Edited by
Bhabani Shankar Nayak
Katherine Appleford

Beyond the Pandemic Pedagogy of Managerialism

Exploring the Limits of Online Teaching and Learning

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June 2023

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About This Book

The pestilence of coronavirus spread gives breathing space to managers by shifting the focus from the perils of managerialism and failures of marketisation of education to the question of sustainability of market-led educational institutions. Instead of addressing the long-standing issues within the education sector, the managerial elites find an instant solution by offering massive online courses. It changes the very foundation of teaching and learning in a classroom environment. Online classes in the Zoom, Microsoft Teams, BlueButton, and other web conferencing applications can never replace classroom teaching. It only further accelerates the existing problems of the education sector.

The managerial stubbornness of market logic in education and its failures are under the carpet of the pestilence-infused crisis management. It is disempowering for both students, teachers, and few academic leaders. On the one hand, this crisis is an opportunity for the managerial class to hide their failures. On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic is also exposing the limits of marketisation of education. It is revealing the thoughtless and distorted managerial response to a crisis. It is an opportunity for students and teachers to refuse the culture of business

as usual in the post-pandemic education sector. It is not the individualised, selfish, and brutish managerialism but the struggle for alternatives that comes from collective experiences and understandings. The survival of teachers and teaching as a profession depends on how we steer the struggle for alternatives within and outside the education sector. It can offer a better tomorrow for critical and creative space for teaching and learning in a post-pandemic world if we fight against the twin evils of managerialism and marketisation of education. It is important to remember that education is not merely essential for employment but a tool of all forms of emancipation.

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1

Introduction: Banes of Managerialism in Education

Bhabani Shankar Nayak

In search of profit, the growth of managerialism and marketisation of education crippled the abilities of teachers and destroyed institutions of learning all over the world. The managerial revolution in education is designed to transform education as a commodity for sale by privatisation. The processes of commodification and privatisation of education are central to the principles of the market when it comes to education for profit. Educational institutions are becoming certificate selling supermarkets, which treat students as cash cows and teachers as salesperson. The introduction of league tables and rankings based on metric-driven 'evaluation of teaching, learning, student satisfaction, and research impact' promotes the culture of Taylorism, to implement values of efficiency, productivity, and output, which destroys the critical and creative space within teaching and learning.

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Management-led teaching and learning give a false sense of democratic space along with the idea of peer review culture, where control is exercised in such a way that it looks as if it is a means of professional growth and development for one's own good. It degrades the moral foundations of teaching and learning as a profession for the public good.

The educational environment is further destroyed by the managerial culture of command, communication, and control system in which teaching is managed by people who never taught in their life and research is managed by people without any form of exposure to research. Such a system creates an incompetent, unethical, unprofessional managerial class in the educational sector that eats away the soul of learning itself. These incompetent tick-box managers are given the power to mismanage the place by which they can create their own workload by organising constant useless meetings. This managerial class pretends with confidence as if they know the issues of teaching and research. The manager's Shakespearean acting skills in the meetings can seriously put professional actors in doubt. Their rhetoric, diction, and language sound as if they care about the students and staff. Managers of higher education only care about their salary seeking positions and promotions. The higher education managers run public-funded educational institutions like their own family firms. Transparency, accountability, and rule of law are no longer the pillars of governance of higher education. Quality of research and quality of teachings are no longer required standards for managers of higher education.

The growth of unqualified, underqualified, and inexperienced managerial parasites in higher education destroy the collective culture of pedagogy, where teaching is a learning process and learning is a process to produce knowledge and skills. Teachers and students learn from each other without thinking about essentialist and functional approach of the managers, their workload model for staff, and contact hours for students. Such a profound negative transition in the sector is not only a challenge for students and employees but also a threat to education itself. It has enormous negative impacts on women, working classes, LGBTQ, and ethnic minorities. It is also becoming an alienating experience for students and staff working within the market model of the education sector.

The pestilence of coronavirus spread gives breathing space to managers by shifting the focus from the perils of managerialism and failures of marketisation of education to the question of sustainability of market-led educational institutions. Instead of addressing the long-standing issues within the education sector, the managerial elites find an instant solution by offering massive online courses. It changes the very foundation of teaching and learning in a classroom environment. Online classes in the Zoom, Microsoft Teams, BlueButton, and other web conferencing applications can never replace classroom teaching. It only further accelerates the existing problems of the education sector.

The classroom challenges shape teachers and teaching as a profession. The distinctive pleasure of the profession comes from the students in the classrooms who shape the art of teaching. It takes long time to internalise teaching skills and develop as a teacher in the laboratory of classrooms. Every class adds new experiences both for the students and teachers. The online platforms can never recreate the teaching and learning environment that a classroom offers. The interactive and participatory pedagogy of teaching and learning dies its natural death in online platforms where teachers look at students as dots in the computer screen. The classroom offers limitless possibilities to engage with students, their excitements and their boredoms. So, online teaching and learning is not only short-sighted but also reductionist; it destroys the organic space between teachers and their students. In this way, COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a severe crisis within the traditional pedagogy of teaching and learning.

Teachers and students are not zombies. The zooming online is a medium of interaction, and not a teaching and learning method. Any attempt to replace classrooms with online platforms destroys the very idea of teaching and learning. Technology and virtual learning environment enhance the abilities of a teacher and student. It cannot replace a teacher. The etiquettes of classroom teaching instil qualities like determination, focus, peer interactions, intercultural communication skills, debating abilities, public speaking, and engagement skills via eye gaze. These are invaluable skills for students and teachers. These set of important skills are more valuable in life than curriculum-driven skills and certificates. The managerial class is drunk with the bad cocktail of

ignorance and arrogance so much that they failed to understand the importance of these skills.

The managerial stubbornness of market logic in education and its failures are under the carpet of the pestilence-infused crisis management. It is disempowering for students, teachers, and few academic leaders. On the one hand, this crisis is an opportunity for the managerial class to hide their failures. On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic is also exposing the limits of marketisation of education. It is revealing the thoughtless and distorted managerial response to a crisis. It is an opportunity for students and teachers to refuse the culture of business as usual in the post-pandemic education sector. It is not the individualised, selfish, and brutish managerialism but the struggle for alternatives that comes from collective experiences and understandings. The survival of teachers and teaching as a profession depends on how we steer the struggle for alternatives within and outside the education sector. It can offer a better tomorrow for critical and creative space for teaching and learning in a post-pandemic world if we fight against the twin evils of managerialism and marketisation of education. It is important to remember that education is not merely essential for employment but a tool of emancipation.

Global Pandemic, Profit, and Precarity

British universities have not only benefited from slavery and colonialism but also continue to perpetuate it on an everyday basis on their teaching and non-teaching staff members even during a global pandemic. Unfair workload, the gender pay gap, racism, and sexism are rampant in most of the UK universities, which are operating like family firms. Most of the British universities are home to multiple forms of discrimination. Critical mass is a big lie. Education for empowerment, global citizenship, and so on are empty marketing slogans of British universities. Students and staff members are merely numbers in the managerial spreadsheets as cash cows. There is no attention to student and staff well-being. British universities are making profit at the cost of their students and staff members. The dubious workload models followed by most of the

UK universities are normalising a slave society where there is no other activity but work, work, and work till one collapses in the grave.

This is a profitable business model in British universities. The world is ravaged by the pandemic. People lost their lives, near and dear ones, and their livelihoods too. Yet according to a UCU study, British universities generated record income of £41.1 billion during the pandemic. The global pandemic did not stop British universities acquiring £3.4bn more cash in the bank during 2020/21 academic year compared to the previous academic year. Vice-chancellors of the British universities are not only taking filthy salaries but also planning to spend £4.6bn on vanity projects like grand new buildings at the cost of staff and student's mental health and well-being. The UCU study has revealed that UK "universities generated record levels of income from tuition fees and other sources, hitting £41.1bn, up from £39.6bn in 2019/20". This surplus is a product of daytime robbery by British universities in the form of higher tuition fees and lower wages. British universities are mortgaging the future of our students and young people by increasing student fees and looking at them as cash cows. The profit-driven higher education business model has transformed British universities as degree-awarding shops, where teaching and learning has taken a leap backward. The UCU study reminds the government and university leaders that the "pay offer of just 3 per cent this year represents another real terms pay cut as RPI inflation hits 12.3 per cent". This follows over a decade of low pay awards which puts staff pay 25% behind inflation. "The employers' offer would cost just £0.66bn to implement across all universities and UCU says this can and should be increased significantly". The planned 36% increase in capital expenditure on different vanity projects will further burden staff and students.

British universities talk about sustainability but practice a business model in higher education which is unfair, exploitative, and unsustainable. The growth of managerialism is ruining the quality of teaching, learning, and research environment in the universities. Most managers in higher education have little or no exposure to the idea of research, teaching and learning. Knowledge production is replaced by a profit-driven business model. Critical thinking is replaced by compliance

culture. Democratisation of knowledge and university campuses is transformed by dominance of arrogant and ignorant business managers. The aggressive marketing and advertisements by the British universities take away the dignity of in-depth research and teaching for the greater good of society. The managers and marketers of higher education undermine the creative abilities of universities as places of higher educational centres of learning. The rising cost of living, higher tuition fees, falling salaries, and insecure contractual jobs in British universities are detrimental to the present and future of our society. It is time to question the viability of universities as critical spaces to challenge power for a sustainable future. It is time to reject the profit-driven education model that considers students and staffs as cash cows. British universities need to create egalitarian, non-racist, non-sexist, inclusive, and democratic spaces if they are to survive.

Limits of Managerial Universities

Universities have been experiencing depoliticization, marketisation, and the deepening of managerialism over the last three decades. The campuses across the globe are witnessing the growth of a car park culture of managerialism where students and staff members are treated as cash cows or cars in the car parks. The Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, and their managerial elks run universities like badly managed undemocratic family firms. The growth of compliance culture is ruining the critical traditions of knowledge production and democratic dissemination. The managers in the universities rarely teach and research. They bluff with the deceptive voices of concern and brand themselves as practitioners with new titles as Professors of Practice. What practice? The answer is as tenuous as the title refers to. However, they talk about quality teaching and quality research. This is a fake acting master class in a theatre of absurdity in an integrity-free zone called a managerial university. Sausage factories are better in terms of quality processes than universities today.

Such a ruinous path is dangerous for the present and future of our students and society. The managerial onslaughts on critical thinking,

teaching, and learning are posing serious challenges to the possibilities of radical transformation in society. The growing managerialism and marketisation of education are trying to establish a marketplace for education free from any form of consciousness, creativity, and critical thinking. It is trying to produce compliant hands, minds, and skills necessary for the running of a profit-driven market based on commoditisation of lives and livelihoods. The commodification of education is a means for the commoditisation of society and individual lives.

Despite all forms of alienation perpetuated by the marketisation and managerialism within universities, managerial universities lack radical class consciousness and class character as workers in the universities work like distinct herds without any form of coherence in common experience. The departmentalisation of knowledge in the name of specialisation and employability skills, there is compartmentalisation of people working in the compliance knowledge industry called universities. It destroys the interdisciplinary foundations of knowledge. The career-seeking staff, students, and knowledge workers are busy in the tick-box exercises in selling overpriced educational degrees and qualifications printed in A4 size paper, badly printed in some remote corners of the unused building in the universities. The crises of universities reflect larger crises of radical consciousness in society.

All crises and challenges are opportunities of possibilities for a radical transformation of universities and society in general. The managerial universities create an alienating experience in the workplace for both staff and students irrespective of their positions in the classrooms and in the university pay scale. Universities treat students and staff as numbers in the managerial excel sheets. This is a new reality. There is no illusion about it. These common experiences and outcomes are central to building a radical movement against the backdrop of the deepening marginalisation of staff and students in the universities. The processes of proletarianization of men and women, white and non-white workers, racial and religious minorities, laptop class and chattering class, and outsourcing of jobs are common grounds on which we can stand together and fight in solidarity for the greater good of society. This can only help in the decolonisation and democratisation of knowledge from managerial universities under capitalism. Some radical campus struggles give us

hope for a better future. The freedom from managerial universities and their transformation depends on our commitment to the defeat of the capitalist system. It is a common battle. It is a battle for scientific and secular knowledge traditions accessible and available to all without any form of barriers. It is a battle for critical and creative knowledge in the service of peace, people, and the planet. It is time to fight such a battle to overcome the challenges of managerial university and capitalist society.

The radical transformation of higher education is central to the future of pluriversal, democratic, and de-colonial knowledge traditions. The freedom of teachers, students, and educational environment is central to the sustainability of higher education. The growing commercialisation and managerialism are threatening the very foundation of higher education that can serve as a common good.

In this context, the volume moves away from narrow silo of disciplinary research and engages with critical issues of managerialism faced by the students and teaching with the growth of online education during the pandemic. The second chapter is a moral inquiry on the growth of toxic culture of managerial university exuberated by pandemic. It also highlights the deterioration of working conditions and the stifling of creativity in the higher education sector and beyond (Erickson et al., 2023). The third chapter outlines the pandemic of managerialism in higher education (Nayak, 2023). The fourth chapter engages with issues of impression and performance management during online teaching and collapse of frontstage and backstage for students and teachers while working online during pandemic (Appleford, 2023). The fifth chapter employs an auto-ethnographic lens through which to explore the impact of the changes from the perspective of three actors in the learning and teaching domain—an academic manager, a member of academic teaching staff, and a student. It also uses the New Public Management structure/approach to understand the constraints imposed upon the actors and their experiences and responses to the higher education reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic (Walsh et al., 2023). The sixth chapter is associated with contemporary academic and policy debates over the role of Quality Management (QM) within education systems, heightened by the global explosion in online learning technologies during the

COVID-19 pandemic. It explores the discursive histories of managerialism within vocational education and contributes to contemporary VET policy analysis, re-conceptualising the discursive, and material implications of Quality Management systems used in FE within the current skills-focused policy epoch. The chapter further argues that QM techniques are prevalent before, during, and after the pandemic, as an active, shifting agent of corporatisation, 'misrecognised' within policy and practice (McCarthy, 2023).

The seventh chapter reviews the ways in which the doctoral supervisor role changed during the pandemic with the rapid transition to online working and the use of platforms, such as Zooms and Microsoft Teams to meet and mentor students, other more incipient factors caused supervisors to question their autonomy as senior researchers. The chapter argues that the supervisors in the study identified increased managerialism as creating issues for them and for their role—and suggested that the new regimes which had been adopted with lockdown were difficult to deal with—impacting on their well-being and sense of self. It further argues that the pandemic led growth of institutional control has diminished and undermined professorial status, roles and values in teaching and learning (Martin et al., 2023).

The eighth chapter has argued that teaching and learning online was accelerated by the pandemic, transformed not only how education was organised and delivered, and raised expectations about increased transparency, accountability, service orientation, and civic participation but also exacerbated associated fears concerning surveillance and control, privacy issues, power relations, and inequalities. This chapter utilises Foucault's conception of power relations and governmentality to explore how micro-level techniques of power, such as surveillance, manifested during the pandemic. It further argues that the new 'managerialism' that emerged during the pandemic acts as an emergent and increasingly rationalised and complicated power and control technology that operates at various levels on the individual, both educator and learner, and the broader institutional level (Osei-Nimo et al., 2023).

The ninth chapter focuses on challenges among teachers in their professional development during the pandemic. The findings revealed

that during the pandemic teachers' face challenges in professional development which revolves around three aspects, (1) the rich resources, effective management, and good reputation of the education group promote teacher professional development (Yao et al., 2023).

The tenth chapter deals with academic freedom and excellent delivery have never been more challenging than witnessed during the pandemic. It examines extant literature on the extent of the digital divide that became more pronounced due to the pandemic, thereby provoking urgent discussions on the need to address the challenges witnessed in teaching, research, and other scholarly activities. It investigated and contextualised the degree to which the digital divide in the Nigerian HE has exacerbated the marginalisation of students, staff, and institutions since the pandemic, bring to the spotlight the implications of such a divide in digital learning, demystify how this has beclouded academic freedom, excellent delivery, and knowledge dissemination (Ajonbadi et al., 2023).

The final chapter of this volume explores the cases of Greece and England to gain a deeper understanding of the way the enforced governing practices, at a state and school level, have influenced the professional selves of early-career primary school teachers. Through in-depth interviews with 32 early-career teachers, the study illustrates how their position in the school system was challenged through the renegotiation of boundaries in the digital and physical space of the school. It also demonstrates the changes in the way early-career teachers related to themselves and others in the schools, forming new modes of being and relating (Selechopoulou, 2023).

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2

Moving to Teaching Online: Moral Injury, Pandemic, and the Toxic University

Mark Erickson, Paul Hanna, and Carl Walker

Introduction

No one chooses to work, or to study, in a toxic university. And no one chooses to make their university toxic. Yet somehow, we are in a situation where many UK higher education institutions (UK HEIs) have become toxic, experiencing very high levels of staff and student dissatisfaction, burnout, stress, and moral injury. This is a long-term rising trend, but one that has been exacerbated in recent years by

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Erickson, M., Hanna, P., & Walker, C. (2020). The UK higher education senior management survey: A statactivist response to managerialist governance. *Studies in Higher Education*, 1–18.
Hanna, P., Erickson, M., & Walker, C. (2022). UK Higher Education staff experiences of moral injury during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Higher Education*, 1–18.

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COVID-19 (Fleming, 2021; Hanna et al., 2022). Pandemic-prompted and government-instigated lockdowns, which required UK HEIs to very rapidly, and in some cases frantically, move from face-to-face to online teaching and student engagement, have had a dramatic and long-term effect on staff and student health and wellbeing, and the whole HE experience. In this chapter, we will use data we collected during the COVID-19 pandemic to describe UK HEI staff experiences of online teaching, place this in the context of consequential moral injury, and then widen that context to consider the general conditions surrounding UK HE, notably the shift to New Public Management regimes. Finally, we offer some reflections, and perhaps some hope, regarding tools of resistance to New Public Management and the audit culture UK HEI is now embedded within.

New Public Management in the UK HE Sectors

The backdrop to our studies of moral injury, and indeed to the great many changes in the UK HE sectors over the past three decades, is a new paradigm for managing public services: New Public Management (NPM). NPM is directly linked to changes in the UK, and abroad, in the composition of political narrative and orientation of political actors, with a clear shift to the right on the political spectrum and the rise of 'New Right' thinking and neoliberalism from the 1990s onwards. This trend has accelerated in the years following the global collapse, and the rescue (perhaps even resurrection?), of capital in 2008, becoming more pronounced from 2012 and contributing to more recent 'populist' trends in politics (Tooze, 2018: 20).

NPM was, and still is, presented as a reformist approach to public service delivery, and its narrative includes "the growth of markets and quasi-markets within public services, empowerment of management, and active performance measurement and management" (Ferlie, 2017: 1). Ewan Ferlie notes that the UK adopted NPM at the level of governance in the 1980s, where the governance mode is a "markets-and-management mix combining more competition among public services agencies with stronger line management within them" and was a particularly 'extreme

case' (ibid.: 1). This governance level mode was replicated across public services and repeated down to a granular level, such that individual institutional units in a public service sector would exhibit multiple features of NPM.

