viewing teachers as essential change agent.

Autonomy is believed by some (e.g. Day and Smethem, 2009; Day et al. 2005; Mahoney, 2015) to be crucial in the teaching profession due to the nature of the teachers' professional knowledge. As Mahoney (2015) explains, teaching is not a technical profession that involves applying abstract rules, but one that involves making decisions informed by one's knowledge and understanding of a given context. Therefore, it is crucial that the teachers have the opportunity to react to what is happening in this "context" being their overall teaching context and the specific classroom (Mahoney, 2015).

Additionally, Short (1994) argues that teacher autonomy and empowerment are essential for planning educational reforms aimed to solve problems of today's schools. The emphasis to address teacher autonomy is best summarised by Ingersoll and Alsalam (1997):

> "Advocates in increasing teacher autonomy argue that teachers will not only make better informed decisions about educational issues than district or state officials, but that top down decision making often fails precisely

> because it lacks the support of those whose are responsible for the implementation and success of the decision" (p.7).

In this regard, Person and Moomaw assert that "if teachers are to be empowered and exalted as professionals, then like other professionals, teachers must have the freedom to prescribe the best treatment for their students as doctors/lawyers do for their patients/clients" (2005:39).

Considering the importance of teacher autonomy that was both described in the literature and evident in the participants' discussions of teacher professionalism, marginality and control conflicted with the teachers' sense of professional identity. They felt that their professionalism was undermined by the practices described above, and in the long run this affected not only their motivation and quality of teaching, but also factors such as psychological health and well-being, or even willingness to remain in their job.

These findings are in line with the previously made claims that marginality and control of teaching, as well as lack of trust and managerial support, affect teachers' professional identity, motivation, well-being and creativity (Alnefaie, 2016; Hassan, 2014; Skinner et al. 2018). Research on teacher autonomy (e.g. Person and Moomaw, 2005) also suggested that the reason it is so important for the sense of professionalism is specifically because it has an influence on teachers' job satisfaction, stress, motivation and empowerment (e.g. Earpelding, 1999; Johns, 2000; Person and Moomaw, 2005). Person and Moomaw (2005) found, for example, that "as curriculum autonomy increased, on the job stress decreased …[and] as general autonomy increased so did empowerment and professionalism" (2005: 38). Similarly, several studies (e.g. Natale, 1993; Yee, 1990) have found that constraints on autonomy resulted in tension, frustration

and anxiety among teachers, and Rosenholtz (1987) believed that teachers' efficacy and workplace commitment suffers when they are expected to work with materials that they are not allowed to adapt.

As noted above, some participants of this current study reported that marginality and control of teaching may affect teachers' willingness to remain in their job, and this is also in line with the existing literature. Natale (1993), for example, noted that whilst there are many reasons why teachers may decide to leave the profession, the most common reasons are the lack of professionalism, lack of recognition and lack of autonomy. Pearson and Moomaw (2005) support this claim and argue that "teacher autonomy or the lack thereof, seems to be a critical component in the motivation of teachers to stay or leave the teaching profession" (p. 41).

Considering the participants' accounts of marginality and control of teaching, it may be argued that managerial professionalism appears to be promoted at CoTs. Firstly, the hierarchy form of the structure where the decision making process was 'top down' (Darling-Hammond, 1990) may suggest that this is the case. Policies were made at the ministry and handed down through the local managements of the colleges to teachers for implementation. These top down super imposed policies view teachers as technicians who are expected to operate these policies (Evetts, 2003). Managerial professionalism is also promoted at CoTs by the centralised curriculum and textbook. The findings revealed that teachers at CoTs did not feel that they were autonomous in in terms of the objectives, the textbook, teaching methods and students' assessment, as these elements were planned by administrators and expected to be delivered by the teachers as a prescribed curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 1990). They felt that in

their context, a professional teacher is seen as one who is compliant to the managerialist policies and imperatives, and that productivity is measured in terms of teachers' compliance to these top down policies and not in terms of their competencies as English language professionals. For Johnson (2016), such policies have shifted the focus from that of accountability of competent professionals to compliance and control. Teachers were expected to comply to their institutions' goals, work efficiently to perform tasks which they believed to be irrelevant to their profession (e.g. QA jobs) and to document whatever activities they do for the accountability of the whole systems at these colleges (Darling-Hammond, 1990). The participants felt that teacher evaluation was based on the extent to which the teachers adhere to the procedures, rather than their actual knowledge and performance.

With reference to the phases of professionalism (Hargreaves, 2020), and Hoyle (1980) notions of restricted and extended professionalism discussed in the literature review chapter, it could be interpreted that the control of teaching and the restriction on teachers' autonomy at CoTs seem to represent the pre-professional age and the restricted professionalism where teachers are controlled by managerial and technical work which restrict them from making decisions on curriculum development or to choose what is best for their students.

Despite some teachers' objections towards, and reports of the negative effects of these managerial policies and practices, it is important to note that they might have been needed to ensure the high quality of teaching and learning. Participants 2, 4 and 5, for example, praised the supplementary materials policy, explaining that there were cases of teachers designing their own materials that were of low quality. Some of them were reported to contain language mistakes,

some were believed to have been downloaded from the internet with no reference to their original sources, and others were culturally inappropriate. Participant 2 also explained that consistency between materials taught by different teachers is needed to ensure the quality of instruction.

Thus, whilst the findings of this research support some previously made claims about the negative effects of teachers' marginality and control of teaching (e.g. Alnefaie, 2017; Hassan, 2014; Skinner et al., 2019), they also suggest that some degree of marginality and control of teaching may, in fact, be needed to maintain a high level of teaching and learning.

6.3.2 Intensification of teachers' work

Intensification of teachers' work was found to be another challenge that had an impact on the teachers' sense of professionalism. The teachers raised concerns that in addition to their "normal" tasks, such as "lesson planning and preparation; teaching [and] marking" (Participant 5), they were asked to perform administrative duties such as documenting their work activities for quality assurance inspections, and observing, recording and reporting their students' progress and attendance.

Concerns were raised particularly in relation to quality assurance, which they were expected to do without consent or prior notification. They also found themselves working long hours and being expected to come to work at the weekends to finish administrative paperwork. As previously noted, however, they believed that their main duties were to teach and prioritise their students' needs. As a result, they reported "stress", "frustration" and "confusion", and noted the negative impact of work on their personal life, quality of teaching, as well as their motivation and health and well-being. Overall, the teachers felt that their

professionalism and professional integrity was compromised. This is also in line with other studies (e.g. Ball, 2003; Clegg, 2008; Archer, 2008) which demonstrated that under the conditions of performativity and audit culture, professionals may become uncertain about the reasons for their actions.

The notion of intensification of teachers' work and its effects on the teachers' professionalism has been widely described in the literature (e.g. Ballet and Kelchtermans, 2009; Day and Smethem, 2009; Day et al., 2005; Hassan, 2014; Lam and Yan, 2011; Skinner et al. 2019; Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2014). Van Droogenbroeck et al., who examined changes in the objectives of today's education and their effects on teachers, reported that:

"The intensification thesis holds that teachers are increasingly subjected to external pressures from policymakers, supervisors, parents, and experts. This intensification results in an ever-expanding teaching role, a significant increase in non-teaching-related (largely administrative) workload, and less time for social contact with colleagues and in private life (…) These externally imposed demands reduce the autonomy and creativity in the classroom and appear to lead towards "deskilling" and "de-professionalisation" (p.100).

Rosenholtz (1987) also suggested that too much emphasis on paperwork will deviate teachers from teaching and, as a result, affect their commitment to work. Similar claims have been put forward by Lam and Yan (2011), who stated that: "school factors, such as volume of non-teaching workload, equitability in the distribution of work are found significantly influence the job satisfaction and teaching motivation of teachers." (p.333).

Day and Smethem's (2009) and Skinner et al.'s (2019) studies conducted in the UK found that educational reform policies in that context resulted in an increased

workload for teachers, which, in turn, resulted in stress, role ambiguity and loss of sense of professional identity. This, in turn, affected the teachers' mental health and well-being in the long run. In another study conducted in the UK, Day and Kington (2008) who found that the continuous raising of standards in the UK education system has led to an increase in the teachers' workload pressure and to a diversity of roles and responsibilities.

Hassan's (2014) study conducted in Bahrain, in turn, suggested that teachers' professional lives were mainly influenced by three factors, namely intensification of teachers' work, marginality of teachers and control in education. Finally, for Hargreaves (2003), intensification of teachers' work is one of the results or current reforms policies which may lead to early resignation of teachers.

Notwithstanding the above negative effects of intensification of teachers' work and having to perform tasks that lay beyond the scope of one's responsibilities, it is important to consider whether the described tasks were, in fact, "additional" tasks. Although there is no doubt that the way the teachers were asked to perform these tasks, which often involved threats and "forcing" the teachers to perform them, was not professional, the described tasks, themselves, arguably constitute relatively common responsibilities of teachers. This raises a question, in turn, as to the extent to which the problem may lie more in the quality of communication between the teachers and their superiors than in expecting the teachers to be involved in the described tasks (for a more detailed discussion of the need to improve the quality of communication between the two groups, see Section 7.2 in Chapter 7.

6.3.3 Working conditions

In addition to the poor quality of communication within the colleges, this study revealed that social values may be another influential factor affecting teacher professionalism in Oman. Some teachers felt that they were not treated equally to their native English-speaking colleagues, mainly in terms of the recruitment criteria and salaries. Regarding the recruitment criteria, whilst non-native English teachers are required to have at least an M.A. or Ph.D. to secure a job in TESL/TESOL in Oman, for native English speakers a BA is sufficient.

This so called “native speakerism”, or a false assumption that native English speakers are inherently good language teachers, as opposed to their non-native English-speaking counterparts who are merely incompetent imitators of the language (Selvi, 2010), has been widely investigated. Several studies (e.g. Jansem, 2017; Clark & Paran, 2007; Mahboob et.al; Moussu, 2006) have found, for example, that native English speakers' criterion is an important factor in the hiring process of teachers of English as second or foreign language and programme administrators in ELT. Moreover, Holiday and Aboshiha (2009) suggest this discrimination can also be racist, as the images of a 'native speaker' and 'standard English' are associated with Whiteness. Regardless of what the roots of the problem are, Clark and Paran (2007) raise concerns that as a result of it, English teachers who are fluent, well qualified and experienced may struggle to find employment because of their status.

The second aspect of discrimination reported in this current study was related to salary and benefits. The participants reported a wide discrepancy between native and non-native English teachers’ salary, although their job responsibilities were the same. This is in line with previous studies of this topic (e.g. Doan, 2014), and

these results validate the impression of undemocratic and unethical employment landscape (Selvi 2010) in the Colleges of Technology.

6.4 How do teachers respond to challenges and threats to professionalism?

6.4.1 Evading formal responses to threat and challenges

The findings revealed that most of the teachers avoided confrontations and preferred to comply or evade a formal response because of their fear of the consequences, including the fear of losing their job, and lack of belief that a formal response would help. Thomson (2008:87) explained that compliance might be a result of one of the four interpretations, namely “coercion”, corruption”, “cowardice” or “self-interest”. In the context of this current study, the teachers’ response could be interpreted as both a coercion and self-interest. It is a coercion because they wanted to avoid the possible consequences of their resistance towards the policies or confrontation with their superiors. It could also be seen as self-interest because they wanted to protect their salaries and jobs.

The results of this study reflect the findings from previous studies, including Shamatov (2006), who reported similar reactions from the teachers:

“They often passively complied with their administrators’ definition of a situation, even when they did not agree with it, because they wanted to avoid conflicts with the administrators. They refrained from expressing their views and resentments so as to avoid creating a negative image of themselves. In the absence of induction programmes and support, many of the potentially good young teachers abandoned teaching out of disappointment” (p.605)

Furthermore, Shamatov (2006) reported that "[during the] inspection of their practices by education officials (…) the teachers had to show the officials good practices and comply with their demands in order to avoid getting negative feedback and reprimands from the officials as well as their own administrators" (p. 608). It could be hypothesised that the passive reactions of some teachers represent a sort of curbed position, intentionally chosen by the teachers to evade confrontations. Such supposition is supported by Gaus and Hall (2016) who believe that "individuals can demonstrate their compliance, when it is observed at the public level within the surveillance of power holders" (p.686).

Some teachers, however, reported some forms of response to the threats to the challenges they faced, and among these "responses" were avoidance strategies.

6.4.2 Avoidance strategies

The teachers' responses to the reported threats varied, but some of them employed certain avoidance strategies, which are strategies often employed to avoid increasing one's workload (Anderson, 2008). This included, for example, "feigned ignorance" (Scott, 1986:22), evident in "pretending that they are ignorant about these things and so they will not be given any serious responsibility" (Participant 2). In other words, they were saying that they are unable to perform the type of task they were asked to do because they lack the relevant skills. Another reported avoidance strategy was to fail the task at the first attempt, or to deliberately perform it poorly because

"if you ask me to do a task and I do it excellently. That means you are going to come back to me and ask me to do it again, or an extra one. Because I'm capable. Whereas, my next colleague, if he or she fails, then you won't go to him or her, because she's not capable" (Participant 1).

Avoidance strategies have been documented in previous research into the teaching profession (e.g.Tusting, 2009), and Austin et al. (2005), for example, suggested that "teachers with high levels of stress are more likely to use negative coping strategies such as escape avoidance" (p.73). Considering the stress reported by the participants of this current study, it is also possible that this stress resulted in their increased use of avoidance strategies, although there is no direct evidence that would support this claim.

6.4.3 Gossiping and discussing with colleagues

Gossiping and discussing with colleagues about the situation they were in was another coping strategy mentioned by the participants. As noted in Chapter 3, Scott (1986 &1990) called these strategies "everyday forms of resistance" or the "power of the weak", which can be seen as a way to look for support from people who are experiencing the same problems. Similar findings have been reported by Gaus & Hall (2015) who described them in the following way:

"The offstage gossips circulated, whispered, and communicated among themselves every day in their works which take place without political arrangement and organisation, a resistance which sprang up discursively without someone to coordinate and consolidate. We will call this resistance as a resistance without an actual platform and leadership" (p.694).

According to Parker et al.'s (2012) classification, such reactions can be divided into positive and negative coping strategies, where evasion, avoidance, and gossiping reported in this current study constitute negative coping strategies. These strategies are passive and demonstrated a type of "docile resistance" against the threats that these professionals felt were caused by the policies implemented by the administrative staff. Scott (1980, 1985) calls these

behaviours' "hidden transcript" because they occur in absence of power groups, i.e., the administrators and managers imposing the policies. According to Scott, hidden transcripts are "discourse that takes place off stage beyond direct observation by the power holders" (p. 4) and may take the form of "featured by the use of languages, jokes, and criticism" (Gaus and Hall, 2015: 686).

The use of passive strategies by the participants may suggest that they felt powerless and preferred to employ passive strategies rather than directly confront their superiors ("it's easier to do that than to reason with the policy makers" – Participant 6). According to Martin's (2007, cited in Parker et al. 2012: 505) this reflects "a predominately short-term avoidant and emotion-focused approach to coping with setbacks and challenges". The assumption about the participants feeling powerless, in turn, Gaus and Hall's (2016) claim that

> "some academics from Universities A, B, and C utilised their helpless condition for justification to comply with and at the same time evade this pressure. This helpless position was another kind of hidden or discursive resistance in form of their helplessness state of being" (p.691-692).

However, according to Anderson (2008), this type of passive resistance practices (evasion, avoidance, gossips) can potentially undermine power structures. She suggests focusing on understanding these subtle forms of resistance "which recognize more routinised, informal and often inconspicuous forms of resistance in everyday practice" (p.253-254). This is because these everyday forms of resistance are more widespread now and often prove more effective than the direct confrontational modes (Scott, 1986 cited in Anderson, 2008). Moreover, if these passive forms of resistance involve reflections about the top-down power imposition, the teachers might develop more structured and organised ways to deal with the challenges and threats to their sense of professionalism.

Despite the effectiveness of everyday forms of resistance, some scholars (e.g. Anderson, 2008; Clegg, 1994; Thomson 2008) have argued that unless these forms are collective and organised responses, they can prove problematic and are unlikely to bring about major change to policies as they are “easily subject to organisational treatment” Clegg, 1994; cited in Anderson 2008: 259). With this in mind, and considering that no participants reported any collective resistance practices, the teachers’ efforts are unlikely to be effective.

6.4.4 Direct responses

Although most of the participants did not mention any official form of response, Participant 10 reported that he and a group of fellow Omani colleagues went to the ministry to file a complaint about the discrepancy between their salaries and benefits as a company employees and those of their counterparts employed by the government. According to Parker et al. (2012), such reactions represent positive coping strategies framed into a problem-resolving perspective. A question remains, however, whether the response from the Omani teachers was the result of their self-confidence stemming from their nationality, and whether the expat teachers would find similar courage to act.

As demonstrated above, most of the reported “reactions” to threats to professionalism were rather passive, with some participants reporting no reaction at all and only one participant describing a formal action taken against the challenges he faced. In Phase 2 interviews, however, when the participants were asked to suggest hypothetical responses to the scenarios developed on the basis of Phase 1 data analysis, they provided much more detailed accounts of what should be done in these circumstances.

6.5 How Do Teachers Respond to Scenarios Developed from Phase 1 Findings?

Compared to the real challenges discussed in Phase 1, the teachers' responses to "hypothetical" scenarios based on the analysis of Phase 1 data were much more detailed. The described reactions were also much more proactive and "brave". One explanation behind the teachers' confidence during Phase 2 might be that the hypothetical scenarios offered them emotional safety and comfort, as discussing something merely in theory enabled them to distance themselves from the situation without the burden of having to take the responsibility for discussing their real actions. As previously noted, the most discussed reactions involved open dialogue with the management. This suggests that they would employ what is called "principled resistance" (Thomson, 2008:92), as most of them refused to comply with the policies and would attempt to discuss their point of view with the management, supporting their point of view with evidence. According to Thomson (2008), principled resistance is employed by teachers who are self-confident and able to argue their point of view with the management.

The preference to have a dialogue with management could also suggest that the teachers would like to be taken into account given that they considered themselves as being professionally able to offer new alternatives to the managerial policies and to what is suitable for their students, themselves and the management. However, they raised concerns that there is no platform for this kind of communication, and the management would not listen to them and acknowledge their point of view. Section 7.2 in Chapter 7 discusses the implications of this finding in more detail.

Importantly, a minority of the participants still preferred to avoid confronting the management staff. They would choose to deviate the confrontation by accepting the overload but performing poorly. In other words, they would employ what is called “minimal compliance” (Anderson, 2008), which involves deliberately performing the given task poorly.

6.6 Chapter Summary

The findings of this study have provided insights into the teachers’ perceptions of teacher professionalism and contributed to understanding the challenges and threats to the teachers’ sense of professionalism, as well as their responses to these challenges. In particular, understanding that, in the participants’ view, prioritising the students’ needs and well-being is the single most important goal of the profession enabled the researcher to make sense of the remaining responses. Being treated as a professional teacher, for example, involves, according to them, being treated in a way that, essentially, enables them to focus on teaching and, as mentioned above, prioritise their students’ needs. The challenges they discussed, in turn, were, again, very much related to various practices that, ultimately, hindered the teachers’ flexibility, autonomy and ability to deliver the highest possible quality of teaching.

The findings also revealed that all policies that were found to pose a threat to the teachers’ sense of professionalism were top-down and the teachers had no input in developing them. Although the findings were largely consistent with many of the previous studies conducted in other contexts (e.g. Day and Smethem, 2009; Hassan, 2014; Skinner et al. 2019), the study provides insights into the strong influence that power ties have on the education of English in the CoTs in Oman,

which, in turn, resulted in the teachers' passive responses to the managerial policies.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This study aimed to explore teachers' interpretations of the concept of teacher professionalism, their perceptions of the managerial policies that have an impact on this sense of professionalism, as well as their responses to these policies.

The study was an attempt to address a gap in the existing studies of teacher professionalism, as few studies have addressed this topic from the teachers' point of view in the field of TESOL. Also, although a large body of research on the impact of managerial policies on teacher professionalism and identities exists, few studies have explored teachers' responses to managerialism (Anderson, 2008). The study was also a response to McGinity and Hall's (2016) call for research into how compliance to managerial policies is being established and why resistance is ignored. Finally, research into the above topics in the context of Oman is almost non-existent, and as no teaching context is the same, it is neither feasible nor desirable to make claims about the experiences of teachers in Oman based on the existing studies which predominantly focused on other national contexts.

The key findings of this study from both phases can be summarised as follows:

- In the teachers' view, professionalism constitutes both a way of acting and the way the teachers are being treated. Regarding the former, a professional teacher is, essentially, one that prioritises his/her students' needs, sets an example and acts in a professional and ethical way. Being treated as a professional, on the other hand, is mainly about being trusted,

involved and respected. A professional teacher is, therefore, given autonomy to flexibly adjust teaching methods and materials to the students' needs, is involved in decision making and is being given opportunities to develop professionally. Essentially, being treated as a professional teacher involves being treated in a way that enables the teacher to *act* as a professional teacher.

- Three main threats to the teachers' sense of professionalism were established, namely teachers' marginality and control of teaching, intensification of teachers' work and working conditions. Each of these threats were fostered by specific policies regarding class observations, material development and adaptation and the delegation of quality assurance tasks as well the recruitment criteria and payment between native and non-native speaking teachers. On further analysis, it became evident that these were considered threats because, essentially, the way these policies were implemented was believed to deprive the teachers of autonomy, to affect their sense of being trusted and respected, and to affect their motivation and teaching performance. Therefore, considering the previously noted teachers' conceptualisations of professionalism, these policies did not enable the teachers to fully prioritise their students' needs, which was, in the teachers' view, at the core of acting as a professional teacher.
- The sense of compromised professionalism was found to affect the teachers' motivation to teach, mental and physical well-being, their teaching performance, and their personal lives. As a result, it affected their ability to act as professional teachers, and was associated with them experiencing identity conflict.