In UK HE NPM is manifested in several ways, and the NPM paradigm has come under increasing criticism from voices across the sector. UK HE was a largely autonomous realm, even though its expansion period in the 1960s and 1970s, but this changed with the rise of neoliberal governance and ideology from 1979 onwards. Until then, academic management and student education had not been subject to stricter marketisation or restricted public capital investment, which resulted in the sector enjoying a lengthy period of freedom around learning and application of knowledge and its purposes escaping any significant scrutiny by government (Deem, 2004). Following this the sector experienced significant changes to both internal governance and external funding regimes. The expansion of the UK HE sectors in 1992 led to further marketisation across the sector. However, the biggest shift towards a full NPM model, with internal markets, increased competition between institutions, and increased marketisation (Naidoo, 2008) came with the introduction of tuition fees for undergraduate students in England (the largest part of the UK HE sectors) in 2003 (subsequently raised in 2012 and again in 2016). The NPM rhetoric of treating students as 'customers', whilst still not fully embedded, changed the relations between academic staff and those they were charged with educating. This coincided with the erosion and almost total removal of democratic structures of control and leadership across the UK university sector (Radice, 2013: 410); academic staff in universities lost much of their voice and say in how their institutions were run, and the direction they were taking, a shift from democratic governance to managerial governance (Erickson et al., 2020). This shift has led to large changes in how academic staff in universities are doing their work; Gill (2009) noted the emergence of more bureaucratic modes of control and surveillance of academic workers, and the emergence of Taylorist modes of academic production and assembly (Halffman & Radder, 2015: 177).

Central to the NPM project is assessment and evaluation of change and 'progress' through measurement and metrics. These also underpin

the Taylorist model of production and assembly, and the UK HE sector is beset with metrics at almost every level. Internal metrics in the form of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are legion; all academic staff will have come across these and many have to formally report on and respond to these as part of their work duties. Externally, the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF), and the National Student Survey (NSS) measure, respectively, research 'quality' and impact, teaching and knowledge exchange 'quality', and student satisfaction with degree delivery and environments. The introduction of these metrics has led to an increasingly harsh and pervasive 'audit culture' (Martell, 2017). Our previous research (Erickson et al., 2020) revealed very high levels of staff dissatisfaction with the audit culture, new managerialism, lack of democratic governance, and increased bureaucracy putting pressure on already high workloads.

This context, of increased workloads, audit culture, marketisation, job insecurity, loss of democratic governance, and an increasing separation of senior managers from the rest of the staff of an institution, provides the backdrop for the crisis in UK HE that the COVID-19 pandemic brought, and helps us to make sense of how staff responded to the rapid and very disruptive shift to online provision of learning.

Moral Injury

Originally developed in the 1990s by psychiatrist Jonathan Shay (1994), the concept of moral injury connects the negative emotional experiences of individuals to wider social factors. Shay worked with US military veterans who had post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); he found that they often shared experiences of being made to do things by superior officers or by the systemic situation they were placed within, that were against their own code of moral values, and often placed them in harm's way. Paradigmatic examples of such experiences would be soldiers being ordered into combat zones by distant commanders who had no perception or share in the risk being faced, being provided with inadequate equipment by the military and this facing increased risk, being ordered to

participate in or witnessing acts of barbarism ordered by superior offices. Shay suggests that such acts all feature 'betrayal', by military or political leaders (or both). Specifically, Shay defined moral injury as being a consequence of 'a betrayal of what's right, by someone who holds legitimate authority … in a high stakes situation' (Shay, 2014: 103). Clearly, the social, relational, and institutional context is central to this, and our, understanding of moral injury.

The concept of moral injury has provided a useful framework for a number of recent studies, moving and expanding the horizon beyond considerations of military experiences. Griffin et al. (2019) in their review of recent moral injury studies note that whilst the origin point of the concept of moral injury lies in Shay's work, who in 1994 introduced the idea "heuristically, using Homeric philosophy[1]" there is no consensus definition of moral injury (Griffin et al., 2019: 350). Recent studies have taken Shay's concept into much more clinical settings, looking at what we could term 'episodic' rather than 'systemic' moral injury. Griffin et al.'s review of 116 academic articles on moral injury found that the focus of these was overwhelmingly on clinical symptoms and remedies, and many featured typologies and predictive models regarding *potentially morally injurious events* (PMIEs). Few studies looked at the social contexts and consequences of moral injury, and Griffin et al. concluded that:

> The social consequences of moral injury appear to be especially pernicious. Future work should examine the range of social, cultural, and political factors that may contribute to the occurrence of PMIEs (e.g., placing men and women in positions where they must compromise shared moral values or violate their own sense of justice to accomplish a conflicting social imperative). (Griffin et al.: 356)

Litz et al.'s work, similarly, looks at episodic moral injury, seeing moral injury as a result of an episode, or linked episodes, of betrayal by a leader (Litz et al., 2009: 697). Whilst this is relevant in some cases, our systemic

[1] We think this term is rather contentious. Shay does not use the term 'Homeric philosophy', and it is unlikely that any classicist would recognise the term. It is possible to reconstruct a Homeric *ethics* based on, particularly, the *Iliad*. Perhaps this is what Griffin et al. mean.

focus considers episodes *and* also the ways that individuals' 'assumptions of fairness' are betrayed.

Our position regarding moral injury is closer to Shay's original position. We recognise that the framework of moral injury has been useful to recent clinical psychology studies, particularly connecting moral injury to PTSD as a result of 'episodes' of betrayal, but this 'medicalization' of moral injury runs counter to our argument and purposes. Specifically, we consider the medicalisation of 'moral injury' to elide and occlude the social, political, cultural, and structural factors that are central to the emergence of moral injury, and which provide significant aspects of the experience of moral injury that individuals experience. Our research results reported below, we feel, support this position.

Our Research

This project emerged from, and extends, an earlier piece of statactivist research we carried out. As academic workers in Higher Education, we consider it important to reflect on and offer a critique of the current condition of our sector, but also to provide tools that may help to improve working conditions and Higher Education in general, as a public good for all participants. By 'statactivist' we mean using, primarily, statistical data generated by our own research to support our activism in, in our case, our workplace and industrial sector. Statactivism has been articulated as a militant use of figures whereby previous representations of reality can be challenged and contested. Statactivist projects such as ours deliberately generate data that can be used by activists and other actors who are trying to effect positive social change. Central to the project of statactivism is recognition that numbers, specially statistics, carry a particular significance in public discourse and debates.

Our first statactivist project, the Senior Management Survey (SMS), was a response to the 'tyranny of metrics' that many UK HE academic staff say plague their work lives. We sought to mirror the UK National Student Survey (NSS) but rather than focusing on students perceptions of their experiences at university, we shifted the lens to explore staff perception of their university, with a specific focus on their experiences

of their senior management (in a similar way the NSS focuses on experiences of teaching). Turning the glare of metrics upwards, we collected data on UK HE academic staff satisfaction with their senior managers and constructed a league table that ranked HE institutions according to how positively their staff rated the senior management team (Erickson et al., 2020). Extending that work we used a similar methodology to collect and examine the experiences of academic workers in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the rest of this chapter, we draw on two studies carried out during the lockdown and also reflect on our earlier work.

Method and Methodology

Our Approach

The data in this chapter is taken from two studies we undertook during the first 12 months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both of these studies were designed to build upon our original statactivist research (see Erickson et al., 2020). The ontological and epistemological assumptions behind the two studies presented in this chapter draw on statactivism as its philosophical foundation.

Whilst statactivism is relatively underused in conventional Western social science research, it has a long and rich history originating in Latin America and was taken up in France by Liberation Psychologists. It utilises the 'tools' (e.g. quantitative measures and surveys) of positivist and empiricist methodologies but rather than taking an 'objective', or passive approach to research, it actively acknowledges the subjective nature of research and attempts to undertake research through the notion of praxis which 'produces knowledge and knowledge that turns into action' (Montero & Sonn, 2009: 2). Therefore, rather than working from an objective position and utilising quantitative methods in ways that often serve to reinforce the status quo, or more problematically utilising them as regressive social accounting practices of the neoliberal state (Bruno et al., 2014), statactivism seeks to utilise quantitative methods, and a neopositivist position (Jiminez-Dominguez, 2009), to reveal social

injustice (Samuel, 2014) and engage with a journey of collective action that uses numbers, measurements, and indicators as means of denunciation and criticism (Lury & Gross, 2014). Our intention in these projects was to expose the issues we were experiencing in our everyday lives as Higher Education academics.

It is argued that statistics can be used as a tool to resist coercion (Boris, 2014). Therefore, we adopted this approach to use statistics to challenge and resist the current orthodoxy circulating in Higher Education. Furthermore, from the start of the pandemic, we were witnessing the explicit exploitation of the pandemic as the backdrop for severe and problematic change. Indeed, in the UK Higher Education staff were initially largely not seen as keyworkers, though with some exceptions, for example, those working on clinical training programmes (HE workers were all granted keyworker status in January 2021). Regardless of this status, universities were not willing to suspend their student-focused activities. As a result, the difficult and uncertain times that the pandemic had created internationally were viewed as irrelevant by university senior management teams, and staff were instructed to put the delivery of teaching above any individual situations they might be faced with and overnight were expected to move the delivery of teaching online. Clearly, such a move by universities added to the already distressing situation staff were faced with and having witnessed this first hand, the authors of this chapter set to action to explore UK HE staff experiences of working through the pandemic and conduct a mental health evaluation of the staff. Thus, we drew on our previous statactivist approach to publicly name the ways in which universities were impacting their staff through unrealistic, if not barbaric, expectations of, and lack of support for, their staff at a time of national and international distress.

Our Methods

Study 1—UK HE Staff Experiences of Working Through the Pandemic

Our first online survey (identified in the results below as C-19 survey 1) was opened in June 2020 and ran for 8 months until March 2021. Given the constraints placed upon social researchers by the pandemic, but also following previous successful online surveys of UK academic staff regarding work and management (Erickson et al., 2020; Wray & Kinman, 2021), we decided that this platform would satisfy the needs of our research question

> *How are UK HE staff experiencing working through the COVID-pandemic and what is the impact on their mental health?*

This questionnaire was comprised of 9 topic-related questions relating to their experiences. The topics covered in this survey were: changes to their working life; support received for changes; mental health impacts (including GAD-7 and PHQ-9); perceptions of job security/insecurity; experiences of surveillance; health and safety; perceptions of university leadership; university communications; and perceptions of adaptations to the workplace. Following the close-ended questions, we offered participants the opportunity to add any other comments they wished to express. The questionnaire also collected demographic data including data on gender, age, ethnicity, pay grade, contract type, academic disciplinary area, name of institution, and trade union membership. Data was carefully checked and all identifying features in the qualitative write-in comments were removed prior to data analysis.

We disseminated the online survey using our own social media accounts, snowballing via personal and academic contacts. Participants self-selected and all participation was entirely voluntary, anonymous, confidential, and unrewarded.

In total we received 156 fully completed responses to the online survey. The sample was also predominantly female (63.4%), identified as 'white' (70.5%) with 85.7% responding no to the question 'do you

identify as disabled' and 75.6% stating they were on permanent full-time contracts, with 77.2% earning over £40,000 p.a. A good range of disciplines were represented in the sample, fairly evenly split across the three main categories (Arts and Humanities 23.0%; Social Sciences 51.9% STEMM 17.9%) with a further 3.2% representing Professional Services and 3.8% selecting 'other'. The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS and the qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Whilst study 1 offered some interesting insights into UK HE staff experiences of working through the pandemic and the impact this had on their mental health, from our preliminary analysis it became clear that not only were staff experiencing significant distress and mental health difficulties, but more pertinently they were experiencing what Shay described as Moral Injury. Therefore, we designed a Moral Injury focused survey and undertook our second study presented in this chapter.

Study 2—UK HE Staff Experiences of Moral Injury

Our second online survey (identified in the results below as C-19 survey 2) was opened in January 2021 and ran until the end of March 2021. which was:

> *Did academics working in UK HEIs suffer moral injury in responding to changes in their work and working environments following the COVID-19 pandemic*

Our questionnaire was comprised of ten topic-related questions, each of which included follow-up sub-questions and also invited participants to write in additional information. The questionnaire also collected demographic data including data on gender, age, ethnicity, pay grade, contract type, academic disciplinary area, name of institution, and trade union membership. Data was carefully checked and all identifying features in the qualitative write-in comments were removed prior to data analysis.

We disseminated the online survey using our own social media accounts, snowballing via personal and academic contacts, and through UCU and THE both including the link to the survey in their social

media feeds. Participants self-selected and all participation was entirely voluntary, anonymous, confidential, and unrewarded.

In total we received 663 fully completed responses to the online survey and 658 of the respondents adding comments into each of the seven additional comments free text boxes positioned throughout the questionnaire. The sample was also predominantly white (64.8%) with 86.5% responding no to the question 'do you identify as disabled' and 70.5% stating they were on permanent full-time contracts, with 73.1% earning over £40,000 p.a. A good range of disciplines were represented in the sample, fairly evenly split across the three main categories (Arts and Humanities 27.4%; Social Sciences 36.6%; STEMM 25.0%) with a further 4.9% representing Professional Services and 6.1% selecting 'other'. The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS and the statistical analysis was published earlier in Hanna et al. (2022). The qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We redacted the results from both surveys to preserve anonymity and confidentiality.

The University in Lockdown; Experiences of Moving to Online Teaching

> Coronavirus lockdowns have precipitated a crisis in university funding and academic morale. When lockdowns were announced, universities all over the world closed their doors. They moved classes and some research activity online. But staff were given little or no time to prepare and few resources or training to help them. *Nature* editorial 18th June 2020

The rapid imposition of lockdown measures, including the closure of all university activities other than essential services, brought considerable stress and chaos across the sector. Whilst university managements must be commended for implementing government orders to shut campuses very rapidly, there we are lot of associated problems with this. 'Pivoting' classrooms from face-to-face provision to online provision happened

very quickly, but in haphazard and non-standard ways. There was a considerable degree of chaos and, for some, additional pressure:

> Immense pressure has been put on colleagues with front-line teaching roles. There's a feeling of threat. (C-19 survey 1)

> Back to back meetings online, intensification of workloads, university made redundancies so as research staff we now have to pick up teaching and supervision of undergrad and Master students because the university doesn't want to hire additional HPLs. (C-19 survey 2)

> Excessive work load due to switch to online teaching, multiple additional exams/resits, student assessment extensions, working from home, on top of all this university dropped all hourly paid teaching contracts and stopped hiring when positions were vacant so everyone left had significantly more work expected of them, all leading to excessive workload, work hours, minimal time off, high stress and burnout. (C-19 survey 2)

A constant theme throughout our research in the pandemic was a lack of information and poor communication from senior management:

> Within my school/dept, our head has been amazing (Health Sciences), [but] the disconnect between our senior management (VC, exec board, council) and what's happening 'on the ground' is shocking. (C-19 survey 1)

> There has been a lack of direction and clarity from the executive board of the university which has filtered down to a lack of decisions from senior management at school level. Students were often told about changes before staff, which meant a considerable amount of uncertainty and additional work. Senior management say that they care but their actions do not reflect that and come across completely disconnected from what staff are having to deal with. (C-19 survey 1)

> *Russell Group university* was one of the last universities to go into lockdown. We got an email at 9:30am on Monday morning (16th March) telling everyone to go home ASAP. They could have emailed everyone on Friday or even at the weekend but they waited until the last minute

> and picked the most inconvenient time to announce campus closure. They tow the Tory party line and make decisions based on how it will impact their profit margins. I am convinced that if a staff/student died, they would do everything in their power to keep it from going public to protect the *Russell Group university* brand. (C-19 survey 1)

> I have been frustrated at the lack of information whilst we are still requested to make decisions about provision. (C-19 survey 1)

> There has been a recurring pattern of SMT making promises to students without consulting the staff responsible for keeping those promises, which has created confusion and anger amongst students and heavily increased workloads for staff. (C-19 survey 1)

> Senior Management have made some terrible decisions despite academic staff telling them their plans were not feasible, which has led to student dissatisfaction which is then directed at academic staff. (C-19 survey 2)

> [Our] University is only stopping face-to-face teaching when the Government insists on it, leaving staff and students open to the inconsistency and uncertainty caused by the Government's shambolic handling of the crisis; the University could easily take a stronger stand on the evidence. I also consider their handling of my case to be exacerbated by on-going failure to comprehend the severity of mental health conditions such as depression/anxiety; this seems to lead to a preference for driving me into the ground and then dealing with the resultant crisis (my going on sick leave) rather than taking a preventative approach by reducing known stress-factors wherever possible. (C-19 survey 2)

Shifting to online provision was complex, technically difficult and stressful with academic staff being required to 'upskill' to an online only environment in a matter of days. A constant theme from our data was the mental and physical toll this took on staff:

> I don't feel that the senior leadership understand the emotional and psychological impact of the pandemic on my physical and cognitive ability to perform my job, and I do not want the responsiblity of trying to ensure that my students, staff members and those they come into contact

> with do not die or become sick. I experience physical pain now from doing everything on-screen with no let-up in sight. While my research career is (ironically) thriving, the teaching demands take everything out of me. (C-19 survey 1)

> Extremely large workloads have been forced on me (and some colleagues), sometimes as high as 200-300%, without any support or consideration of health and wellbeing. (C-19 survey 2)

This was coupled to difficulties in home life and achieving a work-life balance (always elusive in HE teaching):

> It's not just childcare pressures; a big negative is having to share a small home with one or more others working from home, with inadequate space etc. (C-19 survey 1)

> I had a period of well over 5 weeks during which I worked until 3am, and woke up with my son between 6-7am. The expectations placed on us at the departmental, school and collegiate level were excessive. As an early career member of the department on probation for one more year, I did not feel able to speak outwardly. (C-19 survey 2)

Moral Injury Resulting from the Shift to Online Teaching

Already, in our early survey of staff experiences of HE work in the pandemic, participants identified significant moral injury:

> There is no policing of Covid-19 secure measures on campus and these are largely being ignored. We are being pressured into 50/50 face to face teaching before students have self-isolated. ALL the measures are for students and no/very few responses about keeping staff safe and well. (C-19 survey 1)

> We have been asked to mislead/misinform/withhold info from students, which would have enabled them to go home or stay at home rather than moving onto or near campus for teaching. We have also been forced to withhold info on policies about exams, no detriment, etc that would reduce student stress if released in a timely manner. I have seen first hand the negative effect this has had on my students' mental health and well-being - I have never seen so many students suffering from mental health issues. The stress of being separated from family, the financial worry of having to find and/or break leases on flats, etc. (C-19 survey 2)

This was amplified in our second survey:

> [We are] being forced to withhold information from, or provide misleading information to, students about the likelihood of/plans for on-campus teaching (i.e. conveying that it was likely to happen, when in reality it was not - thus requiring students to live in rented accommodation unnecessarily, move to the UK unnecessarily, and not return home when they desired to do so). Have also been asked repeatedly to withhold info about details on online exams, no detriment policies, etc (because they have 'not yet been approved,' for weeks and months) to the detriment of student mental health and wellbeing. (C-19 survey 2)

> Bad behavior by managers (bullying, victimization) is putting a strain on my mental health and it is hard to have to deal with this on top of the isolation during COVID. (C-19 survey 2)

> Senior management have not in any way altered their expectations for the performance of early career academics - we are still expected to be winning grants, publishing 4* papers, etc whilst delivering excellent student experience and translating whole courses to online format. I could go on and on about how unsupported I feel by my line manager and senior managers - they are completely out of touch, and they are not providing sufficient resources to support staff in dealing with the massive overhead from online teaching. Gov also does not help by again refusing to replace the shortfall in uni funding that would result from tuition fee refunds - so students are still expecting an experience that is comparable to in person, on campus. This is just not possible to deliver. (C-19 survey 2)

NPM and the Persistence and Prevalence of Moral Injury

Whilst it is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic is an extreme, hopefully, a unique case what we can see in responses to shifting teaching online is the continuation of the intensification of work that NPM and the audit culture in UK HE have brought about.