- Regarding the way the teachers responded to these threats, they were mostly found not to respond at all or to adopt negative avoidance strategies. They mainly justified these responses by referring to fear of the consequences of confronting their superiors, and the belief that such action would not bring about any meaningful change.
- In Phase 2, however, when speaking *hypothetically* about possible responses to the presented scenarios, their responses were much more in-depth, and the teachers described in much detail how the discussed issues should be addressed. This further strengthened the argument that whilst they were well aware of possible ways to address the discussed problems in theory, in practice they did not did not feel able to speak up about these problems.

7.2 Implications

Based on the findings of this study, it is possible to draw several implications for policy and practice in the studied context. Applying the recommendations discussed below may potentially develop a more positive sense of professionalism, which was shown both by this and the previous studies to ultimately influence the quality of teaching and the teachers' willingness to remain in their profession.

Regarding the implications for general policy development, involving teachers in the process of policy development and making other teaching-related decisions, as well as considering their input in the form of feedback (Lamb, 1995) may be the first step towards overcoming certain challenges to teacher professionalism and, as a result, fostering that sense of professionalism and enabling high quality of teaching. As emerged from the findings, the policies and practices at CoTs are

mostly imposed either by the MoM or the colleges' management, and the teachers raised concerns that their voices were not considered. Moreover, most of the participants agreed that on a wider institutional level, the communication should be improved, and teachers should be better informed about new and existing policies or managerial requests. They noted that their consent, particularly when dealing with extra duties (e.g. quality assurance), was not taken into account and, instead, these duties were imposed on them. Therefore, the suggestion is that teachers should be better informed about such decisions and policies, should be asked about their consent to participate, and should be involved in decision making "from [the] start" (Participant 22).

Ensuring equality between the teachers at the workplace is another fundamental issue that would foster the teachers' sense of professionalism at CoTs. The policy makers should realise that the employees' ethnicity or nationality is irrelevant to their value as academics (Neal, 2010), and this should be reflected in equal pay regardless of one's national or ethnic background. The same applies to the recruitment strategies that tend to favour native speakers of English over non-native English speakers. It is also of paramount importance to adopt policies that instil greater sense of job security since it plays a great role in teachers' motivation and innovation (Khan, 2011).

With regard to local, institutional-level policies related to specific teaching activities, the findings also helped to make several recommendations. The dominant theme underlying the discussion of all three policies that the teachers found to be problematic was the need to improve the quality of communication between the management and the teachers at the institutional level. The participating teachers suggested that classroom observation should be meant for

teacher professional development and, therefore, the teacher should be involved in the whole process. They suggested that the teacher should be involved in the arrangements of the observation so that the details of the observation including the time and venue should be agreed and communicated in advance with the teacher's involvement. They also suggested that teachers should be involved in the post-lesson discussion, as this would help them reflect on their teaching practices and, as a result, improve them. This suggestion is in line with Freeman and Richards (1996) who argued that listening to teachers in the post-lesson discussion, acknowledging their beliefs and experiences and giving them opportunities to reflect on their classroom decisions could develop teachers' awareness of the importance of reflection and guide them to become reflective practitioners. Additionally, involving the teachers in the post-lesson discussion, listening to them and allowing them to justify their teaching approaches would enable the observer to understand the rationale for the teachers' classroom behaviour (Basturkmen, 2007 and Vacilotto & Cummings, 2007). In addition, some participants also suggested that management members should be trained in order to conduct a professional classroom observation. This suggestion is consistent with Cosh (1999) who argued that helping teachers to reflect on their lessons and giving them constructive feedback on their performance is not an easy skill and not all those who are responsible for observing teachers performance can do this appropriately unless they are trained to do so.

Regarding the supplementary materials policy, the participants also mainly emphasised the importance of communication between the teachers and the management, as well as the need to improve it. Management members should listen to teachers' concerns regarding the textbook limitations and their

justifications for the need of supplementary materials. The teachers' concerns should be acknowledged, and the teachers should be trusted and given the freedom to exercise their knowledge and expertise for deciding and designing what is suitable for their learners (Person and Moomaw, 2005). Because students are the top priority of the professional teachers' work, in contexts where the management is not confident in some of the individual teachers' competencies to design materials, the participating teachers suggested that, this job could be assigned to a group of well qualified and interested teachers. This is because "group work is always better (…) they can revise to each other, they can share ideas, they can come up with the new ways how to deliver things in class" (Participant 15).

Communication was also a theme in the discussions of work distribution and planning, and here the teachers suggested that more communication regarding the expected tasks, which they saw as "additional", is needed. Bearing this in mind, it is also possible to suggest the improved communication between the management and the teachers may involve a clearer explanation of what the teachers' responsibilities in fact are, as some tasks and responsibilities such as "doing one to one tutorial", "conducting remedial classes" and "attending department's and committees meetings" that the teachers described as additional seem to be relatively common tasks in which teachers at any level are involved. It would help, therefore, to ensure that teachers are clear about the scope of their responsibilities when arriving in their new job. Having said that, rather than the mere fact of being required to perform these tasks, the problem that most teachers discussed was the way these tasks were announced to them, which involved forcing and threatening the teachers to perform the task. This, in turn,

further strengthens the argument that communication between the teachers and the management should be improved.

7.3 Contribution to Knowledge and Practice

As previously discussed, the literature shows there are different meanings attached to teacher professionalism (Fox, 2016). These definitions do not always prioritise teachers' interpretations of the concept (Bair, 2016; Dahghan, 2020) particularly within the field of TESOL (Kurowski, 2018). This suggests the need for a framework that would help in analysing and understanding of English language teachers' interpretations of teacher professionalism. Thus, as seen in Figure 7.1, the results of this study contributed to the existing literature on teacher professionalism by providing a theoretical framework that is used to inform the analysis of English language teachers' understanding of teacher professionalism. This framework is based on Furlong's (2013), Furlong et al., 2000; Evetts (2009) and Waring and Evans (2015) explanations of teacher professionalism and it links between different concepts related to teacher professionalism such as meanings and forms.

Additionally, the review of literature and context chapter show that there have been changes in the policy environment at various countries including Oman and therefore, there is a need for a framework that would help in exploring English language teachers' perceptions of these changes and their impact on teachers' sense of professionalism within the changing context. To address this need, this study's framework used Evetts (2009) model of forms of professionalism and Waring and Evans (2015) categorization of professional identity and that's enabled the understanding of how English language teachers perceive their professionalism and how they been treated in Oman. The framework also

enabled the identification of various policy changes, the form of teacher professionalism and professional identity that exist at CoTs and how this impacted on teachers' sense of professionalism. The findings of this study showed that, the policy changes at CoTs have promoted managerial form of professionalism which in some cases have not only affected teacher professionalism but rather produced teachers with "incorporated identity" (Waring & Evans, 2015) who are compliant to these managerial policies (Evetts, 2009). Therefore, this framework might be useful in informing the analysis of local and international studies that attempt to examine the different meanings attached to teacher professionalism, the forms of teacher professionalism, how teachers are treated, the challenges of the current reform policies and their effects on teachers' professionalism and professional identities.

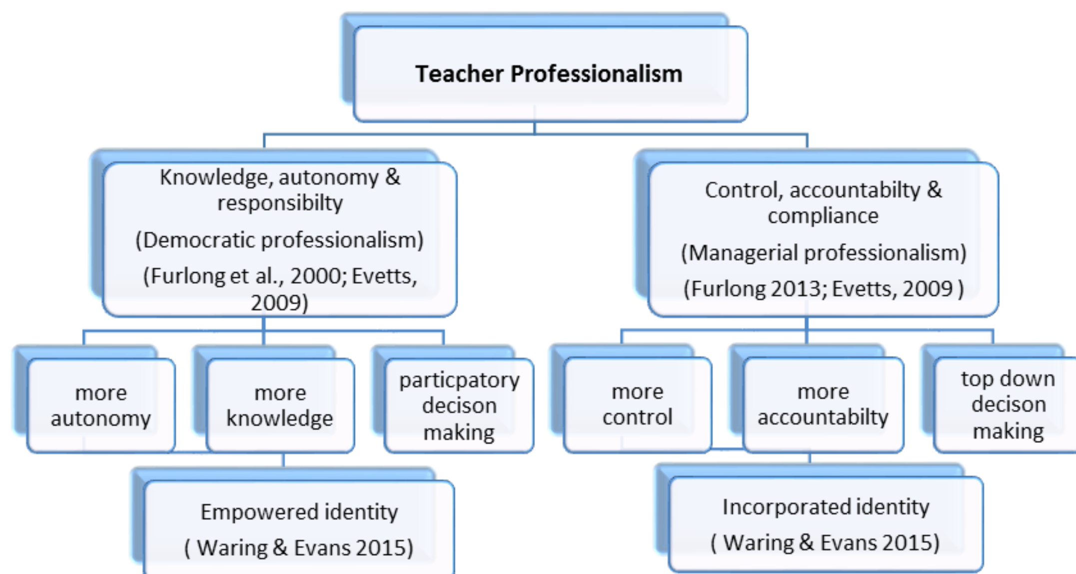

Figure 7.1: The Theoretical Framework Diagram

Additionally, the findings in this research showed how English language teachers at the CoTs interpret teacher professionalism. The findings from this study aimed

to address the paucity of existing research on the meaning of teacher professionalism (Helsby, 1995; Kurowski, 2018; Osmond-Johnson, 2016) and added to the literature in this area by highlighting that the professional teacher is one who prioritises his/her student learning over other duties and should be treated accordingly by the management. Similarly, the results are in line with many previous studies that discussed challenges and threats of managerial policies and the effects they have on teacher professionalism, professional identities, motivation and commitment (e.g. Alnefaei, 2017; Day and Smethem, 2009; Day et al., 2005; Hassan, 2014, Skinner et al., 2019). This study also shed further light on these previous results by suggesting that poor communication between the management and teachers may be at the core of many other challenges.

Another strength of this study is that, by supporting some previous findings from studies conducted in other geographical contexts (Alnefaie, 2016, Edstam, 2001; Hassan, 2016; Helsby, 1995; Osmond-Johnson, 2016; Skinner, 2019; Smethem, 2001) as well as adding further insights to these findings, this study enriched our context-specific knowledge of the notion of professionalism, as well as the threats and responses to it in this particular cultural context. The study shed light on how English language teachers at CoTs perceive specific educational policies established at the CoTs, and suggested that some wider policies, including the previously mentioned teacher recruitment in Oman, may also need to be reviewed.

Additional insights were also provided by contradicting some previous claims regarding teachers' responses to managerial policies and practices (e.g. Gaus and Hall, 2015; Anderson, 2008). This current study demonstrated that the

teachers were not always active or resistant to these policies, but most cases rather compliant and passive. This is because there were occasions when such response was preferable in order to avoid coercive consequences such as loss of the job. However, by doing so, the teachers may contribute to their self-marginalisation.

Finally, the methodological contribution of this study was in its use of the Phase 2 scenarios. When the teachers' responses to threats to professionalism in Phase 1 are compared with the *hypothetical* responses in Phase 2, it is evident that presenting the participants with these hypothetical scenarios was a highly effective approach. As previously noted, it seems that even though the teachers were discussing problems that were very real and relevant to their experiences, discussing them *hypothetically* enabled them to separate themselves from the experience and speak more freely about it. Thus, this study has added additional insights into the effectiveness of using this type of approach, for, as previously noted, few studies to date have assessed this technique particularly in the domain of education (Stravakou and Lozgka, 2018). In addition to adding to the relatively limited number of studies in the field of education that have assessed scenarios as a research tool, the results generally suggest that this technique is effective and should be considered in exploring teacher professionalism and resistance. Adopting this kind of approach could be very effective, therefore, in studies that aim to discuss the participants' problematic or traumatic experiences, and more attention should be given to this method (Jenkins et al., 2010; Schoenberg & Ravdal 2000; Stravakou and Lozgka, 2018).

7.4 Limitations

As part of the study was concerned with specific managerial policies, the limitation was that the study only considered teachers' point of view. There were many instances in this study where the teachers were very critical of administrators and policy makers, but because the voices of these stakeholders were absent, it is not clear to what extent the teachers' views reflected their experiences and to what extent they may have indicated the previously mentioned poor communication between the two groups. Thus, the sample that was limited only to teachers has limited the opportunities to validate the findings and gain more in-depth data from a variety of stakeholders.

Additionally, as the only method of data collection were interviews, validation through triangulation of methods was not possible. If more data sources were added, additional data would have allowed to explore this issue from different angles/ perspectives. The following section describes in more detail what kind of methods could be considered in future research to address this limitation of this current study.

Another limitation of this study is related to the specific context and sample of the study, as it focused only on the CoTs. However, as there are other different government institutions under different ministries (e.g. Sultan Qaboos University and Applied Science Colleges are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education), it would be beneficial to investigate these various contexts. Doing so would provide further insights into the concept of teacher professionalism and how it is understood in these institutions as opposed to CoT employees that this study investigated. Moreover, though the study involved teachers from different nationalities and backgrounds e.g. native and non-native

speakers of English, it did not aim to explore differences between these groups. Furthermore, the analysis did not consider all the themes discussed in the literature review such as the different types of resistance. This is because there was not enough evidence to examine these themes and concepts.

7.5 Suggestions for Further Research

This study points to problems related to the teachers' sense of professionalism and highlights certain discrepancies between their understanding of professionalism and the way they are treated by their managers. The teachers perceived themselves as professionals who should be trusted and involved in decision making because of their credentials (qualifications), expertise and knowledge. However, the way they are treated is at odds with these perceptions. This may suggest the need for further research into specific leadership practices in the contexts where more extended and occupational forms of professionalism are operationalised (Hoyle, 1980; Sachs, 2011), including the Omani context itself.

Another area that should be examined further are inequalities in the workplace. The findings showed that there existed forms of discrimination related to the recruitment and payment policies between native and non-native English-speaking teachers at CoTs. Therefore, investigating what non-native English teachers believe about the workplace and recruitment practices may add further insights into possible issues with recruitment criteria and payments, as well both the reasons for, and the effects of this treatment.

With regard to the methodological suggestions, future studies may consider exploring both the teachers' and other stakeholders' (the administrators and the policy makers) points of view in order to present a more balanced argument by

means of a variety of methods. One suggested method that would increase the validity of findings and contributing to triangulation of methods are reflective journals, or diaries. The teacher participants would be asked to, overall a long period of time, fill in such journals, to which the guidelines would be provided by the researcher. This method has been used in several studies of teacher identity (e.g. Morita, 2004; Park, 2012), and is known for its effectiveness in gathering data related to situations and experiences that are difficult for the researcher to observe (Robson, 2002). Asking the participants fill in their diaries also gives them more time to come up with ideas (ibid.) than the interviews, during which they may feel the time pressure when trying to remember experiences relevant to the topic of the interview.

Another method to consider in future studies may be focus groups, or group discussions between group members who share same or similar background, experiences or characteristics (Franz, 2011). Advantages of this method include the large amount of data that can be collected in a short time, as well as the fact that due to the shared background, sometimes focus group participants provide much more data than they would in individual interviews (Acocella, 2012). Thus, focus group discussions could be conducted not only among the teachers but also among the other stakeholders mentioned above. In this case teachers' discussions could be separated from other stakeholders as some teachers may not be confident to share their views in front of their managers.

Finally, in order to be able to explore transferability of the findings to broader population, more institutions and stakeholders could be involved in a large-scale, longitudinal study in the future. Exploratory mixed-methods approach could be adopted in order to first gather qualitative data and then, based on that data,

develop quantitative instruments of data collection (Creswell & Clark, 2011) in order to investigate a wider context.

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Appendix One: Ministry of Higher Education Decision

Poor Results of Graduates of [removed for anonymity purposes] in Dubai

The Ministry of Higher Education in Oman decided to discontinue university enrolment of Omani students at the [removed for anonymity purposes] in Dubai. The decision was made due to poor outputs and results of graduates of these two institutions and also low rates of job interviews of the graduates. Moreover, the Ministry decided to disqualify the two universities depending on an extensive investigation conducted by Committee for the Equivalence of University Degrees in coordination with Cultural Attaché and relevant employment providers. However, qualifications of the already enrolled students, before this decision, will be assessed upon fulfilling other equivalence conditions.

[The institution's name is removed for anonymity purposes]:

Director of the Office of Degree Equivalence, Saied bin Amer Ar-rahbi, declared that there are several reasons behind this decision. He mentioned that the [removed for anonymity purposes] was established in 1988 as a private college, and then it later on developed to become a university.

The Ministry made a study to determine levels and achievements of the graduated students. The study was jointly conducted with various job and employment providers that attract graduates of this university. The study showed that the percentage of passing job interviews for positions of the Ministry of Education was 43% in 2013-2014. Yet, this percentage dropped to 6% in 2014-2015. This obviously shows the large decline in the graduates' academic levels.

In other words, in the scholastic year 2013-2014, the job interview passing rate for female applicants was 43% compared to 67% for male applicants.

Numerically, there were 3 male applicants, of whom 2 passed the job interviews. In contrast, there were 51 female applicants. Only 22 of them passed the job interviews. In 2014-2015, the rate of passing job interviews for female was 6%. Precisely, there were 51 female applicants, but only 3 of them passed the job interviews. However, there were no male applicants in this period.

The study concluded that the low rate of interview passers could be attributed to low level of the university academic programmes and relevant subjects given to the students. Too, the study referred to negligence and carelessness of students of their studies and assignments. This lack of care by the students is ascribed to the fact the [removed for anonymity purposes] is a private institution that is not fully observing clear-cut academic standards and quality of educational programmes. Furthermore, the university allows the enrolment of students of poor achievements in their pre-university diplomas.

Ar-rahbi added that depending on the above mentioned facts, which show the low rate and poor achievements of graduates of the [removed for anonymity purposes], the Committee for the Equivalence of University Degrees recommended to remove this institution from the list of accredited universities of the United Arab Emirates. Accordingly, Omani students are no longer allowed to study at the [removed for anonymity purposes]. Moreover, qualifications of any enrolled students at this institution, after declaring this decision, will not be accredited and/or given an academic equivalence.

[The institution's name is removed for anonymity purposes]

As for the [removed for anonymity purposes], the director of the Accreditation and Equivalence Office said that this institution is a university college status. Its focus is on teaching Islamic Law and Arabic Language and Literature. The institution is officially accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the United Arab Emirates. It is in the rank of 45 out of 51 similar institutions in the United Arab Emirates. This rank is low compared to other educational institutions (Web Ranking).

Total number of the Omani students enrolled at this university, in the under graduate stage, is 2326 (Males and Females). There are also 28 female students enrolled as postgraduates at this university. These numbers jointly form 68% of the total number of the Omani students studying in the United Arab Emirates. The reason behind presence of a large number of Omani students, especially females, enrolled at this university is the fact that studying at it totally free. The university is an endowment institution, which does not charge its students any fees for the educational services it provides. This provision excludes postgraduate studies, where the students pay only a small fee. On top of these exemptions, the students get financial allowances.

Ar-rahbi added that the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman made an investigation regarding levels of the graduates of the [removed for anonymity purposes]. The survey shows that the job interview passing rate of the graduates of this university was 42% in 2013-2014. Yet, this rate diminished to become 40% in 2014-2015, which denotes a general decline of the graduate levels. Particularly, in the scholastic year 2013-2014, job interview passing rates were 51% and 24% for females and males respectively. On the other hand, in the

period of 2014-2015, the rates were 43% and 25% for females and males respectively.

Overall, the investigation concluded that the low rate of passers could be attributed to the poor academic performance of the [removed for anonymity purposes] in terms of programmes and teaching objectives. In addition to this, obvious carelessness of the students of their studies augments the problem.

Source: Al-shabiba (Youth) Newspaper, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. http://shabiba.com/article/75416/ [accessed Date: 25 February 2015]

Appendix Two: The study's theoretical framework

Conceptions of professionalism	Meaning	Professionalism means different things to different people	It's about qualification & experience	Horn (2016) and Lam (1983), interpret teacher professionalism as just simply holding a high degree in education and spending a number of years in teaching.
			It's about knowledge, autonomy and responsibility	"The three concepts of knowledge, autonomy and responsibility, central to a traditional notion of professionalism, are often seen as closely interrelated" (Furlong et al., (2000).
			It's about knowledge, behaviour & what is morally right or good	O' Neill and Bourke (2010) professionalism, includes identification of a unique body of occupational knowledge, adherence to desirable standards of behaviour, processes to hold members accountable and committed to what the profession regards as morally right or good.
			It's beliefs about professional obligations, values and behaviours.	Swisher and Page (2005: 2 cited in Phelps 2006) professionalism refers to "the internalized beliefs. .. regarding professional obligations, attributes, interactions, attitudes, values, and role behaviours".
			It's about autonomy Vs. hierarchical control	Halls (cited in Aun Toh et, al 2006), there are two levels of professionalism. The first level supports the notion of autonomy where the individual determines his own professionalism, when he is his own boss. The second level is where the professional is subordinated to hierarchical administrations. In this level the control is exercised by hierarchical regulations.
			It's about quality of practice	Hoyle (1980), describes professionalism as the quality of practice.

			It's about responsibility & respect	Phelps (2006) concludes the three Rs', responsibility, respect and risk taking, constitute teachers' professionalism.
	Feature	**It is dynamic and changing over time**		Evetts (2003) it is "not fixed and the social analysis of the concept has demonstrated changes over time both in its interpretation and function" (p.411). For Sachs (2001 cited in Tansem 2018:145) "professionalism gradually evolves over time and contexts as a response to external power including, for example, scientific development and business movement".
Forms of teacher professionalism (The concept being redefined differently and new forms of professionalism have been adapted to serve different groups' interests and needs.	**1) Managerial professionalism (professionalism from above)**	**Features**	A) Teacher's accountability & system effectiveness	- It is being promoted by the authorities to accomplish teachers' accountability and system effectiveness (Sachs, 2000).
			B) Hierarchical decision making (top down police s and decision making)	- "Schools from the managerialist professionalism are agents of governments that can be administered by hierarchical decision making and control" (Darling-Hammond, 1990:38). -Has a hierarchy form of a structure so the decision making process is 'top down'. - Policies are made at the top of the system and handed down to administrators who translate them into rules and procedure.
			C) Centralised curriculum (objectives, textbook, teaching methods, students assessment) and teachers are just operatives of the curriculum and other polices	- Curriculum planning is done by administrators & specialists; teachers are to implement a curriculum planned for them (Darling-Hammond, 1990:43). - Teachers job is to follow the rules and procedures (class schedules, curricula, textbooks, rules for promotion and assignment of students, etc.) (Darling-Hammond, 1990, 39).