> Uni[versity] senior management places pressure on staff (with threat of disciplinary action) to promote the idea that the campus is covid secure and face to face teaching is safe and this is the line staff have to take with students (and other staff); This line was maintained despite the uni senior management hiding/delaying/obfuscating the fact that 1000+ students had covid within a few weeks of the start of semester. (C-19 survey 2)

> Senior managers are using the cover of the pandemic to further their own interests. (C-19 survey 2)

> Excessive workload and stress, exacerbated by stressful restructuring proposals which amount to a deskilling and downgrading of several people in the department (I am one). (C-19 survey 2)

> We are understaffed by pre-COVID standards, no amendments have been made to promotion expectations, administration has increased with new risk assessment processes, documentation of multiple different levels of teaching plans and adjustments etc., AND the curriculum review has not been halted, nor other restructuring activities which have created additional stress for academic staff and the professional services team. (C-19 survey 2)

Conclusions

It is clear from the results of our two COVID-19 surveys that staff in UK HE faced enormous pressures due to the pandemic, and that this was exacerbated by two things. The first was a general lack of leadership; staff

were left to their own devices to enact the considerable changes required to 'pivot' from face-to-face to online teaching and engagement. The second was, ironically given what we have just said, a specific directive from management to return to face-to-face teaching and engagement. This caused huge amounts of stress and worry and undoubtedly lead to infections amongst staff and students in university settings. We can read these two responses in the light of NPM: in the first case, the UK government and most UK HEI senior management teams had no contingency plan for a pandemic-induced lockdown (and this despite considerable warnings being available) and so no policy was enacted or issued. Staff were left to make it up as best they could, and we should recognise the achievement of academic staff in managing to delivery university education under these conditions. In the second case, we can see that formal policy enactment and directive from the government regarding UK HE had returned in the form of a 'face-to-face teaching and back onto campus regardless' policy. This was enforced across many universities in the UK, though not all, and this was done in the face of very clear evidence that it was a dangerous and counterproductive position to take. After all, the US HE sector had tried something similar in July of 2021 with disastrous consequences.

There is a further point here, again one that is strongly connected to NPM ideology and rhetoric. It is that the shift to online teaching and student engagement and the subsequent shift to face-to-face were stressful and harmful for staff not because of their specific content, but because of the form in which this was brought about and enforced. Lack of support and leaving crucial decisions to individual members of staff in the first phase of the pandemic was followed up by hardline management and specific threats to the individual members of staff. Constantly shifting modes of teaching delivery were imposed by managers, many of whom were very far removed from delivery of teaching itself. Taking a step back from the specific situations, we can see that a lack of democratic governance in UK HE, and a lack of meaningful consultation with academic staff lead to stress, burnout, and moral injury. This need not have been the case. UK HE staff are involved in a collective endeavour and effort to deliver the best education they can for students. A much more co-operative and supportive approach from government and senior

university managers could have mitigated this situation and, it is very possible, delivered much better experiences for staff and students alike. The toxicity that still pervades UK HE in the wake of the pandemic needs to be addressed through recognition of mistakes made and through attempts at reconciliation. We hope that the statistics, research results, and analysis we have provided in this chapter may contribute to this process.

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3

Pandemic of Managerialism in Higher Education During the COVID-19: A Political Autoethnographic Reflection

Bhabani Shankar Nayak

Introduction

Managerialism is not new to higher education. Even before the pandemic, managerialism was gaining ground in higher education with the growth of neoliberal university, where education was transformed into a commodity in market. The theology of Taylorism of scientific management of education has reduced the criticality of higher education, where employability skills have replaced scientific, secular, and progressive consciousness towards social, political, and economic emancipation. Universities and colleges are increasingly adopting business-oriented approaches, focusing on metrics, rankings, and efficiency rather than fostering critical thinking, creativity, and intellectual pursuit.

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The pandemic, however, exacerbated this trend as higher education institutions were forced to quickly adapt to remote learning and rapidly changing circumstances.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on higher education institutions worldwide within few months of lockdown. Students and staffs have faced enormous stress with the new online teaching and learning environment. The teaching and non-teaching staff members have faced unprecedented challenges in ensuring the safety of their students and staff while continuing to provide quality education. However, amidst the chaos and disruption, another crisis has emerged in the new forms of managerialism in higher education. The online teaching and learning environment is a bane for the students and teaching staff members whereas it was a boon for managers of higher education. The reduction of support services to students and staff defines online learning and teaching environment. The managers of higher education find an opportunity to ensure more bureaucratic hurdles for students and staff members by focusing more on managerial principles and practices, often at the expense of academic values and priorities. The new managerialism and its ideologies shape organisational values and practices to bring radical transformation in the culture of work and workplaces (Deem, 1998: 109). The pandemic gave breathing space to such ideological frameworks of managerialism, which was otherwise lost its relevance. This chapter delves into the pandemic-induced rise of managerialism and its consequences in the realm of higher education.

The COVID-19 Pandemic and Profits in Higher Education

The managers of higher education have justified their austerity drive to reduce services for the students and staff members in the name of financial crisis during the pandemic. The managers argued for saving money to overcome financial crisis of the higher education institutions. It is also argued that during the COVID-19 crisis; many institutions faced financial challenges due to declining enrolment and reduced funding.

In response, administrators and governing boards turned to a managerial approach as a means of survival. Decision-making power became centralised, academic departments faced budget cuts, faculty members were placed under increased scrutiny, and emphasis was placed on revenue-generating programmes. The immediate need to ensure financial sustainability overshadowed academic autonomy and institutional missions. These neoliberal arguments of structural adjustments were imposed on students and staffs of higher education. The profits of universities, colleges, and other higher education institutions reveal the fallacies of such arguments. The universities have made enormous profit during the pandemic.

British universities are making profit at the cost of their students and staff members during the pandemic. The latest study by the UCU (2023a) has revealed that 147 British universities have made the total income of £44.6bn and it is £3.5bn more than last year. The income is higher than the pre-pandemic years. The universities have made the total surplus is £2.6bn; the highest it has been for at least four years. The universities have cash and current investment holdings which has reached £19.6bn. It is £1.3bn more than last academic year. However, staff expenditure is just 51% of income which is a record low in British universities (UCU, 2023a, 2023b). It shows that fallacies of neoliberal managerial argument that universities are facing financial crisis. It also reveals that university managers are making profit out of the precarity of their students and staffs.

The UCU study has revealed that UK "universities generated record levels of income from tuition fees and other sources, hitting £41.1bn, up from £39.6bn in 2019/20". This surplus is a product of daytime robbery by British universities in the form of higher tuition fees and lower wages. British universities are mortgaging the future of our students and young people by increasing student fees and looking at them as cash cows. The profit-driven higher education business model has transformed British universities as degree-awarding shops, where teaching and learning has taken a leap backward. The UCU study reminds the government and university leaders that the "pay offer of just 3 per cent this year represents another real term pay cut as RPI inflation hits 12.3 per cent". This follows over a decade of low pay awards which puts staff pay

25% behind inflation. "The employers' offer would cost just £0.66bn to implement across all universities and UCU says this can and should be increased significantly". The planned 36% increase in capital expenditure on different vanity projects will further burden staff and students. British universities talk about sustainability but practice a business model in higher education which is unfair, exploitative, and unsustainable. The growth of managerialism is ruining the quality of teaching, learning, and research environment in the universities (UCU, 2023a, 2023b).

The corporatisation of universities and marketisation of higher education has followed a managerialist approach which is detrimental to higher education sector (Parker, 2014, 2018). The impact of corporate culture and managerialism on university research and teaching is well documented in the works of Fleming (2021). It takes away the unique and diverse abilities of the students and staff members. It destroys democratic processes and spaces of knowledge production and distribution. The managerialist approach to higher education dismantles universities as critical spaces of questioning power and authority for the deepening of democracy and production of emancipatory knowledge traditions.

Most managers in higher education have little or no exposure to the idea of research, teaching, and learning. Knowledge production is replaced by a profit-driven business model. Critical thinking is replaced by compliance culture. Democratisation of knowledge and university campuses is transformed by dominance of arrogant and ignorant business managers. The aggressive marketing and advertisements by the British universities take away the dignity of in-depth research and teaching for the greater good of society. The pandemic of managerialism undermines the creative abilities of universities as places of higher educational centres of learning. The rising cost of living, higher tuition fees, falling salaries, and insecure contractual jobs in British universities are detrimental to the present and future of our society. It is time to question the viability of universities as critical spaces to challenge power for a sustainable future. It is time to reject the profit-driven education model that considers students and staffs as cash cows. British universities need to create egalitarian, non-racist, non-sexist, inclusive, and democratic spaces if they are to survive.

Pandemic of New Public Management Theory in Higher Education

From the Midvale Steel Company to the higher education institutions across the globe, the ideals of Taylorism and its so-called scientific management theory have travelled far and wide. It has entered every nook and corner of public and private lives in the name of efficiency, productivity, and profit. The New Public Management theory draws its intellectual lineages from the old Taylorism, which argues that the art of managerialism is defined "*as knowing exactly what you want men to do, and then seeing that they do it in the best and cheapest way*" (Taylor, 1903: 1356–1364). Such idealism of managers breeds a sense of ignorance and arrogance, which produces managerial junks called university policies and processes, the foundation of inefficiency in higher education. The knowledge production and dissemination take a back seat whereas the managerial idealism drives the higher education. The pandemic has aggravated the existing know all managerialism and taken it to a new level, where managers rarely find time to get out of their meeting spaces. Meetings for the sake of meetings to manage higher education defines the pandemic of managerialism. It even defies every tenet of industrial Taylorism of mass production based on arguments of efficiency and resource management. The domestication and control of the creative abilities of labour is central to old and new public management theory. The COVID-19 pandemic was an opportunity to further domesticate the creative abilities of labour (Nayak, 2022).

Historically, academics have enjoyed greater workplace autonomy within higher education system where students and teachers regulated academic praxis (Burawoy, 2005). This autonomy of the foundation of knowledge production in the process of research as a subversive activity. The online teaching and learning environment has taken away the autonomy and technocratic managers used the COVID-19 pandemic as a pretext to undermine academic autonomy. The COVID-19 has helped in the deepening of corporatisation of higher education with the help of managerialism. The online teaching and learning environment has undermined the values of collegiality and academic freedom.

Le Grange (2020) has argued that the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the uberfication of the universities. It has also help to expand the gap between the teaching and research, which is a product of corporatisation of higher education (Gebreiter, 2021). The pandemic has not only aggravated the existing predicaments of higher education, but it has also accelerated the crisis with profit-driven managerialism.

The COVID-19 pandemic has dismantled academics as critical mass community with the help of managerialist interventions during the lock down period. Such a process is detrimental to the collectivist foundation of knowledge production and sharing. The growth of compliance culture in higher education is a product of pandemic of managerialism that intends to control abilities of labour and its critical power to question power.

Conclusion

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic-induced surge in managerialism in higher education are damaging the present and future of higher education and its role in the social transformation. The technocratic interventions between a teacher and student during online teaching and learning reduces the organic interactions to a lifeless digital space. The online teaching and learning environment sidelines the requirements of the students and staff members in the name of the pandemic. The managerial decision-making is authoritarian and undemocratic where academic governance is managed by non-academic managers. It minimises collaboration between staff and students in the universities, colleges, and other higher education institutions.

The pandemic has also to the growth of a rent seeking culture within higher education, where revenue generation takes priority over knowledge production. The efficiency and other evaluation methods driven by teaching and research metrics undermine the quality, diversity, and uniqueness of educational offerings of institutions and intellectual abilities of individual staff and students. The curriculums that don't generate profit or align with market values are made redundant. As a result of which the liberal arts, humanities and other critical disciplines are

eroding from the higher education curriculums. The austerity measures during the pandemic compromise the interactive and immersive nature of higher education teaching and research. The increased pressure on staff reduces student learning and staff wellbeing and work life balance. The managerialism during pandemic helped the managers of higher education to monitor staff and students as if universities are industrial shop floors. The sudden shift to online teaching and learning led to significant changes to the quality of teaching and research due to time constraints.

The overreliance on managerial approaches to higher education during pandemic or any form of crisis destroys the critical, democratic, and collaborative educational space for knowledge production and dissemination. The teaching and learning in higher education are not merely for a certificate or for a qualification. The higher education helps to develop higher consciousness for greater common good. Therefore, long term visions of higher education should not be ruined by managerialism and their ignorance.

The pandemic teaches to be more collaborative to develop critical thinking, creativity, adaptability. The pandemic of managerialism is opposed to these ideals of higher education. In this way, the COVID-19 pandemic has unearthed the growing crisis of managerialism in higher education. While universities and colleges must respond to financial challenges, it is essential to strike a balance between managerial approaches and academic values. The well-being of faculty, the diversity of educational offerings, and the preservation of shared governance should not be sacrificed at the altar of immediate financial stability. Education for emancipatory consciousness can only help the individuals, states, and societies to face and overcome crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic whereas managerialism ensures compliance culture that is opposed to the idea of innovation and creativity to deal with crisis.

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4

Being Seen: Impression Management and (In)visibility in the Online Classroom

Katherine Appleford

Introduction

In March 2019 the Covid-19-pandemic and UK national lockdown ushered in a 'new normal' in Higher Education, which saw the delivery of lectures, seminars and tutorials migrate to online platforms (Leung et al., 2021). While those who had been working on distance learning courses were familiar with the digital classroom (Hathaway, 2014), for many others it was new terrain, and although online synchronous delivery was the closest approximation to face-to-face teaching and learning, it required staff and students to quickly adapt, adopting a new set of rules for social interaction (Petchamé et al., 2022). Raising and lowering your hand to speak, ensuring you were muted or unmuted at appropriate points in a session, and understanding the social etiquette around the chat function, were all important in this new learning environment,

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but particular consideration was given to whether students should be required to turn their webcams on, ensuring that they could be seen in the classroom (Moses, 2020; Meishar-Tal & Forkosh-Baruch, 2022; Riches, 2021).

As several research papers argue, 'cameras on' allows staff to read the room much more effectively, as visual clues provide useful indications of understanding and engagement (Meishar-Tal & Forkosh-Baruch, 2022; Yarmand et al., 2021). Being able to see each other in the online classroom also gives students a much better understanding of who is their cohort and thus helps to facilitate peer-to-peer relationships and fosters greater discussion and debate. Yet, across the education sector tutors found that there was a reticence amongst students to be seen on screen, with early research suggesting that students had strong concerns over the potential breach of privacy, in respect of their own lives and others in their household, and also had anxieties over their physical appearance (Kozar, 2015; Meishar-Tal & Forkosh-Baruch, 2022).

Certainly, 'cameras on' had the potential to allow those in the classroom a view into students' everyday lives which would normally be hidden, and thus by 'being seen' students ran the risk of disclosing elements of their private lives which could impact, and possibly discredit, their classroom persona. For lecturers, being on screen, coupled with working from home, posed similar challenges. Though some tutors were able to curate onscreen images in a way which reinforced their academic authority, showcasing their extensive book collections or practice spaces, for example (Marsden, 2022; O'Loughlin, 2008), for others being on screen, and at home, created the possibility of revealing aspects of their private space usually hidden from work (Kidd & Murray, 2022), which could damage their professional image or simply influence others' view of them.

In this chapter, I seek to unpack the experience of being seen when teaching and learning online and explore the blurring of boundaries between public and private space, which occurred in these online learning environments. Using Goffman (1990 [1959]), I consider how turning the camera on requires new forms of impression management, as typically back stage space becomes the 'front region', the place from which 'the performance is given' (1990 [1959]: 11). In doing so, I reflect

on my own practice and teaching experiences, examining the ways I looked to stage my performance as well as exploring the 'back stage difficulties' I incurred when teaching online. I also draw on qualitative comments from my students gathered during the lockdown periods. Moreover, in evaluating the existing research which strongly emphasises student's reluctance to be seen on screen, I consider the role of the audience, and how audience perception impacts students' willingness to be seen. Drawing on Tseëlon (1995), who employs Goffman in her analysis of visibility, I consider how students' willingness to be seen is also linked to their understanding of the audience, which feeds into feelings of insecurity and visibility.

The chapter starts by looking at the existing literature pertaining to the use of cameras in online teaching, particularly in the context of Covid-19. This work typically considers the reasons that students give for not turning cameras on and outlines the benefits of being seen in the online classroom, both for the students and the staff. Drawing on the arguments concerning privacy and performance the chapter moves on to outline Goffman's (1990 [1959]) dramaturgical model and how this work can help unpack the experiences of being on screen in online lectures, seminars and workshops. In particular, I consider the blurring of boundaries between front stage and back stage, highlighting the different ways in which staff and students look to 'impression manage' in this space and reflecting on the 'back stage difficulties' individuals can face in this environment. Here, I consider my own practice and the actions I took to try and maintain the impression I would ordinarily present if in the on-campus classroom. Finally, I consider arguments concerning students' perceptions of social audiences and the ways in which distinctions between front stage and back stage are shaped by one's relationship with the audience and consequently, how secure one feels. Here, I consider students' willingness to turn cameras on when in much smaller, more familiar group settings, and suggest that perhaps one the way to encourage visibility, is to build rapport between students, enabling them to feel less psychologically visible when in the online classroom.

Online Teaching and Learning: Covid-19 and Cameras

On 23 March 2019, the UK entered its first nationwide lockdown as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic. In his national address, Prime Minster Boris Johnson ordered that the British Public should 'Stay at home, protect the NHS, and saves lives' outlining the restrictions which would be imposed on people gathering in public spaces, mixing with members outside of their household and going about their daily routines (PMO, 2020). As a response, UK universities required lecturers and students to work from home, resulting in the 'rapid transition to online learning' (Meishar-Tal & Forkosh-Baruch, 2022: 1). This shift was not only witnessed in the UK but across the globe (Aristovnik et al., 2021). For many, including myself, this initially meant working asynchronously, recording audio onto lecture slides and uploading this material onto virtual learning platforms, such as Blackboard and Canvas, for example. Very quickly, however, universities ushered in the use of software such as Zoom, MS Teams and Google Classroom to provide students with synchronous classes. These 'real time' lectures, seminars and workshops more closely replicated the on-campus experience. Enabling live interactions with the lecturer and with other students, they provided the opportunity for students to seek clarification, ask questions and discussed ideas for, as Yarmand and et al. (2021: 9) note, the key benefit of synchronous teaching is the '[e]nhanced interaction' which is 'shown to improve learner satisfaction, class retention, and learning gains'.

To create an environment which was as close to normal face-to-face classes as possible, students were also encouraged to have their webcams turned on, to enable the lecturer and other students to see who else was participating in the class. As the literature on online learning has highlights, 'being seen' allows the lecturer to better facilitate students' learning, as they can read facial expressions to 'convey messages of interest, understanding or misunderstanding, boredom or class involvement in non-verbal ways' (Meishar-Tal & Forkosh-Baruch, 2022: 2). In my teaching, for example, I found that when students used their webcams it gave me a much better sense of who was in the room and who was paying attention. Moreover, as Kozar (2015) suggests, I could

bring students into the discussion or take questions more easily, as the visual stream allowed me to read the faces of my students and pick up visual cues. I also felt that the students had better relationships with one another when they were able to see their peers in the classroom. In fact, a further benefit of synchronous teaching is its ability to combat students' feelings of loneliness and isolation as students can see each other's reactions (Castelli & Savary, 2021: 3567; Hrastinski, 2008: 51). Learning in a group setting provides students with 'a sense of community in the classroom [and] yields personal and academic benefits, including increased classroom participation and learning' (Joksimović et al., 2015; Yarmand et al., 2021: 2–3). Furthermore, as Castelli and Savary (2021) suggest, teaching is much improved too, for rather than lectures teaching 'into the void' (O'Conaill et al., 1993; Yarmand, et al., 2021) which can be extremely disheartening (Leung et al., 2021), 'cameras on' allows tutors to see students listening, nodding their heads, smiling and so on, which provides immediate and reassuring feedback. As a result, having cameras on creates a much more positive teaching experience. It fosters a greater level of staff-student rapport and peer-to-peer support, which in turn helps to cultivate a feeling of class identity (Falloon, 2011), and arguably makes it feel like an 'actual class' (Rajab & Soheib, 2021).

'Cameras Off'

In the speedy switch to online learning, however, many lectures found that their students refused to turn their cameras on during online classes, sparking academics to question why this was the case and what could be done to change it (Castelli & Savary, 2021; Schwenck & Pryor, 2021). Although across Higher Education there were worries that a lack of appropriate equipment and accessibility were resulting in students not engaging fully in synchronous classes, research tends to suggest that this accounts for just a small portion of cameras being off (Bedenlier et al., 2021). Instead, a student's decision not to turn cameras on is much more likely to be driven by concerns over appearance and privacy (Bedenlier et al., 2021; Castelli & Savary, 2021; Rajab & Soheib, 2021; Schwenck & Pryor, 2021), although can be the result of others' failing

to do so, meaning that it becomes a collective response and classroom norm. Students worry, for instance, that information about them may be being collected (Rajab & Soheib, 2021), and they are also concerned that cameras provide a view into their private space. This is clearly illustrated by Petchamé et al.'s (2022) participants, who comment that 'many students do not want to show their personal space' and that 'the camera shows your house to unknow people' and therefore feels 'invasive'.

Added to this, any anxieties student may have over their appearance are exacerbated due to the close-up nature of the image on screen, or what has been termed the 'zoom gaze' (Caines, 2020). As Sumner (2022) notes, the use of video conferencing has led to a situation in which individuals are hyper-visible and yet estranged, as participants can see each other's faces, and their own, in close proximity, and yet are not able to interact in ways individuals typically do when in person. Moreover, the intense focus on our image in these environments makes us 'actively aware of the intricacies and idiosyncrasies of our self-presentation' (Sumner, 2022: 874). This has led some to suggest that 'zoom dysmorphia' is operating, as individuals struggled with their image in the 'digital mirror' (Gasteratos et al., 2021; Schumer, 2022). Confronted by their imperfections, which they and others can also 'zoom' in on, some commentators argue that video conferencing can also result in 'zoom face' where individuals seek out cosmetic surgery (Padley & Di Pace, 2022) having been engaged in constant scrutiny and comparison of their face with the others that they see on screen.

Furthermore, one of the peculiarities of being online is while 'cameras on' allows for the 'zoom gaze' as participants to constantly watch themselves and watch others, individuals cannot judge the extent to which they are being watched (Bedenlier et al., 2021). In a situation reminiscent of the panopticon (Foucault, 1977), 'cameras on' brings about a 'concentrated self-awareness' and self-surveillance as audiences are 'forced to see [themselves] being seen', which subsequently 'encourages self-monitoring, self-critique and forms of self-correction, adjustment and performance' (Sumner, 2022: 248). This surveillance of oneself and others is further intensified if other participants have their cameras off, as those in the meeting will not even know if their peers are present behind

the screen watching them or not. As a result, some will choose to turn their cameras off, as this is the only definitive way of avoiding the gaze.

Goffman: Performance, Region and Back Stage Difficulties

In thinking about the performances which take place on screen in this new learning environment, and the unwillingness of some to turn their cameras on Goffman's (1990 [1956]) work is perhaps most relevant. Kozar (2015), for example, suggests that the reluctance to turn cameras on is linked to impression management, while authors such as Sumner (2022) have acknowledged the relevance of Goffman for exploring the emphasis placed on the face in social interactions in the digital space. Others have also considered Goffman's work in relation to online personas in respect of dating, blogging, virtual worlds and gaming (Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013; Kalinowski & Matei, 2011; Shulman, 2016), arguing that his concepts provide a useful way for understanding how the self is constructed and performed online, although it is still also important to acknowledge the ways in which interactions in the digital world differ from the physical space.

As Danah boyd argues, simply 'translating physical expectations to the digital world is problematic…' (2002: 32) as boundaries that exist in the physical space are more porous online. For example, it is easier to record performances, to replay them and to locate performers' histories and other information about them, when interacting in the digital space. Although actors may look to segregate their audiences, as Goffman (1990 [1959]: 57) suggests and make efforts to hide information which damages their reputation, the 'collapsible' nature of online contexts means it is much easier for discrediting information to come to light and to be shared between different publics. At the same time, however, the online space also offers opportunities to build and curate appearances in ways which are not possible in the physical space and to enhance or embellish aspects of one's persona (Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013). Moreover, though actors may find contextual information which normally 'provides performer with the visual cues with which to

determine what is appropriate behaviour' is obscured or missing (boyd, 2002: 24), the 'digital mirror' does allow for a constant adjustment in presentation as performers watch their own acts.

Reflecting on the commentaries concerning online learning and teaching, boyd's arguments regarding the digital mirror and the obscured nature of contextual information certainly have relevance. As already discussed, online learning can create an environment in which audiences are confronted by their own image, and this is often coupled with a lack of opportunities for normal class interactions. Students are less able to have private conversations within online class space, for example, although the chat box does facilitate some of this, and they are less able to interrupt one another or have spontaneous interactions in the way that they might do in class. While technologies have allowed for breakout rooms, for example, the online interaction is not as dynamic as it might be in the physical space. Acknowledging how online contexts differ from Goffman's examples, therefore, can be just as important in understanding the dynamics of online interaction as applying his theory. Nevertheless, as others have suggested (Corrigan & Beaubien, 2013; Hogan, 2010), aspects of Goffman's work offer a useful starting point for unpacking the presentation of self-online, and in particular, his arguments concerning front, region and region behaviour (1990 [1959]) resonate with my experiences and my student's comments about learning and teaching online during the pandemic.

In his seminal work, 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life' (1990 [1959]), Goffman argues that individuals operate as social actors, who put on a show for the benefit of others. The performance, Goffman explains, 'refers to all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers' (1990 [1959]: 32). As such, it is a performance subject to 'continual observation and self-monitoring' (Hogan, 2010: 378), which seeks to give the audience an idealised impression that exemplifies the social and cultural values of that society. Indeed, in a bid to 'give expression to ideal standards' Goffman argues that an actor will 'forgo or conceal action' (1990 [1959]: 50) which may be considered to undermine the impression being given and thus, while 'some aspects of

the activity are expressively accentuated … other aspects which might discredit the fostered impression are suppressed' (1990 [1959]: 114).

The performance is said to be supported by the 'social front', which includes all the elements which could be considered scenery, stage and props in a theatrical performance. Goffman defines it as the setting, the furniture, the décor and the layout of the room. Added to this the actor himself presents a 'personal front', which are those elements associated with the performer's appearance and manner, such as clothing, age, gender and race (1990 [1959]: 32–34). Together the social and personal front work to provide a coherent impression to the audience about the performers' social identity or role, and the act which will take place in the 'front region' or what has more informally been described as the 'front stage', 'the place where the performance is given' (1990 [1959]: 110).

In contrast to the front region, is the 'back region or back stage' (1990 [1959]: 114). This is where the preparation for a performance takes place. It is the space where impression management is fostered and the performance 'painstakingly fabricated' (114). It is also the space in which props and items which make the personal front are stored, and it is a space in which there is a 'collapsing of repertories' as actors take off their characters (114). As such, it can often be a space in which 'performers behave out of character' or in contradictory ways, as they relax and drop their front, away from the pressure of the audience. Indeed, Goffman suggests that the back stage is crucial to giving an idealised performance, not only because it offers space in which the impression can be constructed but because it operates as a safe space in which performers are shielded or buffered from the demands of work and social audiences where they can 'hide the jig that enabled him to turn out a days work' (116).

For this back stage space to work effectively, however, Goffman suggests that it needs to be a secure environment. Workers need to have sufficient control over who can access it, and the back region also needs to be distanced from the audience so that performers and their preparation are not on show. Where there is insufficient control or distance, actors can find themselves in 'back stage difficulties', i.e., situations in which public impressions and performances are compromised. Here Goffman provides a range of examples, including a hotel

kitchen and noisy neighbours. Perhaps his most germane example when thinking about teaching and learning online, however, is that of the television or radio broadcaster. In this scenario, Goffman explains how the presenter, believing they are off air can drop their act, and joke with team-mates. However, as the recording is still running and thus the audience is still present, the journalist discredits their professional image with disastrous consequences. Unfortunately for the broadcaster, the potential for such mistakes is high, demonstrated by the various high-profile cases found across British media (see, e.g., Gordon Brown's 'bigoted women' comments, in 2010 or Krishnan Guru-Murthy's insult to Steve Baker, 2022). Yet incidents like these are unsurprising, given, as Goffman notes, 'the walls that broadcasters have to hide behind can … fall at the flick of a switch or a turn of the camera' (1990 [1959]: 121).

Blurring of Boundaries: Front Stage, Back Stage and Being (In)visible

Returning to the context of teaching and learning from home and online, and particularly during the pandemic, it is likely that many lecturers and arguably students can empathise with television or radio broadcasters, for they may have experienced similar 'back stage difficulties', as their back stage became front stage with the simple click of a button. Lectures and students used to performing within the 'highly bounded region' of the lecture theatre or classroom, a space with clear parameters in respect of space, time and identity, were now suddenly thrown into an environment where the boundaries between the performance and preparation were blurred and where impression management was heightened. As Sumner (2022: 875) notes interaction through Zoom results in the normalising of 'curated performance of our private spaces (the home, the local café, the backyard)… with the increasingly porous boundary between work and leisure environments… the camera… turns our surrounding personal environment into a kind of stage; each aspect of our real (behind the camera) lives is on display'.

Educators, who were now forced to work from home, found that '[d]omestic spaces and routines had to be rapidly re-organised' as 'previously back stage becomes part of the public front stage' (Kidd & Murray, 2022: 397). Dining room tables, kitchen islands and dressing tables were swiftly adopted as desks and teaching spaces, meaning that spaces which were once private and personal, such as one's kitchen, lounge or bedroom became public and visible, as education moved into a new 'in-between' or 'hybrid space', 'virtual and disembodied … but clearly viable, visible and shared' (2022: 397). Certainly, I found that areas in my home had to now work as back stage and front region, as spaces in which I would normally prepare lectures also became the same spaces in which I delivered them.

Conscious that I was on camera, and that these spaces could now be seen by my students, I, as a matter of course, sort to manage or curated these spaces to try and ensure they cultivated the 'right' impression. Sensitive to how much of my personal and family life I wanted those at work, colleagues and students, to see or rather not see; I consciously removed photographs of family members or university days from the shelves visible behind me. I cleared areas which were caught within the camera's view that seemed extremely cluttered and untidy. I moved stacks of papers and pots of pens out of view, and I took down my daughter's drawings, in a bid to frame my performance in a way that concealed, or at least minimised; my identity as a mother and instead emphasised and conveyed my professional image. So, for example, I thought about the book titles which would be on show behind me, making sure the ones relating to my research areas of fashion and class were more prominent than some of the paperback novels which were also housed there.

However, just as Kidd and Murray's (2022) participants found, being in my home rather than in the university space meant that there were some elements of my private life that I was just unable to conceal: the noise that emanated from the street outside, for example, the neighbours next door, the doorbell ringing or my on occasion my daughter walking into view and interrupting the lecture or workshop conversation. Working in a period of homeschooling, where I was managing the domestic space and my teaching commitments inevitably resulted in 'back stage difficulties'. There was fluidity between the front region

and back stage and as a result aspects of my private life came into public view.

Moreover, as I watched my colleagues in various team meetings, I could see how they too were experiencing this collapsing of boundaries, and how some had strived to manage their impressions, to varying degrees. Some could be seen framed by bookshelves, for example, bursting with academic texts, or situated in front of interesting artwork. Like many of the media commentators and politicians featured in news interviews at the time, they appeared to display their symbolic capital via their bookcases (Towheed, 2022), curating the composition of their backgrounds to 'communicate a series of signs to those on the other side of the screen… deliberately or not' (Sumner, 2022: 875). In the opening pages of '*Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*', Goffman notes the importance of 'sign vehicles', which he explains are sources of information and visual markers which audiences used to 'glean clues' about others' identity, status and conduct. These signs help the audiences to make sense of others, and the interaction which will follow, and here in the digital space, it seemed that 'sign vehicles' were playing an important role, helping colleagues to cultivate an identity of a learned academic which framed the interaction with their students and colleagues.

Though some had curated and controlled spaces, however, there were others where back stage and front stage merged. I soon became acquainted with some of my fellow academics' homes, particularly their kitchens, their sofas and their dining tables, even their cars, spaces which I had not been privy to before. I saw their piles of recycling in the corner of the room or their collection of ornaments on their fireplace. I met their pets and their children, and I heard other members of their families, their flatmates and neighbours. As Kidd and Murray's participant (2022: 397) reflected, I went 'through the keyhole' into my colleagues' homes and their lives outside of the academy, as being on camera and working from home ruptured the boundaries between the personal and professional.

Reflecting on my own experiences offered me some insight as to students' reluctancy to turn cameras on in their online learning sessions, for although these encounters have the potential to build greater rapport and combat feelings of isolation as the literature has shown, working

from home and turning the camera on presents challenges for impression management and performance. Like staff, students are also confronted with the collapsing of front and back regions, resulting in their private spaces becoming visible to the class audience which in turn makes negotiating their identity in the learning environment much more difficult.

While I was teaching during pandemic, I asked my students what the experience was like and how they felt about turning their cameras on. Many of the comments echoed the findings of other researchers, with students suggesting that not seeing each other led to a feeling loneliness. As one commented, 'I haven't made any friends, there's no opportunity to socialise'. However, added to this were comments which concerned the effort required to manage their impression in the online. Turning the camera on, involved attempting to control what others 'did see' and raised questions about what others 'should see'. My students had concerns about what turning the camera on might disclose about their life outside of the university environment. They missed going to the physical space of the university, not only because they craved the social interaction that took place there but also because going to the university had offered them a space, a stage, in which they performed a particular social identity. Going to university allowed for a separation between home and university life, and the social identities they had in these two spaces. Working from online and from home, meant they had lost that clear distinction.

> I feel like if we had to turn on our cameras there would be a lot more pressure. We automatically assume people are judging us, so we act different than we normally would.

> It's very difficult at times. Trying to work out what the audience should see, and whether, or not, to put my camera on.

> I feel like I'd like to turn on the camera, but it feels awkward .... I know I'd have to get presentable.

> It's difficult to get it right, when on camera, when you have to deal with your home life and your presentation at uni.

> before there was a separate building, but now our performance at home (as a son/daughter) is blended into our student identity, it's now blended into one, we can distinguish it.

Being (In)visible: The Role of the Audience and Feeling (In)secure

What also comes through in the comments from the students is their concerns about the audience's judgement. The anxiety about turning the camera on is not only about the back stage becoming front stage but the students' understanding of the audience; how much they feel they are being scrutinised by that audience and how much the audience's judgements matter to them. In Tseëlon's (1995: 41) work, she argues that Goffman's distinction between front and back region is not structural, but rather 'the distinction between a subjective experience of being visible or invisible', and therefore, it is a distinction which is mediated by one's relationship with the audience and how (in)secure one feels.

> In a secure environment, one feels approved, accepted, loved, inconspicuous – in short, confident, and psychologically invisible. In an insecure environment, one is on display, on show, being examined and measured. One is invaded by scrutinising looks, attention or comments; overshadowed by other people's better presentation or judgment. It is a feeling of being threatened and psychologically visible. (Tseëlon, 1995: 55)

Consequently, whether to turn on the camera is a decision that not only concerns one's ability to manage an impression but also is a decision shaped by the individual's perception of the audience. If the audience is familiar, cultivating an environment in which one feels secure, there is a greater chance that the individual will turn the camera on and be visible. However, in an environment where students feel less familiar with the audience, unacquainted with their other classmates, and are concerned by how they may be scrutinised or judged by others, then they may opt to keep the camera turned off. Rather than putting themselves in a situation where they are visible, and feel visible, they can simply be invisible.

Indeed, having the option to keep the camera turned off enables students to protect themselves from any potential judgement from their audience and avoids any possible shame and embarrassment which may discredit them or result in a 'spoiled identity'.

This may also explain why students are more inclined to keep cameras off when in large online classes, but more likely to have them on when in much smaller group settings. Though authors such as Day and Verbiest (2021) and Meishar-Tal and Forkosh-Baruch (2022) suggest that this is because there is a greater requirement for interaction in smaller classes and 'cameras on' is more likely to be mandatory, I wonder whether, in these smaller settings, students are more familiar with one another and thus feel more psychologically invisible, enable them to be visible on screen. Certainly, I found that in small personal tutor group sessions, one-to-one supervisions and seminars with final-year students more students did turn cameras on. These were also groups where students were much more familiar with one another, or where I alone was the audience, and perhaps then in these contexts, students felt the audience less significant, in the sense that they were less anxious about the judgement I or their fellow students would make. They may have felt more accepted, and more confident and therefore felt that they could be visible on screen.

In these scenarios, I recall being given a tour of one student's flat, which she had recently moved into and I was introduced to a student's pet dog on more than one occasion. I had meetings with students held in bedrooms, giving me an insight into aspects of their private lives that I never would have seen before. Crucially, I had not asked the students in these situations for students to turn their cameras on; rather, they had made a choice to turn on the webcam as they felt comfortable enough to be seen. Reflecting on staff experiences too, the role of audience perception, secure and insecure environments and significant and insignificant audiences are most likely relevant too. Thinking about my own experience, I, like my students, felt more comfortable turning my camera on when in meetings with small groups of colleagues and those with whom I was much more familiar.

Concluding Thoughts

The pandemic ushered in widespread online learning, and in many ways, has created a new normal in Higher Education, which has seen the continuation of the digital classroom. As early experiences demonstrated, and research has underlined, one of the significant challenges of this new normal is the ability of students to be present but not have presence, to opt to have their cameras switched off and to not be seen. As research has already evidenced, the impact of 'cameras off' is felt across the classroom, affecting the learning and teaching experience for both staff and students. It results in fewer opportunities for interaction and feedback and can create a feeling of loneliness and isolation.

As time has passed since the outbreak of Covid-19 and the initial adoption of online provision, staff have become more adept at working in this environment and managing the hybrid space, of working from home online. Many have found ways to blur out their private lives when on screen, as the boundaries of front stage and back stage blur in the home working environment, though few are having to juggle domestic life alongside teaching in quite the same way, as they were during the height of the pandemic. Nevertheless, for many of our students, the reluctance to be seen remains and as a result many lecturers still find themselves teaching 'into the void'. It is important then, to continue to research in order to better understand the reasons for cameras being off, to unpack students' concerns about privacy and appearance and to provide students with the tool that can help them manage their online performance.

The decision not to be seen is undoubtedly a complex one, which involves many more aspects than those discussed here. But perhaps it is useful to consider the ways in which having cameras on can collapse front and back regions, and perhaps even more importantly, to explore how students' ability to turn cameras on is linked to their feelings of (in)security, and their familiarity with the others in the room. If lectures can find ways to make students' audiences more familiar and less significant, to build rapport and peer-to-peer relationships, then perhaps they will be more willing to be seen.

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5

Experiences of the Higher Education Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic: An Auto-Ethnographic Analysis

Anita Walsh, Philip Powell, and Sara Leal de Matos-Powell

Introduction

In 2020, the global pandemic caused by the Covid-19 virus severely disrupted higher education (HE). The impact was particularly felt on the provision of learning and teaching, involving a very rapid move from face-to-face to on-line delivery, termed by Godber and Atkins (2021) as '*emergency education*'. The sudden shift in delivery mode took place within the wider constraints imposed by the pandemic, including rapidly enacted national laws and educational regulations. The need urgently to tackle issues raised by these imposed, but necessary changes, was addressed within the existing context of UK higher education—a context

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which was already experiencing pressures and tensions due to a changing managerial approach and the increasing use of technology across a range of higher education functions.