		- Teachers are no longer autonomous in their decisions particularly that concerned with curriculum and pedagogic. - Centralised textbook and assessment (Darling-Hammond, 1990) - Lack of flexibility in the classroom for determining teaching methods" (Darling-Hammond, 1990:40)
	D) An increase in paperwork	- "Increases in paperwork required to monitor students and school activities" (Darling-Hammond, 1990: 57)
	E) The professional teacher is the one who is compliant to the managerialist policies and imperatives	- The professional teacher from the managerialist professionalism is the "one who work efficiently and effectively in meeting the set policies, regulations and standardised criteria set for the accomplishment of both students and teachers, as well as contributing to the school's formal accountability processes" (Brennan 1996 cited in Sachs 2000:80). - "The standard for accountability is compliance rather than effectiveness" (Darling-Hammond, 1990:43).
	F) Teacher evaluation focuses on following the curriculum procedures	- "Inspections of teachers' work is conducted by supervisors whose job it is to make sure that the teacher is implementing the curriculum and procedures of the district" (Darling-Hammond, 1990, 43). - "Evaluation criteria stress good soldiership and conformity with managerial policies rather than knowledgeable advocacy of appropriate teaching practices" (Darling-Hammond, 1990, 43).

		G) Teacher evaluation is organised by a checklist and focuses on general teaching skills	-"Teachers are assessed in a standard manner using general criteria, such as generic teaching skills (does the teacher plan? set objectives? Cover the curriculum?). The evaluation is highly standardised, procedurally oriented and organised by checklist" (Darling-Hammond, 1990, 50)
2) Democratic professionalism (Professionalism from within)	**Features**	A) Seeks to demystify teacher's work	- Seen as an approach which is highly resistance to organisational change (Evetts) 2009). It is an alternative to the managerialist control or what is called the "state control" of teaching profession and seeks to "demystify professional work" (Whitty 2000:292)
		B) Considerable autonomy	- The control is operationalised by the teachers themselves over their work. Teachers enjoy considerable autonomy within their classroom (Hall & McGinity, 2015).
		C) Participatory decision making process between the teachers and the management	- In democratic schools teachers are given the right to participate in the school decisions, to reflect on and analyse their schools polices and share their ideas with policy makers to solve problems in these policies and to improve their working conditions.
		D) Promote activist identity	- Accordingly, in democratic schools teachers are encouraged to develop "activist identities" (Sachs 2001:157).
		E) Teachers are involved in the evaluation process	- Democratic/professional evaluation involves teachers in the development and operation of teacher evaluation processes.

The effects of the current reforms policies on teachers (From autonomous teachers to operatives of top down policies)	**Demotivate teachers**	1) The current wave of educational reform has hindered teacher professionalism and teachers in many countries have cited ways in which their ability and motivation to feel and behave as professionals have been negatively affected (Day, 1999).
	Increase workload Affect identities Lack of trust	2) They challenge teachers' practices; 3) They result in an increased workload for teachers; 4) They don't pay attention to teachers'; identities- arguably central to motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and effectiveness; and 5) Teachers' work internationally, is now more transparent, its quality more closely monitored and teachers themselves are held to more public account for students' progress and attainment (Day & Smethem, 2009).
	Cause work pressure & resignation	6) " [In UK] the national Curriculum is seen as the major agency for teachers' sense of losing control and for the dramatic increase in stress levels, the collapse of teacher morale and the flood of early retirements that have been noted" Goodson (1997:137)
	Control teachers work	7) Teacher professionalism has been vulnerable to state politicians' control, restrictions and lack of support Day (1999) & Hargreaves (2000).
	Cause early resignation & retirement	8) They subjected teachers to public attacks which in turn resulted in early resignation and retirement and shortages of capable teaching staff (Hargreaves; 2003:2).
	Devalue teacher's work	9) They devalued the teaching profession and accordingly many teachers want to leave the teaching profession and fewer want to join it (Hargreaves; 2003:2).
	Cause lack of trust in teachers work & lack of power in decision making	10) The notion of trust in what teachers do is being eliminated and they no longer had the power to make decisions but were regarded as mere employees in the chain of command (Barton et, al. 1994)
	Diversity of roles and responsibilities	11) The continuous raising of standards has led to an increase in the teachers' workload pressure and to a diversity of roles and responsibilities (Day and Kington, 2008)
	Kill creativity and innovation	12) The standardisation of activities also kills creativity and innovation because things are done in a particular way leaving little room for the imagination (Johnston (2015).
	Cause intensification of	13) Teachers' professional lives were influenced by three main contextual factors; intensification of teachers' work, marginality of teachers and control in education (Hassan (2014).

	teachers' work and marginality		
	Lower teacher's commitment and dedication	15) Managerial tasks that overburdening teachers with paperwork will deviate teachers from teaching and in turn lower their commitment to work (Rosenholtz, 1987).	
Professional identity	**Definition of professional identity**	It is related to how professional we feel we are as teachers and how professionally we are treated by others (Johnston, 1997; Edstam, 2001).	
	Forms of professional identity (Waring and Evans 2015)	1)Incorporated professional identity	The incorporate teacher is an accountable, responsible, and efficient teacher who is compliant to administrative policies and provides consistent, high-quality service.
		2) The empowered professional identity	Which is driven by collegial professionalism and not by dictated instruction from hierarchical position.

Appendix Three: Participant Information Sheet

Dear teachers,

My name is Salim Bani Orabah. I am a doctorate student at the University of Exeter, in the Graduate School of Education. I am planning to conduct a research study in partial fulfilment of a degree of Doctor of Education, which I invite you to take part in. The following information are about the aims of this study and the way I would like to use information about you if you choose to be in the study.

You are being asked to participate in a research study about teacher professionalism and identity at the Colleges of Technology in Oman. The study aims to explore English language teachers' interpretation of the concept of professionalism in teaching and the tensions that they have experienced/are experiencing as a result of the policy changes and the working conditions at the colleges of technology. It also aims to understand the ways in which these tensions affect teachers' professional and personal lives and the strategies they have used/are using to cope with these tensions.

Participation in this study is voluntary and your responses will be exclusively used for the study purposes and will be regarded as confidential. I would like to emphasise that no personal details of any respondent will be mentioned in the findings, nor will any of the results be related to any particular teacher. Please be also informed that the results in an anonymised form may be used for the study publication.

The study utilises semi-structured interviews as a key research method. Each interview will take approximately 60 minutes and all of the interviews will be audio recorded and they will take place at the English Language Centre.

If you are interested to participate in this study please confirm by giving your details through the email below. I very much appreciate your participation in this study. If you have any concerns about the study that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me through the emails below.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Regards,

Salim Bani Orabah

sb763@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix Four: Phase 1 & 2 semi-structured interview schedules

Phase 1 semi-structured interview schedule

1) Could you please tell me about yourself and your experiences in teaching?

2) Why did you choose to become a teacher?

3) From your point of view, what does it mean to be a professional teacher?

4) Do you think you are generally treated as a professional?

5) Can you give me an example(s) from your professional experience where you believed that your professionalism was recognised and/or supported? Can you give a more detailed description of what happened? How did you respond to this?

6) Can you give me an example(s) from your professional experience where you believed your professionalism was compromised or endangered? Can you give a more detailed description of what happened? How did you respond to this?

7) Are you able to describe any internal policy changes that have affected your working life? Were these policy changes discussed or negotiated with you or were they more imposed?

8) What are the effects of this policy change(s) on your professional or personal life?

9) Are you able to describe any external policy changes that have affected your working life? Were these policy changes discussed or negotiated with you or were they more imposed?

10) What are the effects of this policy change(s) on your professional or personal life?

11) Are there any other comments that you would like to add?

Phase 2 Semi-structured Interview Schedule

1. What is your initial response to this scenario?
2. In what ways does this connect to your ideas about professionalism?
3. In what ways do you think you might have responded to being in this situation?
4. Have you ever experienced a similar situation to this?
5. What possible solution could you suggest to resolve the issue?

Appendix Five: Phase 2 Piloting Questions

For the scenario discussed

Did you find the scenario clear and understandable?

Do you think that the scenario succeeds in raising some issues?

Would you like to propose any changes to this scenario?

For the accompanying questions

Did you find the accompanying questions clear and understandable?

Do you think that the questions are examining the issues that the scenario raises?

Would you like to propose any additional questions for this scenario?

In sum

Do you feel that there were issues left undiscussed?

Do you have any overall comments or suggestions?

Adapted from Koutsouris (2014).

Appendix Six: Sample of an Interview

I: Thank you for participating in this interview. Let me first ask you about your experience in teaching. When did you start teaching?

Participant 1: I graduated from [removed for anonymity] University in 2001. My final year I started teaching in a private institution. I was teaching English to adults at beginner and pre-intermediate levels. Later on, I taught English in Germany at university level. I was teaching some university students there for about two years. Then I went to London to do my master's degree, and then I did PGCE there. I started working at Southgate College, now it's Barnet and Southgate College. I taught English there for three years to adults from beginner level to advanced level, so A1 to C2 now. And then I went back to [removed for anonymity], I worked at [removed for anonymity] University for about seven years. I taught English to university foundation students, first engineering faculty and then like more general. In [removed for anonymity] University students, have to complete one year foundation, just like here in this college. I taught them general English skills. That's more or less my experience. Apart from face-to-face teaching, I also have experience teaching English online. That's, actually, my dissertation topic is what I did my study on training English language teachers for this new medium. I studied the experiences of the directors and the teachers on how this process works in different universities, three different universities in [removed for anonymity]. Maybe that sums up my teaching experience.

I: And when did you join this college?

Participant 1 : I joined this college last year.

I: From your point of view what does it mean to be a professional teacher?

Participant 1 : Professional teacher, when I hear the word professional, it sounds that this is done in a progressive way. If somebody, like to see something not as a hobby, but as a profession, then they have to plan for the future. I used to hear the word continuous professional development a lot in England, and I think that's very important, because if you are to keep your profession, you have to continuously develop it. The way I see teaching as a profession is that you don't just like teaching, you have to plan, what you are going to be doing in your future career. Okay, I like teaching, five years down the line, I will still like teaching, but then what? What's going to change? What am I going to add to my teaching? What am I going to add to my classes? To my students? To my institution? Which adds a lot to our network overalls, as teachers. It's not just like going into classroom, delivering the lesson and coming out, but also thinking about these different relations with the institution, with your own teaching, with your reflective practice, and you know the other elements that are involved in professional teaching, I would say.