As Godber and Atkins (2021) point out, the forced shift to on-line learning represented a paradigm shift in the delivery of higher education. The change was sudden and reactive, rather than an anticipated and planned e-learning strategy, and immediately affected both staff and students. At institutional level, there was a recognition of the immense challenge offered to managers and academic staff by the need to respond effectively to Covid-19 restrictions, and of the importance of supporting and retaining the student body. It could be argued that this recognition, together with the speed at which the changes took place, meant that any existing tensions between managers and academic staff relating to the shape of teaching in higher education were temporarily set aside. However, the extent of the changes required to respond to the pandemic have fundamentally affected perceptions of higher education in a way which is likely to have a considerable impact on future practice.

Focusing on the period from mid-March 2020 to the end of the summer term 2020, which is arguably when activities of highest impact occurred, this chapter employs an auto-ethnographic lens through which to explore the impact of the changes from the perspective of three actors in the learning and teaching domain—an academic manager, a member of academic teaching staff and a student. The collaborative auto-ethnographic method is based on the experiences of actors in different roles and located in different higher education institutions. This will allow for a range of perceptions and positionalities to be analysed, in order to identify emerging themes and commonalities.

The advantage of this approach is that it provides perspectives from people directly involved, turning the experiences of the researchers into data which can be used to explore wider issues (Sam et al., 2020). Connections may be made between the autobiographical and personal to the cultural and social, drawing on the researchers' personal experience to offer insights into particular cultural contexts. In placing the self within a social context and making the researchers' personal experience a focus of enquiry, auto-ethnography takes the form of a reflexive ethnography which illuminates aspects of a culture, in this case that of higher

education (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). The approach taken here will be that of a '*narrative sandwich*' of empirical reflections critically interpreted by relevant theory (Ellis, 2004). Initially it is helpful to consider the cultural context of higher education at the time when the changes required to accommodate Covid-19 impacted.

Higher Education Context

As a background to the following discussion, it is worth briefly rehearsing the nature of the University as an employing organisation—the role of the academic in higher education is that of the salaried professional. There are two occupational cultures in each institution—the academic and the managerial. Historically, the academic culture has had a dominant role, which has posed challenges for those concerned with management in higher education. This is because professionals tend to have their primary loyalty to their profession and their practice, rather than their employing organisation. Raelin (1985) points out that salaried professionals assume they should decide on which activities they undertake in their employment, believing that their professional colleagues or association are better able to evaluate their performance than organisational management. They often have little enthusiasm for becoming involved in administrative positions, being predominantly interested in advancing their professional reputation.

The dominance of an academic culture at universities was well established in a fairly stable higher education environment until challenged by the adoption of neoliberal assumptions and a New Public Management approach which was based on those assumptions. It is argued that from mid-1990s UK politicians have been committed to the market model as the solution to everything, and that post-1997 there has been a continued acceptance of quasi-market mechanisms and increasing emphasis on performance management to increase national competitiveness. Taberner (2018) argues that there has been a consistent UK narrative of neoliberal policies applied to higher education, focusing on efficiency and cost effectiveness as the main priorities, with the result that with the establishment of massification and the introduction of

tuition fees there has been fierce competition for declining resources. The marketisation of higher education with the commodification of services and an emphasis on the importance of the student as consumer has championed an individual approach, in contrast to that of the collective (Shepherd, 2018).

Increasingly, widespread concern has been expressed about the impact that '*supermarket*' policies have on lecturers' professional lives (Hannon & Bretag, 2010). In addition, it has been argued that managerialism in the public sector is politically-driven, with managers being seen to be agents of change, practising the New Public Management (NPM) as the organisational arm of neoliberalism (Shepherd, 2018).

Traditionally, in higher education established concepts of academic freedom and autonomy have helped ensure a clear separation of managers and professionals, but an important objective of NPM is to achieve changes in the way that professionals are traditionally regulated (Santiago & Carvalho, 2008). A wide range of literature points out the shift in perception to academic staff as employees, rather than as autonomous professionals (Santiago & Carvalho, 2008). Increasingly, academics are subject to performance management, against a backdrop of increasing staff/student ratios, pressures to move courses on-line and efforts towards standardisation (Field, 2015). The emphasis on quality assurance measurement and towards an audit culture, including what the UK funding and regulatory body, HEFCE, has criticised as a '*metric tide*' of data, has helped shift the culture from the collegial to a rise in prominence of central service units, leading to a blurring of the distinction between academic and professional staff (Youngs, 2017). Such managerialism is seen to conflict with collegial practice and weaken the professional status of academics, since University systems have dominance over academic values (Cano et al., 2022).

Coinciding with the culture shift to the NPM there has been what Fardella et al. (2020) refer to as the '*digital turn*' in higher education, with the suggestion that the key to institutions remaining competitive is the integration of technology for all University processes, information management and the pedagogic. While it is recognised that network technologies are central to the changing role of universities, there is no consensus as to the future use of technology (Hannon & Bretag, 2010).

It could be argued that the discussion relating to technology in higher education is in its early stages. Concern has been expressed that the interest in the use of technology for distance learning is commercially driven, supporting the commodification of higher education, rather than learning through the use of technology. Delanty (2001) argues that the virtual University links the privacy of the home with the privatised world of the market, and that the University is moving towards the use of technology more through the use of the market than with a focus on the public culture of citizenship. More specifically, Hannon and Bretag (2010) claim that Learning Management Systems (LMS) are equated with a '*default pedagogy*' of content access and the management of students, which places effective pedagogy and engagement in the background. Whatever the view taken of the desirable use of technology in universities, it is accepted that it has resulted in the extension of academic work through the potential availability of academic staff anywhere and any time (Taberner, 2018).

It is in this context that what Parkin and Brown (2021) term the '*enforced experiment with virtual engagement*' which was precipitated by the Covid-19 lockdown took place, and which frames the experiences outlined below. Three participants in the UK higher education move to on-line delivery as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic now reflect on their experiences and roles.

Academic Manager Reflections

I joined the University as the interim Dean of a Faculty comprising a Business School, a law School and a politics department a few weeks prior to the first pandemic lockdown. The University is a research-focused; civic institution that had endured hard times, primarily due to poor student recruitment over a number of years. This had led to a painful restructuring with job losses and departmental closures. While much of the pain was in the past, the tail-end of this was still in progress. Overlaid upon this, my Faculty had suddenly lost its Dean due to family illness. Many colleagues in the Business School viewed the world through

the prism of the School's past successes in which large cohorts of international master's students had generated substantial funds which allowed low teaching loads and good research support. Poor recruitment had left the School in deficit.

The University was led by a leadership team comprising the VC, the COO, the four Faculty deans, the two PVCs and the Director of People. Below this, the structure was very flat as layers of administration had been stripped out in the restructure. Despite the small central steering core, academic action within faculties was largely in the hands of the deans. Schools and departments were led by heads, but much of the professional support infrastructure had been reduced and centralised. Despite these challenges, the University had good overall technical provision and an alert and responsive IT department.

The University, and my Faculty in particular, faced the pandemic from a difficult starting-point. As a recruiter of international students, particularly into the Business School, and with a number of international partnerships that involved both flying Faculty and partner delivery the Faculty was disrupted early in the pandemic. Some partnerships involved cohorts of international students coming to the UK for semesters and UK students spending time in overseas institutions. The University was internationally oriented and so was immediately affected by the pandemic and the subsequent UK and other international lockdowns.

Most of the teaching in the Faculty was face-to-face. Indeed, the excellent student experience that the University achieved was based upon personal interaction and support for on-campus students. Some on-line delivery was provided. Any move to on-line delivery would imperil the best form of competitive advantage the institution had. Given the sudden departure of the previous Dean and my recruitment over the Christmas period, the Faculty was new to me, and I to them. This was, however, the third UK Faculty/School I had led, though the others had not included law and politics, but had had more technology-based subjects as well as business.

I had spent the early part of my tenure getting to know the people, and the un-tackled problems, within the Faculty. Something of a reality-check was needed, especially in the Business School as the extent of the financial problems was still ignored by some colleagues. I have been a

fellow of the University of London's Centre for On-line and Distance Education for a number of years and had helped launch on-line courses at a couple of institutions. I was also part of the editorial team of a CODE book on on-line delivery. Hence, I had some background in on-line delivery but, like everyone, I had never been involved in switching from face-to-face to on-line delivery effectively over a weekend.

Our first indication of the seriousness of the pandemic was the restrictions in China which prohibited cohorts of Chinese students from travelling to joining us. Some of them were in lockdown. At this point we, and most of the rest of the world, considered Covid-19 to be a containable event which might temporarily affect China and maybe some other places. We developed a set of videos expressing solidarity with the students and assuring them that they would soon be able to come to the UK to study. Quite soon thereafter, we were unable to allow staff to travel to Hong Kong to fulfil teaching for partner institutions. We quickly developed on-line, synchronous teaching material. However, time differences meant that some colleagues had to come to work to deliver their material at 2 a.m. This was done, evidencing the commitment of staff to deliver, but was only really feasible as at that time the on-site technologies at the University were available and it would not have been sustainable long-term, especially for those who used public transport to travel to work. This, and other non-standard activities necessitated budget and financial process flexibilities—for example, we would have to pay for taxi travel to work and for sustenance. In an organisation that had experienced severe financial constraints, this flexibility was counter-cultural, but was pragmatically addressed with more discretion being given to Faculty leaders. Aside from technical issues, delivery at these times would be problematic for those who had to deliver from home if they had others in their household who would be disturbed.

We started to field increasing concerns from students and then from parents about how the University was responding to Covid-19. Initially, we followed Government/regulator advice, which was sparse and seemed to lag the general mood in the press. Parents of international students pressurised many to return home. Despite the fact that many of these students would be returning to countries with poorer healthcare and support systems than the UK, understandably parents did not want their

children to become stuck in the UK in the event of travel restrictions, nor for the parents (and perhaps for their children) not to be able to provide in-person support in the event of illness or prolonged lockdown. Some students felt conflicted. They wished to stay and continue their studies (especially before the UK went into lockdown) but felt they could not disobey their parents' wishes. As the numbers leaving the UK increased, we needed to provide on-line support whilst continuing to teach students face-to-face on campus. This dual teaching presented additional pressures on staff.

The University leadership team led on institution-wide pedagogic and governance issues. These included issues such as assessment and year and final awards (including a No Detriment Policy), but there needed to be flexibility at course level especially with those that involved regulated professions as some regulators were very slow to react to the pandemic or were inflexible—for example, continuing to insist on in-person exams as a qualification requirement. The leadership team early on discussed what events might be delivered in-person—open days, etc., and what might move on-line. Post-lockdown, these discussions focused more on how important events such as graduation might be handled. On-line graduation was discussed but felt to be an insufficient culmination of students' time at the University. Discussions with students revealed that some misunderstood the distinction between graduation and graduating. That is, they believed that without a ceremony they would not graduate. This highlights that some, hitherto fore, assumptions about people's understanding of their study, were less than full.

The Faculty had good physical infrastructure and better-than-average technical infrastructure. The University had a variety of delivery technologies which varied by Faculty and by department depending on their disciplines and their prior on-line delivery needs. The leadership team spent some time discussing delivery technologies but, ultimately, aside from core mandated ones, faculties had discretion in their choice. However, while all the on-line delivery technologies in my Faculty had been used by some people/teams to deliver some content, most had not been used by all, nor had some been used as the sole delivery vehicle. Some colleagues faced the new on-line world with trepidation, but others saw it differently. One senior professor nearing retirement commented

on how reinvigorating it was to have to come to terms with the new teaching systems. Some issues with some systems only surfaced when used in anger. For example, some platforms had maximum simultaneous cohort sizes or use timings. Some of these were license-dependent but some were unalterable. All had problems in recording attendance, either through not being able to keep a log-in record, inability to identify multiple students sharing one device, or ability to allow anonymity if required. The latter problem meant the suspension of the free legal service the Law School offered as the technology made the all users' email addresses visible.

Beyond the delivery platforms, the lack of technology or its disparity among staff and students was an immediate issue. To counter the staff problem, colleagues were able to take their work equipment home. But some new machines were needed and supply chain problems, and setting-up and mirroring amid Covid-19 restrictions, meant some staff lacked the requisite technologies at the start of the lockdown. Laptops were lent to students too, but only those still on campus or nearby could benefit. Of more concern than the machines was connectivity. On-line delivery relies on broadcast ability and reception ability. On-campus on-line delivery was supported by the host infrastructure. Once lockdown came, we were reliant on staff having suitable broadband capabilities—we eventually agreed to pay for broadband or upgrades for home delivery where these could be delivered, but those living in rural areas still struggled, as did those located internationally. Forgotten in much of the advice on on-line delivery is the other physical infrastructure. Colleagues delivering from home might have suitable workspaces including desks and chairs or they might not. Many did not, so we allowed people to take their office furniture home. Even so, some people reported health effects from having too confined a space for working at home.

Time zones presented additional problems as international students were located from China to South America and times that would work for one zone would not for others. The best was made of this—late times for China, early times for the western hemisphere. But this placed restrictions on the delivery timetable as the available time window was small.

Access to material in an on-line library proved problematic, especially in Law where the standard texts were not already available on-line and were extremely expensive to procure.

While the focus of much debate, research and reflection is on the move to on-line delivery, all institutions needed, alongside this, to keep other aspects of business going. All the back-office systems such as HR and pay needed to function. Staff were still leaving/retiring and joining the institution, if they had arranged these pre-lockdown. The promotions process had to continue as did preparations for the upcoming Research Excellence Framework. Locally, re-accreditations were due and initially these looked as if they would continue, then be postponed, then be moved on-line or postponed. Decisions had to be made about how on-line versus in-person accreditation visits at a later date might play out.

Internally, the University leadership team met frequently, sometimes daily, in the early days and typically two or three times a week thereafter. While a lot of the focus was on the institution, the University considered itself a civic one and tried to support the wider community where it could with equipment, supplies and expertise. These came mostly in the STEM subjects where sanitisers were manufactured and masks 3D printed. In medicine, the role of part-trained medical students participating in clinical settings was an important issue. Within the Faculty, leadership and other meetings were almost daily. External networks became more important as a source of support, but also as a litmus test of how we and our students were faring compared to other institutions. My action learning set from the Top Management Programme decided to meet weekly. These meetings were both informal (involving gin at a distance) and an opportunity to share information. Other groups such as national deans' meetings were useful, but often involved much self-congratulation which sometimes appeared unwarranted. My daughter was an undergraduate at a UK University and, through her, I had some insight into how she, her institution and her colleagues were dealing with the move to on-line teaching.

The mental wellbeing of students and colleagues was a paramount concern during the lockdown. However, it proved difficult to gauge how well people were doing on-line. The situation was not helped by copious

media stories of how students were suffering from the lockdown. Doubtless many did, but fewer than expected signalled this to us, and one, in a focus group, wondered if they were an outlier because they were coping well. The most problematic issue in supporting students was often in making contact. Students would not respond to emails nor attend classes. This might have been for technical reasons, or for isolation or illness or from metal health difficulties, but without contact it was impossible to know.

Delivering (or receiving) on-line teaching and working from home entails a lot more than technologies. Colleagues' and students' work environments varied considerably. One colleague reported that they and their partner shared their house with their five children whom they needed to home School and an elderly relative who had to shield because of health problems. This contrasted with another colleague whose hobby meant that they had a professional-level home recording studio with broadcast quality sound and video. Students too may have been struggling with poor living conditions or might be much better resourced than if they were living on campus.

I had volunteered to stay on campus when lockdown occurred. I felt it my duty to try to support colleagues, some of whom were isolated, some were confined with multiple others. Some had to home-school children and/or care for relatives. Aside from the frequent formal meetings, we held informal sessions ranging from quiz nights to '*introduce your pet*' evenings. These were typically attended by around one third of staff—and often the same people. I also sent round a daily email to all Faculty colleagues. The emails were partly about Faculty matters but also sought to lift the atmosphere a little. As I was on campus, I took regular photographs, detailing how the University gardens were going wild and the squirrels were becoming emboldened. One colleague likened the emails to a cross between '*thought for the day*' and a '*book at bedtime*' (BBC radio programmes).

Issues of trust came to the fore. I had been in post a very short time, and, while my background in academic leadership and on-line delivery experience were of some value, I had not had time to develop deeper relationships with colleagues and to '*walk the walk*' in delivering. The University's immediate context of contraction and staff cuts

heightened colleagues' concerns about the future. A particular incident occurred early in our Faculty discussions about module delivery in the coming term. It was clear that we did not have the staff capacity nor the timetabled time to deliver all the expected optional modules. While staff were aware that they would not be able to plan, construct and deliver all their planned modules, many were reticent to agree to suspend them as they feared that these modules might never be reinstated once the pandemic was over. They felt their jobs might be at risk. Discussions on the pared down curriculum also centred on the relative value of options and compulsory units. Some modules might be merged, others which had very high student satisfaction ratings were in danger of not running with a potential impact on student experience.

Academic Teaching Staff Reflections

When the UK lockdown resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic was implemented during the spring term of 2020 I was teaching a work-based project module to final year undergraduate students who were on a programme which was jointly delivered by my institution and a partner. I was due to begin teaching a postgraduate version of the module during the summer term. I was also Assistant Dean (Learning and Teaching) for the School in which I worked—a strategic role which meant that I was regularly involved with discussions relating to teaching policy developed in the institution. My institution had in place a strategy which involved a move towards what was termed '*blended learning*', i.e. teaching delivery which was a mix of in-person and on-line. This had stimulated some discussion about the pedagogic needs of such a shift and the requirement for different pedagogic approaches such as the '*flipped classroom*'. A small number of programmes were being delivered through on-line learning, but by far the majority of provision was in-person and the expertise relating to on-line learning, provided by the Digital Education Unit, was technical rather than pedagogic.

Revisiting my emails from March 2020 onwards I am struck by the urgency of the exchanges—HE institutions were struggling to cope with an unprecedented pace of change and a complete shift in pedagogic

approach in a general social and political context of high anxiety. At my institution, email communications from central management were a regular feature, outlining the various Government and Quality Assurance Agency requirements and indicating the institution's response. Early in March an organisational email reported that nothing in national advice relating to gatherings prevented in-person educational sessions, but that the Digital Education team were preparing an on-line course with information and guidance about teaching on-line. By 18 March, colleagues were working from home and the institution was closed.

The modules I teach are experiential or project based and do not use unseen examinations as a form of assessment, but the majority of modules in the School do use exams for a large proportion of assessment. This caused particular problems when the lockdown came because the end of term exams were due to take place just one week later. There was considerable discussion relating to the feasibility of delivering these on-line, and as students had expressed a strong desire to be able to continue with their studies it was therefore decided that on-line exams would be required. The institution used a Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) so that was available, but there was no technology to ensure exam security. Moreover, the institution was not a campus University resulting in a concern that students would find it difficult to find the time and space to take exams at home, particularly those students who used the library as a study space. There was therefore a shift to on-line, open book examinations, which allowed students a period of 48 hours during which to sit the exam, with the marking criteria being amended to reflect the changed circumstances. There was some concern relating to plagiarism, but the pressure of events was such that this could not be fully addressed in the short term.

The end of term may have provided some respite for the students but for staff work life continued with consistent exchanges relating to the need to redesign modules which would need to be delivered on-line in the summer term. Colleagues were also requested to reduce the volume of assessment where possible to that which was essential to demonstrate the relevant learning, and to consider whether alternative assessments to exams could be used subject to consultation with External Examiners. Any changes would be reported to Examination

Boards. The intrinsic uncertainty in the national context and the fast-changing guidance meant that some form of central decision-making and communication system was necessary. Announcements tended to come from a central group led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) the members of which were predominantly from either the Academic Registry or Digital Education. They were accompanied by the statement that the documents concerned were '*live*' and would therefore be subject to change. Specific academic staff in the departments were given the opportunity to comment on documents before they were circulated, but the time allowed for that would often be a matter of hours, so that considered pedagogic discussion was impossible.