I: Okay. Do you feel that you are treated as a professional teacher?

Participant 1 : In my current job?

I: Your current job, or in the past.

Participant 1 : I think I am, yes, I feel that I am treated professionally, in the sense that the expectations from me will be what will be expected from a professional, not from a person with a certificate travelling around the world just to see places which would be the main motive and not teaching. In my current job, and in my previous jobs, I feel, yes, I was treated professionally, but I think there's a lacking element in that professionalism. My earlier description gave a web of relations because I see teaching as a career, when we talk about

professionalism, as a profession, so it has to include a career path. What am I going to do after this? I would like to see a career path for myself. What am I going to be doing in five years' time? Ten years' time? Twenty years' time? Down the line. What kind of tasks will I be given? Will I be given an option on what to say, what to choose? These, if they're clearly communicated from the management to staff, I think that would increase the professionalism, and that it would increase the motivation of the people. Otherwise, you're just going to the classroom year in, year out, semester in, semester out, and it becomes like a ritual. You teach, you feel you are a good teacher, you come up, but does it really add to our professional development? I don't think so. Yes, I'm given certain tasks by the management, by the institution, or by our managers, but I'm not sure if we are given clear guidelines on how we are to progress in the future. Probably, they also like don’t know about this, the institution isn’t very clear about this, and I think this decreases the motivation of the teachers, fellow teachers and myself, on what to do to prepare for our next job. If I know, let's say, down the line, two years later, I'm going to be teaching post-foundation, then I should familiarise myself in this time what kind of activities will happen there and how can I prepare myself for these activities, and it's going to increase my professionalism, so to say. But if I don't know, that I'm going to be what level I'm going to be teaching next semester, then I'll just wait and see, which I don't really agree with, to be honest.

I: Can you describe any example where you felt that your professionalism being compromised or endangered?

Participant 1 : There's a very recent example, actually. The college is going through quality assessment, and also, they're going to submit a new application, I think, of up to 2020 for accreditation. What I have figured out is that they are

behind in terms of most of the documentation. Their QA people that have not been able to complete them. So what they ask the teachers to do was to supplement, to come in and do some work, to write documents, to write policy documents, even, to write reports about certain creative requirements. The way I see this is, these teachers are not professionally trained to do this task. It's a lot of assignments and they're brought at the weekend to do this task. I was here that Saturday, and the people were not sure about what they were supposed to be doing. The person who was supposed to run the whole thing, the coordinator wasn't very clear in this presentation, so he just added to our confusion. We, as teachers, are sometimes expected to do certain tasks given by the management or the institution, but they might not relate so much to our teaching or to our profession as teachers. I think that causes some tension between our understanding and their understanding of our role. If, for example, we see ourselves as teachers, mainly as teachers, then I'm going to dedicate most of my time, energy, motivation into that field. But if the institution sees me as an asset, who can do certain things, secretarial, administrative, item like proctoring, not directly related to teaching, then they'll try to utilise us in different ways, which might not always produce productive results. For example, yesterday there was another assignment, I was assigned to one of the committees here to write ethics and biosafety documents for the college. Considering my experience in this particular college, I don't think I'm qualified to write about this. Why am I saying this? Because if I had been working here for a specific number of years, and if I were familiar with the policies and procedures and practice, I would feel more confident in contributing this in the name of our centre, which is ELC, and I would give guidance to the college level document. But now I feel I don't know anything about this, and the management are requesting me to do something which I don't

know anything about, I'm not qualified to write, so it might bring out an awkward consequence.

I: Do you mean that you are facing difficulty in writing these types of reports?

Participant 1 : No, no, not really, because I used to do that in [removed for anonymity]University. I was involved in middle management. So I have done that once. But, I'm not saying I cannot do this, but the specific type of document I was requested to contribute to is not really my specialism. I don't have experience of this here in this particular college. I have experience writing documents about quality assurance, but not about ethics and biosafety, definitely, and not in this particular college. So I would have had a certain orientation before I would pursue this task, but the problem is even the QA coordinator here in the centre doesn't know about this, what we are supposed to be doing. I feel almost like a truck driver who's put on the seat, but I don't have a licence, so I'm going to drive the truck however I can. Hopefully not causing an accident.

I: How did you react when the task was assigned to you?

Participant 1 : I went to see the head of centre a couple of times yesterday to ask about what I was supposed to be doing, and she was in constant meetings, and after this she left, and I wasn't able to see her. I went in today, again, to see her, and she was busy in other meetings. She couldn't guide me on why she put my name down, especially for that document. I feel I could have been of better use in other fields, because there was something about use of IT in education and so, I've got a Ph.D. in this, so I feel I could have been more of use in different, in a different committee, for example. So lack of consultation, I feel, is also wasting the human resources that we have here. For example, if you have

experience doing research, then you should be in the research committee, not in, let's say, student intake or procedures about the registration, or so, if you know what I mean. I think consultation with people before putting their names down for a non-teaching task, will that make things easier, or did that increase the tension? Today, for example, we have purpose training, and then yesterday we were told there's going to be another meeting for writing these documents, QA documents, and they overlap. So, I was asking, which are we to attend today, and apparently they want us to attend the QA meeting, but it was not communicated clearly. There's a lot of confusion, I think, on the side of the management, as well. I try to empathise with them, but it doesn't really make our jobs easier as teachers, if you know what I mean.

I know they have to appoint certain people, certain members of staff for every document. I can understand that, I can empathise with that. What I was trying to find out was what the expectations from me are in this particular role? Because I haven't done this before. I don't feel I'm qualified to do it, so what does she expect me to do? If they expect me to do the work, as I've said, then that's what they will receive. Whatever goes, then, okay, that will be the consequence. But, I don't really want to be put to blame after I produce a document which doesn't really meet the requirements, because it wasn't clear from the beginning. That's why I went in to clarify. I also went to the QA coordinator here in this centre, and he doesn't have a clue about this, I don't know, who is going to explain this to the members or staff, because we had quite a number of names there, so I don't think I'm the only person in this position. I think many people are feeling this pressure now.

I: **Okay. Do you feel that you and other staff here are enjoying the work and happy with what you are doing?**

Participant 1 : I used to work on psychology in the past, cognitive behavioural therapy. There we have an important exercise about costs and benefits analysis. Before you make a decision, you have to weigh out the costs and the benefits. Sometimes you might choose certain behaviour which you don't really like, but because the consequences in the long run, the benefits in the long run, may be more beneficial. That might be probably why many people are doing PhDs. You might not enjoy every step in the process, but eventually you will get this title, and you will have learned a lot about research process and so on. When it comes to teaching here in this particular institution, I would say, a lot of people have certain gains, especially like financial, and it is not as stressful as some other institutions in the Middle east, in terms of student behaviour, or the approach or the management personally to us, and I would say that's what keeps many people in this job. When you look at the costs, though, a lot of people I have heard, are complaining that the institution has really changed. It was a lot easier to teach here, but now it's become more and more difficult.

I: **Where did you hear of this?**

Participant 1 : People keep talking about it in the staffroom. Not commonly, but to me, they said, "This job used to be a lot easier." And it's not one person, it's several of people. I can figure out that this job has become more difficult because of these extra duties, not because of the changes in the students, not because of the changes in the curriculum, but mainly because of these extra duties, which do not directly relate to our teaching. That caused a lot of frustration and stress on the inside of the teachers, but they had to keep a job, they had to

maintain level of income, and that keeps people in this job. I think if they had an alternative today, they've left the job, which is going to make the institution suffer a lot.

I: **In what ways do you think that you or your colleagues have been affected?**

Participant 1 : First of all, confusion, of course. People are confused about the definition of their role and key responsibilities. Our responsibility, prime responsibility, is it teaching? Is it preparing for the QA processes? Is it writing documents? Is it the administrative tasks that we are sometimes delegated with? What is our role? How is it perceived? Because we perceive ourselves a certain way, but then the management, I understand has a changing view of the teachers here, as I was trying to explain. What are the times that we are supposed to be working, for example? We are normally given shifts, and it's based on our teaching, but then if they ask us to come on Saturday, with a short notice email, then it also adds to our family commitments, and other social commitments, more like stress. Why? Because I was supposed to go to Muscat with my family, but now I'm given a task by the head of the centre. The result was actually almost half of the lecturers didn't show up that caused lots of frustration on the management because they said, "We sent you an official email to come in on Saturday." Half of the people didn't care. That also undermines the management's role. I can see that people are struggling on both ends. It's not just the teachers are struggling with their pressures but also the management's struggling because there's institutional pressure on them, as well. Because if they fail in this quality assessment, in the accreditation process, they might even lose their positions. I can understand where they come from, but it doesn't really make

our jobs easier, and it doesn't really add to our quality of teaching here, which I feel is the prime role which we should concentrate on.

I: Have you ever questioned these policies?

Participant 1 : I think, yes, there is. That Saturday we came, a lot of people were asking questions about this. Why are we here? What are we supposed to be doing? Okay, this presentation didn't really inform us about the tasks so what are we going to produce? It just added to the frustration, confusion, and a lot questions. Not necessarily questions, per se, probably they were just comments, on why are we, what's the point? I'd say it is the, I've been hearing this a lot since I've started, especially at times of these administrative tasks about the QA process. This supposed to increase our quality of life and teaching, but I don't think that's truly happening here.

I: Where did they raise these questions? Was there anybody from the administration?

Participant 1: On Saturday no one was hear from the management. I heard people questioning and complaining to each other in the staff rooms and in the lounge.

I: Why do you think your colleagues tend to do that in the absence of the administration?

Participant 1 : I don't think we have a good level of communication about these things, as I tried to explain. I was given a task through an email. I went back several times to the HoC office, I wasn't able to see the person who assigned the task. What am I going to do? And it puts emotional burden, also, it's an actual burden on me, so what am I supposed to think? I go and ask people. When they

say they don't have the answer, of course I'm going to voice my opinion about this, so why I'm asking, given this task. If the quality coordinator, he doesn't know about what we are supposed to be doing, me as a new lecturer, how am I supposed to know the answer? So, who's going to give me this answer in the college, they refer me to certain people, which doesn't really help, and they're as busy as the heads of centres. This frustration, I think, this negative emotion, needs to discharge itself. That's why people talk about this in the common room, that's why people talk about this in the lounge, where we are supposed to have lunch. People talk about this in the events, so it's spreading, actually the negative feeling and thoughts, which doesn't really help, and kills the motivation that we could use for certain things, so whenever we have a teaching-related extra task, people don't volunteer anymore. For example, there's an English society, and people are supposed to be doing certain activities with their students, but I see people don't want to contribute. I was put in a committee now, on action research, how to promote action research among teachers, and in the meeting, I suggested that first we do an awareness presentation. Explain to people what action research is, what are the elements, what are the consequences, how can we publish? When I voiced my opinion, people say, "Okay, then you do this presentation." I said, "Look. We are chosen here as a committee at this time, four people, so we should do the presentation jointly, not as a one-man task." But I think people are fed up with these extra tasks. Especially from the QA processes, that's why they don't even want to contribute in staff development which directly relates to our teaching, and also which will help us improve our teaching practices. You know about action research, teacher research, classroom-based research. It does have a positive impact on our teaching. But if people don't have the motivation, they won't be able to do this.