Considerable effort and resource were put in place to support those staff who needed to have their modules on-line for the summer term. This mainly took the form of a series of on-line workshops provided by the Educational Technology Unit, designed specifically to allow staff to start work on '*their*' module. The courses were delivered to academic staff across the institution and, because they were delivered by staff who were educational technologists rather than teachers, introduced the wide range of technical tools available (e.g. what to use for students to peer review their work) rather than those few applications which would have supported us in effecting crucial changes to pedagogy. As a relative novice to on-line learning I found the course frustrating—it was designed on the assumption that academics were delivering '*content*' to their students, whereas I rely on the co-production of knowledge with my students. For me the focus on technical content was unhelpful, and I used an educators' on-line forum from outside the institution to gain some insight into the effective pedagogic uses of technology. When the summer term started staff and students were still learning how to deal effectively with on-line learning, with the result that it was not infrequent to experience technical problems of various sorts. The level of active engagement with on-line synchronous sessions was low and students were reluctant to put their cameras on or ask questions, even in the chat section. I am an experienced teacher and the group was familiar with me as we had previously met in-person, but I found it extremely difficult to achieve anything near the level of engagement which happens in class. The policy on on-line learning appeared to assume that it was possible to design in

student engagement, but, even when I set apart specific time during the session when I explicitly turned the recording off so that students would feel more comfortable, my experience was that most students lacked the confidence to use the space effectively.

Overall, expectations of on-line interaction—whether pedagogic or pastoral—were much more explicit in terms of what was required of staff than what was required of students. The feedback from students was that they appreciated the efforts made to support them in continuing their studies, and they particularly valued the recording of lectures which provided them with a revision resource. Not infrequently, they referred to using their mobile phone to access their studies. Wide availability of materials on-line which students could access at any time led to considerable discussion relating to the importance of ensuring on-line attendance at synchronous sessions. A particular challenge was what would count as '*attendance*' for Tier 4 students, and technology was seen to be an important element in tracking students. All students experienced real challenges to their studies during Covid-19, but international students had a particularly difficult time during the lockdown in the UK and often in their home country. Even though the numbers on my programme are relatively small (fewer than 100), as Programme Director there were times when I needed to resort to emergency contacts via Student Wellbeing to ensure that international students were safe and well.

All students were uncertain and anxious due to the nature and pace of the changes impacting them, which meant that email contact was considerably increased. These exchanges were complicated by the fast-moving situation, which meant that it was difficult to achieve clarity and consistency in messages. Assessment was a particular focus of concern for students. In order to encourage students to continue with examinations and assessments during the lockdown a '*No Detriment Policy*' was introduced. This policy assured students that, if they attempted assessments of any kind during the lockdown, they would not be disadvantaged by lower marks or failure of assessment. The Mitigating Circumstances policy was amended due to recognition that evidence of ill-health, etc., would probably be impossible to attain. These policies relating to assessment, which were set centrally with limited wider consultation, were

quite complex to implement, and caused considerable extra effort for academics and administrative staff.

Parts of the No Detriment Policy were implemented by Examination Boards which meant that meetings needed to consider students in more detail, including comparing current performance during the lockdown with previous performance where possible so that any required adjustment to performance could be made. Examination Boards traditionally have marked the end of the academic year. However, the change in the pace of work at the end of the summer term 2020 was hardly noticeable. Preparation for the autumn term relating to on-line teaching, consideration of the status of any policies which had been specifically introduced to address Covid-19 issues, and the overview of students' performance to ensure that policies had been applied consistently were all activities which took place during the summer break. A pattern had been established of policy and practice being guided from the centre with relatively limited input from academic colleagues, and in the pressure which was still present due to changing rates of Covid-19 restriction, it was beginning to feel like a new normal.

Student Reflections

I was completing my first year as an undergraduate student when the first UK lockdown occurred. My specific degree programme was running for the first time, so the majority of my Department's staff had recently joined the University and all our modules were new. We were a small cohort of approximately 30 students who regularly communicated through an informal, on-line group chat. My reflections are, therefore, largely based on a review of our message exchanges as well as official emails and webpages published throughout this period.

As my programme's third and final term was reserved for assessments and exams, changes to our education were felt primarily in the final two weeks of our second term, between the 13th and 27th of March 2020. Due to the rapidly evolving nature of the coronavirus situation, we received multiple, at times contradicting, emails from different sources (i.e. our Provost, Head of Department, Programme Director, Deputy

Director or programme administrator and other staff) on a near-daily basis. These two weeks were marked by feelings of confusion, stress and worry, especially as my cohort was heavily international and many course-mates wanted to return home. In particular, these final contact hours were supposed to introduce our upcoming assessments. Hence, we wanted to ensure that we received appropriate instruction before the end of term, especially as it was marked by nearly four weeks of University and College Union strike action which had disrupted most of our modules.

The feeling of unknowing was compounded by the fact that several staff were still on strike, including our Programme Director, Deputy Director and Head of Department. Thus, we initially heard little from our Department while students in other departments and faculties were already receiving regular emails detailing the measures staff were considering taking. Following Public Health England's guidance, the campus remained open for teaching, but our University announced that it was asking staff to deliver on-line classes for the final two weeks of term. At times, we would only know whether a lecture or seminar was on-line or face-to-face on the morning of the event, complicating further the dilemma for students who wanted to go home.

The sudden move to on-line teaching was difficult for us to grapple with. This was the first time in our degree that we attended any on-line event. Likewise, this was our Department's first time experimenting with on-line material. Our smaller, newer department lagged behind others when it came to using the University's on-line resources such as its lecture-recording software. Staff and students were, thus, ill-prepared to transition to on-line learning.

Despite being a technologically adept cohort, factors outside of our control such as poor internet service, underperforming devices and overloaded teaching software impacted our ability to attend our final seminars. Students returning home were travelling when some of these seminars occurred. Yet, for privacy reasons, lessons were not recorded. Hence, those living abroad, at times in vastly different time zones, or those staying in spaces inadequate for study missed many of their final classes. Of those who could attend, we noticed a disparity in lesson quality as seminar leaders of the same module were free to choose the

software used to teach us. These were usually Blackboard Collaborate or Zoom, software which at the time were marred by bugs and which had different functionalities and user interfaces. In particular, our University had not yet obtained teaching licenses for these platforms, so seminars were capped at 40 minutes. Actual lesson time was always shorter when connection and software issues were taken into account. Nevertheless, our teaching staff remained enthusiastic even when their children screamed in the background or none of us had our video on.

The primary concern I and most of my course-mates had during this period (in the context of our degree) was the future of our assessments. For instance, we were struggling to prepare group presentations when these groups were spread across the globe. One week after classes transitioned on-line; our Department chose to extend all assessment deadlines by two weeks, providing temporary relief. Nevertheless, the stress brought on by the pandemic impacted our mental and physical health, dragging us behind on our work. Moreover, students from other departments and faculties were being told that the University was considering cancelling all first-year assessments, so we were left to speculate while the situation evolved.

As the pandemic unfolded, our University set up a coronavirus update webpage for students and staff to consult. It was on this page that we learned of important changes to our education, sometimes even before this information was communicated to us directly. For example, the rumoured cancellation of all assessments and creation of a final pass/fail assessment was announced on it before being emailed to students in batches. We waited impatiently for an email from our Department, as the webpage contained little information and that each department chose the format and substance of the final assessment. Above all, the majority of my course-mates were disappointed to discover that the work they put in their first term assessments and the upcoming ones would no longer be taken into account for our final degree classification. Furthermore, many were scared that the final assessment would be difficult to pass.

By mid-April, we had been fully informed by our Department about the '*capstone essay*': a short essay that replaced our other assessments, graded as pass/fail only and due in late June, covering what we learned across our first-year modules. Students who failed this would be given

the opportunity to complete a similar assessment at a later date. Second- and third-year undergraduates, on the other hand, still had to complete their assessments. Their in-person, invigilated exams were converted into take home assessments. Meanwhile, the centre where most of the University's students were due to take their exams was converted into the first NHS Nightingale Hospital. Despite the initial disappointment of our first-year marks no longer counting towards our degree classification, the extenuating circumstances caused by the pandemic saw us breathe a sigh of relief when the capstone essay was introduced.

Overall, my experience as a student during the unfolding of the Covid-19 pandemic was spent anxiously waiting—waiting to hear from our Department, who told us it was waiting to hear from the University, who, in turn, was waiting for guidance from the Government. As the final link of the messaging chain, we often felt in the dark, especially as our Department was already struggling to keep up with a new degree programme that academic year. Nevertheless, I felt supported and understood by the University once the capstone assignment was put in place. In my Department, our Deputy Programme Director created a weekly Zoom meeting for our cohort to catch up that was also met with much appreciation. Once classes had ended and our capstone assessment was clearly defined, we began to settle into our '*temporary*' situations, waiting for guidance regarding face-to-face teaching for the upcoming year. In the meantime, our choice of writing topic was fitting: we could either write about climate change, or the Covid-19 pandemic as it was unfolding before our eyes.

Discussion and Conclusions

The accounts above, from different perspective and different institutions, indicate the level of urgency experienced across UK HE institutions as Covid-19 impacted the whole sector. The recognition of a common challenge, and of the fundamental importance of students being able to continue with their studies, created an atmosphere in which managers and academics worked together to keep the HE 'show on the road'. Students recognised the efforts being made to ensure that they progressed

through their course at the usual rate, with the result that they were understanding when teaching arrangements changed at very short notice, communications lacked clarity, or there was a delay in decisions relating to assessment.

Institutional context was important, in that existing organisational culture influenced the shape of any response. The fast-changing national environment necessitated the initial adoption of an approach which involved central decision-making by a management team. The extent to which this approach allowed for decisions influencing implementation to reside with academic staff varied, and trust between colleagues was a major element in achieving an appropriate balance between top-down decision-making and local implementation. From a managerial perspective consideration of the technology and even of the teaching was not the major part of keeping colleagues and students well, physically and mentally, so they could focus on teaching and learning. The maintenance of internal and external networks was an important element in terms of ensuring that any response was broadly in line with practice, and also acceptable to any partners, for example, to the professional bodies offering accreditation to courses.

In contrast, the adoption of the technology which enabled institutions to continue to function was a major challenge for academic staff and students. Teaching staff were required to move from in-person to on-line delivery in a matter of days. The emphasis on being able to deliver courses so that students could continue with their studies inevitably focused on making course content available on-line. There was no time to reflect and consider the kind of pedagogic redesign which would be required to maximise the student learning experience. As Godber and Atkins (2021) points out technology had already led to the creep of academic work, in that academics could be perceived to be accessible anywhere, with 24 hour connectivity. Teaching from one's home environment blurred the distinction between work and home life and was particularly stressful for those with caring responsibilities. With the stress and uncertainty being experienced by students, prompt email responses to queries and concerns were essential in keeping students engaged with their studies. The scale of demand on all technologies used was such that technical difficulties were experienced consistently, making it difficult for

staff and students to build their confidence in using learning technologies effectively.

In most institutions, where in-person teaching was by far the dominant model the previous level of digital literacy required of students was limited. At short notice, they had to develop the skills required to use the learning technology adopted by their institution, and where there was no institutional commitment to one specific software package, students needed to negotiate different structures to access their learning materials. Moving from engagement in a classroom to engagement on-line appeared particularly challenging, in that students were often reluctant to ask questions or even keep their cameras on. Familiar and anticipated modes of assessment were changed, and, while arrangements were put in place to ensure '*no detriment*' in terms of measured performance, it is hard to gauge the effectiveness of changed assessment in terms of learning achieved. Moreover, the difficulty of studying in a crowded home environment possibly using a mobile phone for access to learning materials has not been fully considered.

Overall, however, there appears to be a sense that, working together, the sector has dealt successfully with the challenges offered by the response to Covid-19, and that the effectiveness of technology in delivering learning has been demonstrated. These assumptions raise a number of issues with real implications for future practice across the HE sector.

The emergency adoption of on-line learning took place in context where there was an emphasis on student as consumer. As Parkin and Brown (2021) point out, in a Covid-19 world there was considerable emphasis on providing customer service and satisfaction, on being able to demonstrate that students were still getting value for money. It could be argued that the term '*delivery*' is misleading when used in a context of on-line learning, particularly when due to Covid-19 restrictions there was an explosion of delivery to order of groceries, meals, etc. The implication here is of a fairly passive recipient of an ordered service, whereas, as Moodie (2016) points out, learning disciplinary knowledge is formal and systematic requiring effort on the part of the learner. The low level of student engagement on-line could reflect the confusion caused by a quasi-market model of HE. Godber and Atkins (2021) claim that

a decrease in face-to-face interaction and the increased use of technology can result in lower student interest in learning, because of the wide availability of information on-line. They experience information overload.

The willingness of academic teaching staff to devote high levels of energy and time to learning technology during the pandemic is unlikely to be representative of their interaction with on-line learning generally. When discussing the '*digital turn*' in academic management as it pertains to learning technology, Fardella et al. (2020) identify '*device lovers*' who are enthusiastic about technology, '*functional pragmatists*' who are resigned to the use of technology and will conform and the '*oppositionist rejector*' who is explicitly disapproving of technology and may influence colleagues. The pressures of the response to Covid-19 will have obscured such divisions in practice, but what Hodges et al. (2020) refer to as '*emergency remote teaching*', i.e. a temporary shift in institutional delivery is not the same as a well-planned on-line course which uses appropriate pedagogy.

Additionally, Fardella et al. (2020) claim that the '*digital turn*' in academic management involves the integration of technology in all HE processes, providing on-line accountability of staff. The extent to which decision-making was centralised and decisions implemented when disseminated during the response to the pandemic could be perceived to support this case. Certainly, it appears that a number of HE institutions find the promises of scale and innovation offered by on-line learning attractive. However, this promise could be illusory. Adoption of '*emergency remote teaching*' during the pandemic was usually managed and supported by an IT unit, due to the unplanned nature of the development. As Hannon and Bretag (2010) argue the result of this approach is that a Learning Management System perspective is either adopted or built on, the focus of which is programme '*content*' and the management of students, with a '*default pedagogy*' of content access. They claim that effective e-learning requires a reconfiguration of pedagogy and of the organisation of learning, which would place extreme demands on people, time and resources. Moreover, the shape of on-line learning is still contested. Until the response to the pandemic, it was argued that

technology had intensified the tension between technology management functions and teaching practice (Hannon & Bretag, 2010).

It is possible that the tensions between management and academics which were subsumed during the pandemic could re-emerge in the context of a management drive to increase on-line learning. The pressures imposed on institutions by Covid-19 have lessened, and space could be created for a more pedagogic consideration of the benefits of on-line learning for students. In contrast to a push for the '*efficiency*' in terms of numbers and content potentially offered by on-line learning, detailed consideration could be given to areas of learning which are not best served by technology. Hannon and Bretag (2010) highlight the importance of human interaction in helping students develop a broader and deeper cultural experience. In career terms, newspapers recently reported that professional practice firms Deloitte and PWC had found that graduates impacted by Covid-19 while they were studying could not cope well with team work. This would indicate areas of personal and professional development which lie beyond the transmission and processing of information. Parkin and Brown (2021) argue that effective hybrid higher education requires a balance between top-down decision-making and more organic bottom-up influence.

Academic teaching staff are fundamental to the provision of an enriching higher education experience, and managers must rely on their pedagogic expertise. The student-teacher relationship is difficult to measure, but it is the public face of the University, influencing reputation and recruitment. Attempts to micro-manage staff towards a pedagogy in which they have no confidence could lead to professional disengagement and adversely impact pedagogic practice. The higher education response to the crisis caused by the pandemic was transactional, not transformational. The impact of on-line learning during the pandemic has hastened the establishment of a trend which was already developing, but it has not yet supported the transformation of approaches to teaching and learning. The opportunity now exists for academic colleagues to evaluate realistically the benefits of technology and to identify the challenges for which it has not so far offered a solution.

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6

Lessons from the 'Peripheries' of Educational Research: Analysing the Discursive Functions of Quality Management Practices and Leadership Beyond the Pandemic in English Further Education

Hannah Ruth McCarthy

Introduction

Using Bourdieu's thinking tools of 'misrecognition', 'capital', 'habitus' and 'field', the forms of 'capital' afforded to notions of 'quality' and 'quality management' in FE post-privatisation from 1992 are grappled with (Bourdieu, 1984; Bradley et al., 2010). The Office for National Statistics' (ONS) published its' decision in late 2022 to reclassify FE in England as public sector once more (UCU, 2022). Within this context of change, I analyse the performative, positivistic and business-like measurement of "quality" within teaching, learning and assessment which took hold within UK and US education systems from the 1970s onwards but particularly exploded within FE post-privatisation in 1992 (Entwistle, 2022). I argue that these practices continue to define the roles and imaginations of practitioners', leading sector organisations, leaders and

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policy thinkers', structuring the aspirations of the sector and its staff. Thus, limiting our conception of what makes teaching practice within FE and wider education "quality", despite FE colleges no longer existing as private entities (UCU, 2022).

Practices of QM are presented as value-free and aspirational within FE policy, funding and training, aiming to better standards within teaching practice. Held in high regard by practitioners, external awarding organisations and government, Quality Departments across FE colleges are discursively constructed as the bastions of pedagogy and educational values (DBIS, 2016b). Building upon, yet differing to, the canon of policy and practitioner research into QM within FE, this article attempts to explore the shifting ways in which QM practices have, since 1992, vastly grown in their integration to policy and practice, ensuring and enforcing the retention and achievement of students within a market-driven framework (Bradley et al., 2010; Fusarelli, 2004; Hodgson & Spours, 2019; Hooton, 2004; Lucas & Unwin, 2009; McAdam & Welsh, 2000; Mctavish, 2003; Melia, 1995; Mohammed, 2015; Randle & Brady, 1997).

In locating QM practices and discourses as an agent of corporatisation, this research speaks to practitioners and scholars within FE, plus educational and policy settings globally. I argue performative, corporatised measures of Quality Management infect, restrict, constrain, structure, reshape and reimagine the sector's conception of education's worth, impact and role, thus contributing to knowledge and posing ramifications for educational settings globally.

The findings from this research contribute to scholarship in the following areas:

a. in increasing understanding of the nature of corporatisation and managerialism within FE amidst re-classification to the public sector and technical reform change through T-Levels,
b. in understanding how integral QM is in dominating and shaping FE practice and leadership and, therefore,
c. in analysing and revealing the ideologies which underpin such practices.

I aim to contribute to scholarly development of a post-corporatisation sector which is designed, run and governed by axiological beliefs in the notion of education as a public and social good (Courtney & Gunter, 2019). Disrupting current discourses surrounding the remit of vocational education and the teachers who practice within it (Orr, 2013, 2020), this chapter focuses on an FE setting within the North-West of England. The data discussed is taken from a doctoral pilot study conducted through the University of Manchester with one research participant. Analysis within the chapter is taken from five excerpts from the proceeding narrative account.

I explore the role of QM discourses and practices in FE, alongside setting out my axiological beliefs as a qualitative educational researcher. It is from this starting point that this chapter derives its aims. As a previous FE practitioner across the north of England for over 6 years, I conduct educational research which reflects upon issues I experienced within my teaching practice. Yet, doing so within the parameters of policy scholarship, I locate these issues within their broader political and policy context (Grace, 1995). I hope that the following chapter begins a personal, vocational journey and career of disrupting the taken-for-granted assumptions underpinning how policy is enacted and adapted in FE, posing questions for leaders, practitioners and educators everywhere.

Whilst the research focuses on the contemporary FE context in England, the QM practices and discourses discussed have been exported to other education sectors in the UK and internationally (Richardson, 2007; Robeson, 2006). As educational and social researchers reach some consensus on the effects of the application of market values to education sectors in large parts of the globe in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, our lens of analysis must locate QM practices as an agent of corporatisation if we are to both understand and transform the 'field' of FE and indeed educational practice (Bourdieu, 1984).

The Skills and Post-16 Education Act (2022), building on the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill (2016), enshrines in law myriad changes and the reshaping of investment into the FE sector (DBIS, 2016b; Campbell, 2022; GOV.UK, 2022). At the time of writing, the political persistence of the 'Skills' and 'Levelling Up' agenda continues the recent policy spotlight placed upon FE (DBIS, 2016b; Campbell, 2022; GOV.UK,

2022). With the advent of further focus and reform, FE becomes the site through which Whitehall aims to address skills gaps within the UK labour market post-Brexit (DBIS, 2016b). I therefore aim to analyse and disrupt many of the QM discourses and processes tested, fleshed out and institutionalised post-1992 within FE as they are set to roll over into a new era of re-classification and technical reform (GOV.UK, 2022).

Rooted in the success of both bids for funding and the right to deliver new qualifications (T-Levels), quality processes within the contemporary context have grown to shape, govern and constrict practice within FE. QM practices are depicted as firstly existing within discourse as organisational priorities for FE Colleges post-1992, now existing as proper noun departments with dedicated staff. Speaking to the thinking tools of Pierre Bourdieu (1984), particular Quality Management systems, discourses and practices are highlighted as enacting differences between the levels of 'capital' possessed by practitioners within the 'field' of FE.

What Is Further Education in England?

'The Further Education Sector', 'FE' or 'Further Education' are a suite of terms which, generally, describe the institutions, colleges and sixth forms which are responsible for the education of students between secondary school and higher education in England (AoC, 2023; Orr & Terry, 2023). However, this can get confusing, as around eight thousand 14–15 year olds in England in the academic year 2020–2021 were enrolled in an FE college (AoC, 2023). FE currently serves on average 1.6 million students in England, whether they are studying in general FE colleges, Sixth Form colleges, specialist providers or land-based colleges in more rural areas (AoC, 2023). FE provided vocational, academic, professional and skills-based education for 913,000 adults and 611,006 16–18 year olds in 2020–2021 (AoC, 2023). At the time of writing, there are 161 general FE colleges in England, employing over 103,000 people and offering courses from introductory evening language classes to degree-level qualifications (AoC, 2023; Orr & Terry, 2023). Despite the centrality of FE to the lives of over one million people in

England, the experiences of the sector are ignored within wider educational research and academia in England (Orr & Terry, 2023; Robeson, 2006).

Further Education and the Covid-19 Pandemic

This chapter takes a wider lens to interrogate the impact of Quality Management practices which became further entrenched during the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst not limited to the period of analysis of key government lockdowns instigated between March 2020 and December 2021 in England, it would be remiss not to touch on the myriad effects of this period on FE (GOV.UK, 2022; Institute for Government, 2022; Spours et al., 2022). Whilst collaboration between FE providers is identified by Ofsted in their 'Education in recovery in further education and skills providers: Spring 2022' report (GOV.UK, 2022), staff and student absence, behaviour issues, a lack of social skills and gaps in practical skills are identified as long-term effects of the period upon the sector (GOV.UK, 2022; Spours et al., 2022). Despite funding being provided to colleges to provide catch-up sessions, major disruptions to the placement, teaching and assessment of vocational and academic qualifications in FE within the period leave staff and students further behind in a sector that was already creaking under pressure (Entwistle, 2022; Spours et al., 2022).

Research Focus

Thinking with Bourdieu's concept of 'misrecognition', narrative inquiry was used to delve into the structuring structure or 'habitus' of FE practitioners in relation to themes of corporatisation, Quality Management and managerialism (Bourdieu, 1984; James, 2015; Orr, 2020).

Much of the contemporary and historical literature within the past three decades understandably focuses upon an analysis of Quality Management processes' relevance to FE. Conversely, I begin from the

axiological belief that education cannot be reduced to or analysed holistically within said models (Courtney & Gunter, 2019; Elliott, 1993). Rather than producing another contribution which adds to the canon in rejection of QM models, I instead wish to explore the nuances through which QM models come to impact upon professional practice. I will locate my analysis within the 'misrecognition', 'corporatised fabrications' and depoliticisation which currently grips discursive and material practice within the sector, with its blinkered and ferocious competence-focused vocationalism and industrialism, changing the nature and purpose of academic pursuit within FE (Bourdieu, 1984; James, 2015).

As the 'Skills and Post-16 Education Act' (2022) is introduced as part of the return of the schools/industry movement within the UK to locate FE as the skills solution post-Brexit and within deindustrialisation, the Quality Management models and policies of corporatisation first tested on FE and then exported to the rest of the sector have become naturalised and accepted within educational policy discourse and lay the foundations for FE's post-Brexit stardom. Not only is it important to explore the Quality Management practices which are materially in place to regulate and improve qualifications attached to millions of pounds of public funding, it is further important to watch FE once more be used as the testing site for first marketised, but now vocationalised practices which the current prevailing political system are soon to export, and already have begun to, to the rest of education within the UK, whether through employer-designed curricula or through the reification of industrial 'experts' as educators (GOV.UK, 2022; Richardson, 2007; Robeson, 2006).

Quality Management Within FE

Written just after incorporation, this chapter uses Elliott's (1993) analysis of the models of quality assurance which prevailed within the sector at that time (Elliott, 1993; Orr, 2020). Whilst written almost three decades ago, much of the literature on FE is argued to focus FE life post-1992 with homogeneity (Richardson, 2007). Instead, I argue that the data

presented within the chapter provides fresh insight into the transformations of Quality Management, professional identities and professional roles within FE during this period.

Quality Management (QM) theories, principles, processes and practices within the FE sector are situated as a direct consequence of legislative and policy interventions throughout the twentieth century (Richardson, 2007). Wishing to avoid what Stephen Ball described as an ahistorical approach to policy, I instead explore the genealogy of discourses and practices of Quality Management within the English Further Education sector. With FE existing on the side-lines of priorities for UK academic researchers (Dennis et al., 2017; Orr, 2020; Richardson, 2007; Robeson, 2006), much of the literature focuses justifiably on the consequences of incorporation from the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. Yet, whilst locating Quality Management strategies as ideologically rooted in the practices of managerialism and marketisation which abound as consequences of privatisation, the techniques, practices and discourses surrounding notions of 'quality' within FE are confirmed as fluid and changing (Elliott, 1993).

Notions of quantifying, testing and measuring educational practices are understood as rapidly reshaping the education systems and approaches to public service within the UK, US and Chilean economies since the advent of the neo-liberal epoch within the 1970's (Archer, 1999). This positivistic approach to measuring educational practices, outcomes and values has increased in influence since, defining educational practice within the FE sector particularly (Entwistle, 2022). The growth of Quality Management principles, departments and practices within education systems is founded upon the philosophical beliefs of neo-liberal economic and social orthodoxies, but also linked to the subsequent 'School Effectiveness' movement turned industry which has grown within education since the 1970's, out of a desire to improve educational outcomes (Archer, 1999). Despite its initial foundations upon ethical principles, this movement-turned-industry has since dominated the educational sphere within the UK, with vast sums of public funding, research and resource funnelled into educational improvement

paradigms, projects and training (Archer, 1999). It is from this epistemology and axiology that notions of 'Quality', often centred around cost-effectiveness, value for money and customer experience, arise (Elliott, 1993). Inextricably linked to neo-liberal educational values and the focus upon 'standardisation' within UK education after the 1988 Education Reform Act (Archer, 1999), 'quality' as a concept within FE is discursively and materially constructed the checks which are placed upon teaching practice to standardise student experiences, teaching practice and student outcomes (Elliott, 1993). Neo-liberal in its epistemology (Archer, 1999), Quality Management practices seek to standardise education as a product, via assessing teachers' performance against nationally set teaching standards or the extent to which the prescribed curriculum is followed (Elliott, 1993).

As study with great breadth, Elliott (1993) aimed to understand the conceptual frameworks behind the use of the term of Quality Management in FE. With legislation such as TFHEA 1992 and subsequently the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 (GOV.UK, 2022) funding bodies and legislation require Quality Management systems to be in place in each college to receive funding from the state within the quasi-market (Elliott, 1993; Hill, 2017; LeGrand, 1991). From the literature review, Elliott surmised that quality as a concept rests on the assumption that educational processes can be produced or managed via accounting models, set up to quantify and describe what teachers and FE practitioners do (Elliott, 1993). Conversely, another ideological conception of quality is about promoting learner autonomy and notions of the lecturer as a facilitator in FE, learners through practice can accept their own potential (Elliott, 1993). Government policy of early 1990's saw no contradiction between efficiency and competition in education and the quality of learning market processes ensure a better experience or deal for students (Elliott, 1993). Concerns with quality are characterised as examination of systems, individual processes and courses, never the bigger picture of staffing workload or shortages. Originating in industrial relations, Elliott (1993) charts the transference of models to deal with issues of autonomy and control to the public sector, notably Further Education (Elliott, 1993).

Firstly, Elliott outlines 'Total Quality Management' (Elliott, 1993). Originated in Japanese manufacturing before transference to US industrial relations in 1970's, based on the assumption that educational institutions are founded upon the consumer/supplier relations (Elliott, 1993). Secondly, the 'HMI Model' of Quality Management moves discursively from language associated with total control, to self-surveillance (Fisher, 2009). This model of *quality assurance* identifies internal and external key stakeholders within colleges such as governors, awarding organisations and course teams and focuses on the evaluation of curriculum and teaching through reviews and course validation panels and processes (Elliott, 1993). Thirdly, the 'Training and Development Lead Body' Model founded in the private sector focuses on enhancing pedagogy through a national set of competence-based standards for teaching practice, saturating job descriptions, course reviews and training (Elliott, 1993). Finally, the 'Strategic Quality Management' model is identified by Elliott (1993) as most pervasive in FE in the 1990's, emboldening the role of managers. This model conceptualises quality in education in terms of quantifiable characteristics, standards and measurements, juxtaposing the freedom and autonomy that was promised with TFHEA 1992 through this rigid form of Quality Management.

Building upon Elliott's scan of the field in the following decade, argue European Foundation Quality Management (EFQM) proliferates within FE organisations, emphasising the conception of organisations strive for quality as never complete. This model links together nine criteria through which to self-assess their performance continually against metric of, for example, "customer satisfaction". Designed for private sector initially, chart it's exponential transference to two thirds of UK agencies in 1998, reflected today in the Ofsted process across schools and colleges through self-assessment. Corporate institutions such as Lloyds Bank charged the campaign to have this model adopted in schools, with the intention of having more satisfied customers within education and as means of gaining the faith of external funding bodies and awarding organisations. Whilst wishing to extend though surrounding Quality Management in FE away from functional analysis of its use, the aforementioned discussion is argued to be integral to understanding the

'field' within which FE teachers and leaders operate both then and now (Bourdieu, 1984).

Research Method

The research site was selected as an FE college in Greater Manchester. The research site was selected due to its comparable nature to other FE colleges across the country. Post-Area Reviews, FE colleges now after a legacy of mergers and acquisitions tend to be large, general colleges which offer a range of post-16 qualifications, marketed at all ages and levels of ability, from entry level to degree (DBIS, 2016b). As a combined authority (GMCA) with a devolved budget and in receipt of various investments from the Northern Powerhouse strategy, this research site was selected for its particular location and situation due to its post-industrial North-West location, with a number of bordering former red wall seats and a-typical as the site of recent policy intervention which is reshaping FE through the ideologies of the school/industry movement as the saviour of the labour market, economy and attempts to regionally improve skills gaps.

Thinking with Bourdieu

Bourdieu's thinking tools were deployed to inform each aspect of the research design and execution (Bourdieu, 1984). From the early stages of data analysis, Bourdieu's concept of 'misrecognition' was identified as integral to the study (Bourdieu, 1984). For Bourdieu, 'misrecognition' conceptualises the social phenomena or processes are not recognised for what they are, instead they are understood through the 'habitus' of the person experiencing the phenomena (Bourdieu, 1984; James, 2015). In his established work, 'Distinction', Bourdieu discusses 'misrecognition' as the social process by which agents naturalise or impose meaning onto social processes, working to naturalise social difference and inequality (Bourdieu, 1984; James, 2015). Following on from the work of James (2015), this study uses the concept of 'misrecognition' as identified

within educational settings. Bourdieu's work is understood as conceiving of social processes as producing knowledge of how to do or be in social situations (habitus), and similarly the social practice of 'misrecognition' is the practice by which either individually or collectively phenomena or process are understood as grounded in nature, as opposed to hierarchical and divisive social constructs (Bourdieu, 1984; James, 2015). As a form of 'habitus' or structuring structures, misrecognition is used in this study to explore the ways in which educational practitioners and leaders consciously understand, rationalise and practice within the quality practices and management systems 'field' (Bourdieu, 1984; James, 2015). Bourdieu's extension of Marxist thought in analysis of societies' distribution of forms of 'Capital' is further deployed to explore the status and power afforded to discourses and practices of QM within the 'field' (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu's multi-dimensional understanding of 'capital' is used to better understand the social 'fields' of FE and education in current and historical ideological context.

Building on Bourdieusian thought, this study also utilises Courtney and Gunter's (2019) concept of 'corporatised fabrications', exploring the cognitive or axiological dissonance through which educational leaders and processionals adapt to and succeed within the prevailing policy context or neo-liberalisation through adopting corporatised practices, values and discourses, utilising this concept to reveal power relations which are either explicit or implicit in subject's narratives (Courtney & Gunter, 2019).

In opposition to the freedom from Local Authority Control promised post-incorporation, Quality Management systems are explored as the transference of control from state apparatus to individual organisations and professionals within FE. As well as utilising 'misrecognition', 'corporatised fabrications' as thinking tools in this study, Fisher's concept of a 'Business Ontology' (Fisher, 2009) is deployed as a means of understanding the quality field within FE. Denoting the spread of business language, discourse and practice to public institutions, Quality Management processes are understood as requiring teachers to self-police their behaviours, practice and thought (Fisher, 2009). Fisher asserts that the increased practice of efficiency in FE through the 'Business Ontology' does not improve practice and efficiency, instead working to increase

mere discipline and control, reducing the confidence and agency of practitioners (Fisher, 2009; Beyond Ed). Here, Fisher depicts how the culture of anxiety produced by the encroachment of 'business ontology' is essential for the survival of said mechanisms, with the freedom promised post-1992 under quasi-market mechanisms leading instead to more authoritative bureaucracy and control (Fisher, 2009).

Research Instruments

The semi-structured, qualitative interview was selected as a method through which to afford the participant space for reflection and contemplation (Ozga, 1990). The research site was selected due to its transferability, sharing characteristics such as a wide range of provision, multiple sites and a recent history of mergers with many large General FE colleges in the English FE sector (Robeson, 2006).

Potential participants were initially accessed through a gatekeeper. The gatekeeper publicised the study to a pool of potential participants (staff) and then participants applied via email to take part in the study, subject to Purposive Sampling criteria. The research project aimed to pilot a wider PhD doctoral research project, and therefore, one participant was selected in order to test the relevance of narrative inquiry in providing methodological insights into policy exploration. In exploring the participant's professional histories and identities through the semi-structured interview, narrative inquiry was then used to craft a narrative account.

The participant was then required to complete a zoom interview which then was recorded, with the audio kept until transcribed and the video deleted immediately with respect to privacy, confidentiality and robust research practice (BERA, 2018). The interview transcript was then crafted into a narrative account. Whilst only a small-scale pilot research project, narrative inquiry has shown to allow for interesting exploration of policy actors' experiences as they adapt to, work with competing policy contexts within education. Despite the data being from one participant, the narrative account can make a claim to 'transferability' to other FE practitioners within the field (Bourdieu, 1984), reflective of broader trends which structure practice and conceptions

within professional identities within the sector (BERA, 2018). Once the narrative account was crafted by the researcher, the transcription was deleted (BERA, 2018). All documents were subject to anonymisation, using pseudonymised file naming conventions (BERA, 2018).

Data Analysis

Braun et al.'s (2006) approach to Thematic Analysis was then followed, with the Latent approach to Thematic Analysis used to explore ideologies which inform semantic content of data. This was then followed by the theoretical approach to Thematic Analysis by using Bourdieu's thinking tools of 'Misrecognition', 'Capital', 'Habitus' and 'Field' to explore how these are identified and represented within the data (Bourdieu, 1984). A table was then constructed which charted the themes identified within the data.

Results and Discussion

Within the data, a discursive contradiction exists. This contradiction is between the participants' depiction of quality as a positive, value-free and aspirational concept, adjective or standard, whilst the policy role of 'quality' within managerialism is 'misrecognised' (Bourdieu, 1984). Quality is positioned as space where practitioners who wish to seek sanctuary from marketisation go, divorced from Quality Management's role historically and culturally within the socio-economic policy context and practices of managerialism. Here, the participant discursively creates 'Quality' as a place in which the social, 'pure' or true values of education can flourish. Social Democratic values of 'Quality' as an agenda or structure which enables practitioners to focus on pedagogical values and improving teaching are identified. I identify this, through my own experience as an FE practitioner, to be a pervading and taken-for-granted notion within the sector. However, this chapter wishes to discursively and ideologically disrupt such notions.

Quality Management in FE

The expansion of Quality Departments within FE in relation to practice and resource is discussed. Focusing firstly on the performance management role of QM discourse and practice, a variety of different approaches to the observation and evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment are discussed (Elliott, 1993), conveying the journey and shift within FE quality mechanisms in the thirty years after incorporation and after Elliott's study (Elliott, 1993).

Excerpt One

> The role of the AP has changed over the years, it's interesting. It's an interesting job, that changes so much according to what happens in terms of government and Ofsted, procedures etc. Initially as an AP we did lots of coaching, there was a few of us and we would coach different members of staff and have, let's call it an observation. Then we'd try to go with staff to coach them about their practice, teaching, learning and assessment and see if we could improve, grades really and numbers. That's how it was initially. The aim was to get a 3 to a 2, and that kind of thing. It was all to do with pedagogy, classroom practice, assessment methodology and things like that. A couple of years later it was 'coaching for all', so all staff would have a coach to work with and help develop resources. We'd have 'buddy sessions' where you kind of go into their classroom. We then had a team teach situation as well, that was called 'coaching in action'. Next, we had something called the ETLA, evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment. This mirrored what Ofsted were doing in terms of no grades, so it's supposed to be friendlier. This was a rigorous process, quite lengthy really, we had to do two per staff member, which administratively was very difficult to get it all in. It was better though, as it was more conversational, and it was more of a dialogue with staff. But then we moved on from that to ROL, review of learning, which is very much focused on the staff member leading what we call the 'visit'. It's not an observation, so they choose what they want us to come and see, what asset they'd like to focus on. That's part of the Advanced Practitioner role.

Reflective of Elliott's characterisation of the 'Training and Development Lead Body Model', QM processes are here discussed firstly as tasked with evaluating, managing and reviewing pedagogy in relation to nationally set prescriptions (Elliott, 1993). Within the excerpt, the role of the Advanced Practitioner (a specifically employed or seconded teacher employed within the Quality Department) is depicted as moving away from connotations of performance management, towards a supportive one within the contemporary context.

However, the standards to which FE practitioners are observed against are never problematised, constructed as an absolute truth to which pedagogy holds, as opposed to a fluid, policy-led, ideology-led set of societal standards to which teachers must subscribe, feeding into performance appraisals and linked to staff contracts and pay (Orr, 2020). 'Misrecognition' instead occurs as the supportive role of quality as a sounding board through which practitioners check their pedagogy is instead extolled by the participant, reflective of a Total Quality Management (TQM) approach (Bourdieu, 1984; Elliott, 1993) with the pursuit of 'quality' ever-present and internalised by practitioners. Furthering the notion of QM practices as being internalised by practitioners and presented as ideologically-free, in the next excerpt, the participant states.

Excerpt Two

> It's not an observation, so they choose what they want us to come and see, what asset they'd like to focus on. That's part of the advanced practitioner role.