I: **Okay. Do you think that all staff here have the same feelings?**

Participant 1 : From what I noticed so far, I can say most of the teachers here have this negative feelings. This is why they complain to each other and gossip in behind. But on the other hand they are obedient to whatever they are being asked to do.

I Why do you think they are obedient with these requests?

Participant 1 : I think I'll comment with cost and benefits analysis. Why did I come in on Saturday? Because I was new, I thought I'd had no other choice. As I said, I have to come in on Saturday and do this work. Now I'm assigned to be part of this committee. I don't think I was given a choice in the first place. I don't think I'll be given a choice later on. Even if I object, it's not going to change anything. They just need a name there, and they want the job to be delivered somehow. Not in a perfect sense, but somehow it has to be delivered. I don't really see the point in struggling to negotiate, because there's no clear communication routes between us and the management, so I will have to put up this if we want to keep our jobs. I might be a very good teacher in my classroom, but I think there are certain requirements now, by the management, that precede that, that precede our teaching, actually. So, if you are not doing these extra tasks which will take from your personal time, family time, social time, and which will put a lot of burden, stress on you, then you are not considered like a professional teacher but rather a bad member of staff, and you might not have your contract renewed. And I don't really have the luxury to go through that process, so I will have to put up with whatever tasks they give me.

I: **So, you mean because of that fear, teachers prefer to go on and do the work, despite all these challenges?**

Participant 1 : Unless they have an alternative. I know also some people are looking for jobs in different institutions. Now, people have different qualifications here, we know, and people have different backgrounds, like I have UK experience, I have a British passport, and I have taught in a variety of institutions, at a variety of levels, so I'm hoping that I'll be able to find jobs easier than some other members of staff. So, if the pressure feels like too much, I will, of course, look at other options, if I have other options.

I: What are these options?

Participant 1 : I still have my job at Istanbul University. I am on paid leave, actually, so I could go back. I could look at another institution. I have heard there are universities here and colleges of applied sciences so I might like choose to work with them. I'm very new, actually, but, even within this career, people talk so much about changing their job, that I might also plan ahead. At the beginning of the interview, I said professionalism is looking at your future. I would like to stick to being a teacher, not an administrator for my future. If the work, the overloads becomes too much for me to bear, then I will look at alternative options. I think that is not to the benefit of the institution, it is going to cause a lot of burnout on the members of staff. People will resign. People will retire. They lose a significant number of lecturers here, but that is something maybe they have not fully calculated.

I: Okay, how do you manage between your professional work here and your social life?

Participant 1 : Okay, when we say professional work, my definition was more about professionalism as a teacher, but I think now the professional work

in the institution has a lot of extra things, which is outside of our limit as teachers. I think teaching work/life balance was fine the way I hear from other people, but with these extra like duties, it's not working anymore. My wife has joined me recently, roughly two weeks ago, and she said on the phone, "You used to say it's nice and easy, I come home at this time, but now things have changed." Within very short time, she is making remarks about the change of the roles here as well, the professional role as teacher is fine, but the professional role as like as an administrator or like a QA person, is, I think going to increase the workload here. It's already too much to bear, so there's really not so much of a social life to plan for. So the amount of time you plan to spend with your family or the emotional-like relief after work is not there, because people are stressed too much at work that they cannot feel relief when they go back to their families, or spend some time at the weekend, because they know a last minute task will be delegated and they will have to come back on Saturday or they might have cancelled their summer holiday. We also received an email saying that if you don't get the accreditation documents ready, we will lose our summer holiday. Now what that tells me is that there's a threat there to our social time, so how am I going to feel relief? I cannot book my ticket now, for example, although I know the academic calendar, I cannot book my ticket, because there's a threat there.

I: **Was that your reaction, when you received the email?**

Participant 1 : I have heard a lot of people complain about this. I complained myself, like, what is this?

I: **Complained to whom?**

Participant 1 : To each other, “that's against our contract, it's impossible to do this, we are contracted to do this, and that's not our job, we are teachers”

similar comments like this, which are all correct. And I think the management, it's just like trying to motivate teachers to complete the task given, which they are very reluctant to do, and I don't this is going to work. We come from education. We know how human psychology works. If you threaten the students it doesn't always, most of the time, actually, it doesn't help. But the strategy they are using to motivate members of staff, our colleagues, some people might be older than the management here, and in terms of social relations, human relations, psychology, I don't think it's an effective strategy. But I can see the management also struggling, so they took out the stick, showed it to the people, so that they would like finish certain tasks, but I think they don't really understand the reason for the reluctance. First of all, the job description doesn't include this QA task. Secondly, the people are not qualified to write these documents. So, you are telling people to do something beyond their capacity, and then they don't do this, they are being like threatened. It's almost like riding a horse or a donkey and that refuses to go faster it's just beaten. But we are not animals, we are human beings, and we are clever as well. We work collectively as a group, so last time what we saw was a collective resistance to the orders of the management, so they asked us to come in two Saturdays, first Saturday, half of the staff weren't here. What does this mean? Well, threats don't work. So, we have to motivate people. They've done things differently through clear communication, using shorter incentives, financial or otherwise, acknowledgement of the contributions of the teachers in a positive way. I would have thought people would be more willing to contribute to these extra processes. At the end of the day we know they're in big trouble, the management is, but these negative pressures don't really help. Because we're overburdened with our work, and threats don't really help us and

so people react in a very different way, unexpectedly maybe by the management, unexpected by the management.

I: Why do you think teachers prefer to complain against these polices privately to each other?

Participant 1 : We complain to each other because we don't have a meeting, that's the problem I'm trying to explain. The only public space we can talk is the common room the staff room, or the lounge, where we eat our meals or have our coffee. We don't really have that kind of communication space with the management. We are not consulted with when we are given the tasks, when they delegate the tasks. There's no proper assessment or who can do what, it's just they are distributing names without consultation, and I think that's why people have to somehow release this stress, and that's what they do, they come to the staff room. I would presume, they also do this with their families back home, like I keep talking to my wife about things. She doesn't know the people here, I don't mention names, but she knows about the stress I'm going through as part of this emotional release, it has to happen. But I don't think there's another public space, like you wouldn't talk about this in a restaurant, you wouldn't talk about this on the street, the people wouldn't understand what you are talking about here, and this kind of research doesn't happen frequently. I wouldn't be able to speak to anybody else about this in a professional manner, except your fellow teachers. That's why I think people talk about this among themselves.

In addition to the absence of public space I also think there are other reasons as well. First of all, they feel the pressure, okay. And there's this emotional burden, and relieving this emotional burden needs, obviously, like to be voiced, yes, to release the emotional burden, that's the first thing. Secondly, I think some

people are also developing community strategies to deal with this. So they might form certain small groups, and that they might take in a certain way. For example, if you are successful in a task, you are usually given the next one. I heard that there are staff who have less tasks or work because they are avoiding responsibilities, or the head don’t want to give them task more than the teaching because simply they will say they don’t know how to do it. This is very well practiced by many staff in this college even the technicians. Another thing is if you don't want the extra task, then what you do is you fail the first time. That's what I've learned in my time with institutions. For example, if you ask me to do a task and I do it excellently. That means you are going to come back to me and ask me to do it again, or an extra one. Because I'm capable. Whereas, my next colleague, if he or she fails, then you won't go to him or her, because she's not capable, that's what you'd... in the government jobs, I've seen especially in Turkey, that some government officials, they act almost as stupid people just to avoid the extra tasks. You don't go to them, you go to the other person who can do this. The workload is then always granted to common people where in the management knows and remember that particular staff has the ability to do it, rather forcing others to take to take the responsibility of doing certain task. In terms of the teaching, I think people are forming small cliques, and they do sloppy work, just to avoid receiving more. If you are seen as clever, if you are seen as qualified, you're given extra tasks. The expectations would be more from the administration.

I: **So, do you feel that avoidance is a common technique being used here?**

Participant 1 : Yes of course. And the first reason I said was emotional burden, yes? You need to relieve the emotional burden, so I talk to you, I complain to you. If you have similar thoughts, we share it. But we also develop community strategy together. This is the psychological part, so emotional and psychological. What do we decide to do, okay now, next time they do this, okay, we are going just like give them a rubbish document and they won't give it to us again. Because they know the documents are rubbish. Or we don't spend the required amount of time on the document, we don't do it according to the expected quality. Just to avoid being given more tasks. I told you about action research group, for example. We were given that task, we get that task as a group. But then when there was a need for a presentation from the teachers, then people said, "You go ahead and do it." It's not because I cannot do it, but I would have thought it's teamwork, but now the way I see it, people don't want to take this on because they know it's going to bring in more work for them in the future. So maybe I wasn't being clever on that. They were being clever, all like Ph.D. holders, all experienced lecturers here, and I was thinking, why did they do that? Because they are the three Ph.D. holders, they said, "Okay, you go ahead and do the presentation." Which I rejected I said, "Look, if we are going to look as a team, people will consult with us at different levels, then we have to work together." But, I think it's because of what I've just described. Psychologically they developing this strategy, so to avoid any further work, they just run away from it.

I: I see. Okay, that's the end of our conversation. Thanks for coming to this interview. Do you have any comments to add?

Participant 1 : No, Thank you.

Appendix Seven: The Scenarios

Scenario 1: The classroom observation

Ms. Hanna holds a PhD in TESOL and has been teaching in tertiary education in Oman since 2006. Based on her experience with the Omani students, Ms. Hanna found that teaching grammar in isolation is more adequate for them than the integrative approach. Therefore, she always considered this when planning and teaching her grammar classes. One day, she was having her grammar class from 12:00 to 1:40 pm as usual. At 1:00 pm, Mr. Nabeel, one of the ELC management members, arrived suddenly to observe and evaluate Ms. Hanna's teaching skills. At that time, the students happened to be working in groups on grammar exercises and Ms. Hanna had almost covered the lesson plan. Mr. Nabeel (the observer) asked for the lesson plan from Ms. Hanna and then went around asking questions to students to check the efficacy of Ms. Hanna's content delivery. After, he moved to the front of the class and started to teach the students himself. The effect this had on Ms. Hanna, who was standing to one side of the room, was that of embarrassment and degradation and as a consequence, she felt that she was "losing face" in front of her students.

In the post-lesson discussion, the observer raised the comment that the textbook approach was to teach grammar integrative with the writing and that Ms. Hanna should have adhered to the teacher's guide instructions. Furthermore, the observer criticised Ms. Hanna's approach, adding that she had fallen behind her fellow teachers' progression as she had not adhered to the centralised delivery plan. Ms. Hanna was not given the chance to defend her methodology or to question the observer's approach.

Scenario 2: The supplementary materials

Ms. Shazia holds a Master degree in TESOL and has been teaching in tertiary education in Oman since 2016. On one occasion, whilst planning for a reading class, she felt that the textbook did not enable the students to practice the skills of skimming and scanning. So, Ms. Shazia decided to prepare her own materials and used them to supplement the textbook activities on these reading skills. When the Level Coordinator learned of her intention to do this, he decided to issue Ms. Shazia a warning in accordance with the College's Management Policy as she was not supposed to or allowed to give the students supplementary materials without the management's prior approval.

Despite the fact that Ms. Shazia believed that her students' were in need of supplementary materials, she promised not to design anything anymore, as she was afraid of losing her job.

Scenario 3: The delegation of QA tasks

Mr. Don and a group of his colleagues are all English teachers and have been teaching English in one of the Colleges of Technology for over 10 years. The college has been preparing for both Programme and Institutional Accreditation for three years. However, the administration found that the college was hopelessly behind in terms of the required accreditation, such as documentation. Therefore, without prior consultation, knowledge or consent, those tasks were delegated to a group of English teachers. In addition to their own teaching loads, Mr. Don and his colleagues were asked to search for the necessary documents from all of the other college's departments and to write the required historical reports. These reports were on accreditation criteria related to the previous three years. Later they received an email to complete the tasks before the beginning of

the summer holidays, and in order to do so, they were asked to report for duty on two Saturdays. Otherwise, they would not be allowed to go on their summer vacations.

The outcome of this was that on the first Saturday, only a small group of the English teachers reported to the college. The majority, however, which included Mr. Don, pretended as being sick and consequently unable to report for work.

Appendix Eight: Phase 1 thematic framework

Background	**10**	**57**
Work and teaching experience	10	30
Reasons to become a teacher	7	20
Educational background	5	7
Conceptualizations and definitions of professionalism	**10**	**117**
Skills and characteristics of a professional teacher	10	81
- *Prioritizing the students' learning over other duties and tasks*	8	19
- *Professional work ethic and high standard of teaching*	8	17
- *Being a Leader, a Guru and a Mentor*	8	15
- *Clear and well-defined professional identity (self-perceptions)*	6	11
- *Continuous professional development and career planning*	4	10
- *Having professional skills, experience and qualifications*	4	9
Being treated as a professional	8	36
- *Having the managements' trust and support*	5	15
- *Promotions and having your work appreciated*	3	8
- *Clarity about your professional development and career path*	2	8
- *High, but also clearly communicated, expectations*	2	2
- *Being given autonomy*	1	2
- *Clarity about your role and responsibilities*	1	1
Challenges and threats to professionalism	**10**	**270**

Marginality of teachers and control of teaching	10	127
- Not being trusted, listened to or supported in decisions	10	32
- Having your self-perceptions and identity put on the line	9	38
- Lack of autonomy and not being involved in decision making	8	20
- Having to work with poor, inappropriate or centralized teaching and learning resources	4	24
- Not being given opportunity to raise concerns	4	6
- Lack of training and professional development	3	6
- Lack of praise and acknowledgement of good work	1	1
Intensification of teachers' work	9	72
- Unrealistic workload	9	32
- Being asked to do things not related to your expertise	9	40
Working conditions	6	71
- Poor or unprofessional communication within the institution	6	27
- Constant fear of losing the job (Job insecurity)	6	13
- Being disrespected and threatened	6	10
- Favouritism, unequal treatment and discrimination	4	15
- Poor scheduling	3	6
Effects and consequences of compromised professionalism	**9**	**134**
Stress and frustration	9	39
Effects on personal life	8	32
Affected motivation	6	22

Affected quality of teaching	5	17
Confusion	3	6
Affected health and wellbeing	2	8
Affected staff retention	2	6
Affected work relationships	2	4
Responding to threats to professionalism	**8**	**39**
Reasons for the lack of formal response	8	27
- Being afraid of the consequences	8	20
- Not believing that this would help	3	5
- Not having a platform to raise concerns effectively	2	2
Employing avoidance strategies	4	7
Gossiping and discussing with colleagues	3	5
Addressing those in charge	2	5
Open dialogue with those involved	1	1
Publicising the issue	1	1

Appendix Nine: Phase 2 thematic framework

Background	**17**	**57**
Educational and teaching background	17	31
Reasons to become a teacher	15	26
Conceptualizations and definitions of professionalism	**20**	**158**
Skills and characteristics of a professional teacher	20	102
- *Prioritizing the students*	14	27
- *Being flexible and responsive*	12	18
- *Professional work ethic and values*	11	26
- *Interpersonal skills*	10	13
- *Skills, experience and qualifications*	8	13
- *Continuous professional development*	3	4
- *Being dedicated to the institution*	1	1
Being treated as a professional	16	56
- *Having freedom and autonomy*	12	27
- *Being trusted, involved and respected*	11	23
- *Professional development being encouraged*	4	6
Policies that undermine the teachers' professionalism	**20**	**876**
Class observations	**20**	**389**
Issues	20	184
- *Disturbing the order of the lesson without notice*	19	61

- *Belittling and questioning the teacher in front of the class*	18	36
- *Teacher not given a chance to defend and explain*	17	31
- *Disrespectful attitude*	13	34
- *Sending wrong signals about the purpose of observation*	11	22
Effects	16	27
- *Affected self-esteem and self-perceptions*	14	20
- *Affected motivation*	3	4
- *Affected trust*	3	3
Suggested reactions	15	46
- *Request a meeting to discuss, defend and negotiate the teacher's point of view*	9	14
- *Confront the observer immediately*	7	7
- *Let the observer teach the class*	6	8
- *Not let the observer teach the class*	3	5
- *Not allow the observer to enter the classroom late*	2	5
- *Leave the classroom once the observer takes over the teaching*	2	3
- *Try to explain to students what is happening*	1	3
- *Not agree to approve the observation*	1	1
How to improve the current practices	**19**	**132**
- *Improve and standardize the observation protocol*	14	35
- *Give the teachers a chance to explain and justify their approach*	13	26

- *Train the observers better*	11	22
- *Be clear about the purposes of observation*	9	20
- *Give formal notice about upcoming observations*	8	15
- *Get involved in improving the teachers' future practices*	5	7
- *Have more than one observer*	4	7
Limited autonomy to adjust and design teaching materials	**20**	**206**
Issues	15	49
- *Not being given initiative or autonomy*	13	22
- *Lack of trust and respect*	8	13
- *Lack of clear rules and professional communication*	5	8
- *Having to work with poor materials*	3	6
- *Affected motivation and confidence*	9	16
- *Affected dedication and performance*	6	8
Suggested reactions	**17**	**36**
- *Discuss and negotiate one's point of view and the policies*	13	22
- *Comply and stop preparing materials*	5	6
- *Check if this is allowed first*	2	6
- *Defend your point of view and support it with evidence*	2	2
How to improve the current practices	**18**	**97**
- *Improve the communication between the teachers and the superiors*	16	31
- *Develop a clearer policy for what is allowed and what is not*	13	22

- *Train teachers or assign qualified people to develop materials*	11	21
- *Give the teachers autonomy*	11	19
- *Improve the current teaching materials*	2	4
Work distribution and planning	**19**	**281**
Issues	19	85
- *Having to do extra work outside your expertise*	19	45
- *Being forced or threatened rather than asked and trusted*	16	40
Effects	11	37
- *Affected performance*	9	26
- *Affected motivation and dedication*	7	11
Suggested reactions	**15**	**51**
- *Negotiate the task first*	*10*	*16*
- *Officially refuse to do the task*	*6*	*14*
- *Comply*	*6*	*11*
- *Do the job, but not necessarily do it well*	*2*	*6*
- *Comply but then discuss afterwards*	*1*	*2*
- *Investigate whether it is legal to be asked to do this*	*1*	*1*
- *Quit the job*	*1*	*1*
How to improve the current practices	**19**	**108**
- *Improve the communication between the teachers and the superiors*	16	47

-	*Train the teachers or employ trained staff for the extra tasks*	16	34
-	*Improve time management and planning*	12	21
-	*Reward the teachers for extra work*	6	6

Appendix Ten: Certificate of Ethical Approval

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

St Luke's Campus
Heavitree Road
Exeter UK EX1 2LU

http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Title of Project: Exploring English Language Teachers' Professionalism and Identities at the Colleges of Technology in Oman

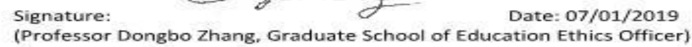
Researcher(s) name: Salim Bani Oraba

Supervisor(s): Professor David Hall & Doctor George Koutsouris

This project has been approved for the period

From: 06/01/2019
To: 30/09/2020

Ethics Committee approval reference: D1819-018

Signature:  Date: 07/01/2019
(Professor Dongbo Zhang, Graduate School of Education Ethics Officer)

Appendix Eleven: The Letter to the Deputy Head of Technical Education in the MoM

الفاضل الدكتورعبدالحكيم الإسماعيلي المحترم

المدير العام للتعليم التقني

تحية طيبه وبعد:

الموضوع: طلب الموافقة على إجراء دراسة ميدانية في مراكز اللغة الإنجليزية بالكليات التقنية

أتقدم إليكم بطلبي هذا راجيا منكم الموافقة على إجراء دراسة ميدانية في مراكز اللغة الإنجليزية بالكليات التقنية. علماً إنني محاضر بالكلية التقنية بإبرا وحاليا مبتعث من قبل وزراة التعليم العالي لنيل درجة الدكتوراه في اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة إكستر بالمملكة المتحدة وعنوان دراستي :

Exploring English Language Teachers' Professionalism at the Colleges of Technology in Oman

وتتطلب الدراسة إجراء مقابلات مع عدد 30 من محاضري اللغة الإنجليزية حول عدد من المواضيع التي تغطيها الدراسة ومن بينها رأي المحاضرين حول مفهوم المهنية في مهنة التدريس والأمور التي تؤثر على مهنيتهم كمحاضرين بالكليات التقنية.

لذا ألتمس موافقتكم على إجراء الدراسة وإخطار المسؤولين بمراكز اللغة الإنجليزية لتقديم التسهيلات التي أحتاج إليها لإجراء هذه الدراسة مرفقا لكم شهادة إستيفاء الدراسة لأخلاقيات البحث التربوي المعتمده من جامعة إكستر.

شاكرا لكم حسن تعاونكم وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الإحترام والتقدير

مقدم الطلب: سالم بن سعيد بني عرابه

sb763@exeter.ac.uk

sbaniorabah@yahoo.com

Appendix Twelve: Consent Form for Teachers

Title of Project: Exploring English language teachers' professionalism at the Colleges of Technology in Oman.

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I agree to participate in the following activities:

- Participate in an interview
- Allow the interview to be audio-recorded
- Provide the researcher with the needed documents

I understand that:

- There is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to

participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation.

- I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me.
- Any information, which I give, will be used solely for the purposes of this research project,

which may include publications.

- All information I give will be treated as confidential.
- The researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

(Signature of participant)
(Date)

……………………

(Printed name of participant)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s). Contact phone number of researcher(s):+447456324177 /+968 96282790
If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:
Salim Bani Orabah (sb763@exeter.ac.uk)
David Hall (d.j.hall@exeter.ac.uk)
George Koutsouris (g.koutsouris@exeter.ac.uk)