Here, QM departments are shown to have distanced from formal observations, with practitioners invited to showcase an aspect of their practice. However, despite the rigidity of a formal observations, the showcase to Advanced Practitioners and Quality Departments is still linked to the performance, review and progression of FE practitioners through appraisal.

The variety and breadth of FE practitioner remits is further conveyed in excerpt three.

Excerpt Three

> Alongside that there's coaching attachments, a huge focus on improving digital practice, lots of designing and delivering CPD across the group. So as an advanced practitioner I work for (xxxx3) however that's part of (xxxxG) Group. It includes us, the justice sector, so (oooo1), there's (oooo2), which is like apprenticeships. Then we also have FE within the college, so it's quite a broad business really, and my work is for all of that. So I design training for prison staff and apprentice staff as well as college staff. I have my own bespoke training on digital practice, so yeah. It's good it changes.

Quality Departments are identified within this excerpt as integral to the performance and financial health of FE colleges within a marketised system. As FE leaders adapt to the harsh, competitive funding environment via bidding for new partnerships or contracts to provide new qualifications to differing provision and settings, QM principles and particularly the role of Advanced Practitioners are discussed as central to the assessment and performance of new ventures, with Quality inextricably linked to the performative KPIs and attainment outcomes upon which the sectors' health is based (Entwistle, 2022; Orr, 2020).

Misrecognition/Corporatised Fabrications/ Business Ontology

Throughout the narrative, continuing professional development (CPD), QM practices and the role of 'Advanced Practitioners' are positioned as the pillars of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) within FE.

Excerpt Four (When Discussing Observing Teaching as an Advanced Practitioner)

> There is that kind of live aspect to it and you know when you see it, you're thinking "this is on fire". You're thinking, "This is good". It's better when it's like that, rather than just procedural.

Here, 'Misrecognition' and 'Corporatised fabrications' again occur (Bourdieu, 1984; Courtney & Gunter, 2019). Social and economic capital is discursively afforded to teachers who exhibit creative agency within their practice by the participant, representing pedagogical values of agency and creativity. This 'misrecognises' the limitations and structures in which Quality Departments have merged from and operate within. Rather than encouraging agency within practice, FE teachers who conform to national standards perform well in observations undertaken by Advanced Practitioners (Bourdieu, 1984). Whereas, as agent of QM, Participant 01 would realistically apply technologies of managerialism (targets, observation, measurement of teaching against KPIs, marketised metrics) to stifle practitioner agency (Dennis et al., 2017; Orr, 2013), observing practice annually on behalf of Quality Departments. Positioned within the narrative as a form of supportive, reflective practice, QM practices are instead understood as a form of TQM (Elliott, 1993).

Bourdieu's concept of 'Misrecognition' and the concept of 'Corporatised Fabrications' are further utilised to think with the data (Bourdieu, 1984; Courtney & Gunter, 2019; James, 2015). Conveying a 'Business Ontology' (Fisher, 2009), the participant explains:

Excerpt Five

> What's impacted my role the most in the past 5 years is being part of the Quality Team. Having a team that listens to you, cares for you, and is quite honest and open about that, asking how you are. There's a culture of listening, in terms of your professional ability, or inability, perhaps

> being able to share mental pressures, good news. I've never experienced that so much in a team, ever, before being an AP. It's a very, very cohesive team. In other areas of FE, I worked in, I really loved the students. They gave everything back, I really engaged with them, they gave their stories to the room – you don't get them from anywhere else. But then, they are stats. You may have had this situation with roll on roll off, you might get a student who comes to start your class in May, who then finishes in June, and you've got to get them a qualification because of the kerching, and its cash. It is so obvious that it is like that. So, the integrity thing is quite hard in terms of trying to nurture a student for two months, because it's bums on seats and that's FE. Especially for adult provision - you've got to get the funding from somewhere. When phrases like "by close of play" start to creep in, I'm thinking; "people, not paper". So that's it, that's my op on that

Here, Quality Departments are discursively constructed as a space in which practitioners can escape the effects of marketisation and the quasi-market introduced after the incorporation brought by the Further and Higher Education Act (1992). Discursively constructed as a space through which practitioners can escape the pressures of financialisation (Hill, 2017) and focus entirely on the pursuit of 'excellent pedagogy'. However, the veneer of QM as a space for teaching excellence is disrupted as a contested ideological space, whereby nationally prescribed standards and performance-metrics of managerialism combine to homogenise practice, limit agency and enforce the corporatised policy of the day.

Habitus, Field, Capital

Within the narrative account, the performative aspect of Quality is alluded to by the participant. Discussing a lack of professionalism from a particular college's response to an Ofsted visit, the participant recalls being asked to replace a staff member for their class due to their superior pedagogical practice. This reflects the lack of 'cultural capital' and feel for the game within the Ofsted field by certain staff members who are overlooked or marginalised when an inspection 'call' is received (Bourdieu, 1984; James, 2015). This further conveys the performance of quality

enacted by FE managements, with the performance check of an Ofsted visit not used to reflect the actual pedagogical practice occurring within the college. Instead performance-metrics of QM are instead shown as becoming monolithic 'must-pass' tools through which to acquire further economic, cultural and social capital for colleges, as opposed to any true assessment (Bourdieu, 1984).

Advanced Practitioners and QM practices are further identified as agents of managerialism due to their respective forms of 'capital' within the field, existing to enforce standards and performance (Bourdieu, 1984). Demonstrating the 'cultural capital' of staff who exert new managerialist practices versus staff who struggle with intensive workload and managerialist practices such as KPI mechanisms, the Quality team are discursively positioned as situated to improve the data of colleges to enable certain sites to increase in 'economic' and therefore both 'social' and 'cultural' capital. Linking to policy, the 'Area Reviews' and 'T-Level' reform of the past decade within FE have seen sums of funding, building capital and status given to FE colleges with positive Ofsted reports and robust QM practices (DBIS, 2016b; Dennis et al, 2017; Hill, 2017), thus reflecting the entrenchment of QM practices as linked to the survival FE colleges and their staff's employment.

If Not Quality Management, What Else?

The above data should be taken as insightful of a wider tension within Further Education and education systems more broadly, that of what practitioners and leaders hope they are achieving, versus the ideological and discursive underpinnings of the actions that they take within their daily lives (Courtney & Gunter, 2019). Generalisability, despite the small sample size, can be arrived at by taking the churn experienced within the participants' career, plus their 'corporatised fabrications' or 'misrecognition' regarding their conception of the role of Quality Departments (Bourdieu, 1984; Courtney & Gunter, 2019). We must now turn to other potential routes. If not 'Quality Management', so pervasive, 'taken-for-granted' and unseen within the sector, then what else?

Leadership is explored within the data in a variety of ways, whether the Advanced Practitioner role is positioned as a 'Leader' in terms of supporting and teaching staff to pursue 'outstanding' pedagogy, or whether explored as something which is to be escaped, due to the financialised, ruthless form of management or managerialism enabled by the sectors' privatisation with incorporation Quality Management, mandated by awarding organisations, government and funding agencies, has become the lifeblood of the sector's governance (Elliott, 1993). Despite this, FE practitioners still resonate with varied, numerable professional identities, particularly the role of FE teaching in providing students with a second chance to succeed in tertiary education, often from deprived areas (Richardson, 2007; Robeson, 2006). Perhaps, there could be another way.

Rather than reducing teaching and the educational experience to quantitative numerical outcomes which are often financially-driven, Carolyn Shields outlined another vision of leadership (Shields, 2011). Rather than the technical, rationalistic approach to leadership which proffers under a system focused on outcomes, key performance indicators and private sector-style management (Entwistle, 2022), Sheild's advocates instead for a framework based on educational leadership a critical, adaptive approach which prioritises social justice values (Shields, 2011). Sheilds outlines eighth interdependent principles on which her theory of Transformative Leadership hangs (Shields, 2011), highlighting education's role in addressing social issues, broken promises and injustices within society (Shields, 2011). Unlike the positivistic philosophy which QM practices are founded upon (the idea that social processes such as education can be tested, statistically generalised and measured via the generation of quantitative data), Transformative Leadership takes into account the material, social realities in which educators practice (Archer, 1999; Shields, 2011). Particularly of use to Further Education leaders and practitioners, Transformative Leadership aims to level the playing field, as opposed to assuming one exists via the use of "objective", statistically generalised metrics (Shields, 2011).

Conclusion

Both the research cite and the methodological choice of narrative inquiry show importance, with the historical, socio-cultural framework of the teachers' working life in FE is identified within the data (Grace, 1995). The data further speaks to the literature, reflecting the contradictions and complexity of the FE sector (Robeson, 2006) within the data, the 'Field' of FE identified within the data as complex and contradictory (Bourdieu, 1984; Robeson, 2006).

In the above research, vast focus and discussion occurs the role of the 'Quality Team' and managerialism within the FE sector (Richardson, 2007). The participant presented a discursive binary throughout the interview which presented the work of the 'Quality Department' within the college as in opposition to managerialism's focus on statistics and data, with the Quality team's focus on the teaching and learning process. However, my reading situates the work of the Quality team within the context of managerialism, as an agent of neo-liberalisation.

The forms of capital identified within the data as associated with the discourse and practices of QM and managerialism in FE have extensive implications for practitioners, the culture of FE and practice (Bradley et al., 2010; Fusarelli, 2004; Hodgson & Spours, 2019; Hooton, 2004; Lucas & Unwin, 2009; McAdam & Welsh, 2000; Mctavish, 2003; Melia, 1995; Mohammed, 2015; Randle & Brady, 1997). The patterns in data connect with established research, and however, they also provide new and interesting insights in relation to managerialism within FE. Corporatisation is reflected within FE in the creation of new roles, plus the churn of associated management techniques post-1992 (Orr, 2009). This chapter extends the current thinking around managerialism and QM in FE, conveying the material and discursive growth of such an agenda post-incorporation, avoiding a monolithic and ahistorical approach to FE study, conveying the shifts and diversity of changes post-incorporation (Ball, 1990).

Therefore, analysis of dominant Quality Management discourses contributes to contemporary knowledge as these are further embedded within the legislative and funding duties of colleges, reshaping and

defining the education sector under the vision of a "viscous epistemology" of vocationalism. With a further £3.8 Billion of investment in skills promised in the government's 2022 Levelling Up White Paper, I examine into the practices governing the delivery of post-compulsory education in England (GOV.UK, 2022). Extending the climate of monitoring and control engendered post-incorporation, under the Skills and Education Bill (2022) there will also be a duty introduced for all FE providers to review how well the education or training they provide meets local needs, with the increase in statutory intervention into FE indicating that mechanisms of managerialism such as 'Quality' measures and departments in FE are only set to extend (FE Week, 2021). Therefore, it could not be of further importance to examine the ideologies which underpin Quality Management discourses within Further Education and beyond.

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7

Managerialist Approaches Changing Approaches to Doctoral Supervision During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Lynn Martin, Marina Dabic, and Pat Ibbotson

Introduction

Over the last sixty years, universities have evolved from elite institutions to mass education organisations which are led and operationalised by professionalised management and compete with each other for students (Deem et al., 2007; Parker & Jary, 1995; Tülübaş & Göktürk, 2022). Their original purpose—to educate a small, privileged part of society—has been replaced with the need to meet socio-economic needs by providing mass education as part of the evolution of the knowledge

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society (Geppert & Hollinshead, 2017). While opening access to university education is recognised as beneficial, mass education may lead to more limited degree programmes and to the rise of the McUniversity (Parker & Jary, 1995). This drive to expand student numbers in teaching was coupled with the need to achieve the third mission assigned to universities, contributing to the social, economic and cultural development of the regions in which they operate, which accompanied the rise of the knowledge economy and the pressures of globalisation (Compagnucci & Spigarelli, 2020; Lynch, 2015).

Throughout UK higher education, it has been suggested that the economic imperative underpins the aims and practices of higher education, seen in increased managerialism (Lucas, 2014). Managerialism is based on the view that “there is little difference in the skills required to run an advertising agency, an oil rig, or a university” such that knowledge, experience and skills specifically related to core business are considered secondary, with negative aspects in its oppressive reduction of managers to a particular focus and in imposing rules (Klikauer, 2015). Managerialist regimes are characterised by “unremitting organizational restructuring, sharpening of incentives, and expansion in number, power, and remuneration of senior managers, with a corresponding downgrading of the role of skilled workers” (Klikauer, 2015: 1108) where organisational bureaucracy is a form of domination justified by efficiency arguments.

As managerialism has increased, there are perceptions suggesting that the value attached to academic activities has decreased and this has curtailed academic autonomy (Alvesson, 2013; Alvesson & Spicer, 2016). University evolution has been mimicked at a faculty level, particularly in Business Schools, with an emphasis on marketisation and the Americanisation of business education, adopted across countries and cultures to satisfy market rather than academic culture and logics (Alajoutsijärvi et al., 2015; Juusola et al., 2015; Lynch, 2015). This includes the adoption and achievement of business school accreditation measures (such as that offered by the AACSB—the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, self-defined as an American professional association which aims to “achieve a common goal: to create the next generation of great leaders”) (Alajoutsijärvi et al., 2015).

This is one of many external and internal performance measures and targets designed to demonstrate worth and value for money (Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000; Martin et al., 2018; Soin & Huber, 2021).

Performance measurement has been applied to both teaching and research (Anderson et al., 2022). In the UK, the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) measures "high-quality teaching and student outcomes", rating institutions as Gold, Silver, Bronze and Provisional according to "teaching quality, learning environment, and the educational and professional outcomes achieved by students" (OFS, 2023). Similarly, research activities have been measured via the Research Excellence Framework (REF). This four-yearly exercise claims to "provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment" through "benchmarking data to establish reputational yardsticks", in the selective allocation of governmental research funding (REF, 2023).

Hence, metrics define and assess research via *outputs*, including patents and publications, where publications are valued depending on their presence and position in specific ranked journal lists. In UK Business Schools, publications (and those writing them) are measured against the rankings in the Chartered Association of Business Schools journal list and the REF (Anderson et al., 2022; CABS, 2021; Lynch, 2015; Willmott, 2011). These measures demonstrate how managerialism, or new public management, is implemented in UK universities (Harley et al., 2004). This focuses which has been said to discipline and subjugate the academic workforce in order to achieve market-driven organisational goals (Barry et al., 2001; Lucas, 2014).

While clearly part of political ideologies, the move to managerialism is also accelerated by public funding cutbacks to higher education (Cano et al., 2022; Deem et al., 2007) which has required generation of other sources of funding, imposing accountability measures and resulting in increased levels of temporary and part-time labour. This has included the use of 'zero hours' contracts in both teaching and research posts with an inverse relationship between the skills levels needed and the precarious nature of these posts and with disproportionate impacts related to gender and ethnicity (Hodgins & Mannix-McNamara, 2021; McIntosh & McKinley, 2022).

What of doctoral programmes in these widespread changes? The doctorate is a research journey supported by the guidance of their supervisors and with research skills training provided by their university, to demonstrate original work which contributes to knowledge. Historically doctorates qualified their holders as fit to teach in universities and, traditionally, the doctorate was embedded in the idea of academic freedom in terms of subject matter and methods of research (Ruano-Borbalan, 2022). Given the importance of doctoral graduates to the knowledge economy, however, there has been a shift from seeing doctoral candidates as stewards of their subject disciplines, towards regarding them as future leaders and entrepreneurs (Deem, 2022b: 424, citing Balaban, 2016).

The highest degree award offered by universities and a set of qualifiers are in place determining who can be a supervisor based on their experience and qualifications. Doctoral programmes and supervision have also changed to fit the wider transformation of higher education given "structural changes, new funding regimes, stricter accountability and quality assurance requirements", which have impacted not only on methods of doctoral education and the variety of accredited doctoral awards but also impacts on how doctoral supervisors are perceived and their academic identity (Halse & Malfroy, 2010: 79).

The recent pandemic has also been seen through the lens of managerialism impacts on academic work. Academic identity and well-being came under pressure during the Covid-19 pandemic, given that an "intensification of more than a decade of higher education policies based on.. intensified managerialism", rather than specific actions taken during the pandemic caused high levels of work-related stress, digital fatigue and adverse impacts on work-life balance (Erickson et al., 2021; Hodgins & Mannix-McNamara, 2021). Hence, the pandemic was therefore not the cause of negative impacts, but it amplified existing effects of managerialism via embedded negative policies (Shankar et al., 2021). Increased managerialism was seen as reducing individual academic autonomy and self-worth during this period, diminishing academic identity (Watermeyer et al., 2021). The next section examines previous research into academic identity and the doctoral role as a context for understanding supervisors' experience.

Academic Identity and the Doctoral Role

Academic identity is often characterised as being a collective identity which based on membership of an 'academic community', embedded in (and sustained by) long-established systems, structures, values and behaviours (Henkel, 2005; Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013). These convey how things are done and are transmitted through processes of socialisation, as the individual progresses through their career journey before, during and after the doctoral supervision process (Deem, 2022a; Halse & Malfroy, 2010; Lee, 2008). The enlargement of the number of universities and the numbers of studies mark a change from an elite system which has also been accompanied by a shift from "the scholarly ideals of truth-seeking, freedom of thought, autonomy and collegiality", which "defined the essential features of academic profession" (Tülübaş & Göktürk, 2022: 2).

This suggests that the traditional view of who academics are and how they construct their identities needs to be redefined in a context of measured performativity and compliance rather than discovery (Clarke et al., 2013; McCann et al., 2020; Nästesjö, 2023). These changes have been part of a series of ongoing policy changes which have impacted university life and academic work such that research into academic identity shows "the crisis at the heart of academic life" (Neary & Winn, 2016: 410). This shift in the importance of subject discipline and of academic culture to meet new performance-based requirements is attributed to government policy imperatives (Henkel, 2005: 7). In this view, academic identity embodies a set of community and discipline beliefs and behaviours, which have been undermined by "transformations in the policy, funding and governance of higher education", causing academic professions and identities to be "diversified, fragmented and blurred" (Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013: 1136).

The doctoral supervisor identity is a particular form of academic identity, with previous research from the 1960s onwards indicating expectations of the doctoral supervisor role and deficiencies in supervisory practice. Consistent themes in the literature include discussions of how the role might be performed, emphasising the need to build an intellectual relationship between student and supervisor, where the supervisor has a dual role—"to be at different times both a supporter and a critic

of the student's work, and sometimes the two together" (Connell, 1985: 41). This was coupled with the need to improve completion rates, with effective supervisors taking measures to support completions of PhDs within specified periods (Rudd, 1986). From a managerialist perspective, given the growth of targets for doctoral recruitment and completion, supervision is an important delivery method for doctoral completions and an essential part of the transfer of knowledge from supervisor to supervised (Shibayama, 2019). Both themes continue to figure in discussions of a doctoral supervisory role given that 'inadequate supervision' is a reason for not finishing on time and for dropping out when doctoral supervisors influence all aspects of the student's experience including research training (Johansson & Yerrabati, 2017; Skopek et al., 2022).

The supervisor role is embedded in beliefs about traditional knowledge transfer, where skills and knowledge are imparted from the master to the apprentice (Bastalich, 2015; Lee, 2008) More utilitarian approaches focus on the supervisor ensuring usefulness in the research topics selected by students (Humphrey et al., 2012; Kyvik & Olsen, 2014; Wang et al., 2021). Hence, in both traditional and managerialist perspectives, the importance of 'good' supervisors is consistently emphasised, although the definition of a good supervisor has changed, reflecting the commodification of knowledge in the knowledge economy model and of students in mass education (Wisker, 2012). In the changing contexts of increasing numbers in higher awards, the nature of the supervisor-student relationship has shifted, with Halse and Malfroy (2010: 83) suggesting that doctoral supervision is now a "specialized form of 'professional work'" rather than apprenticeship or pedagogy.

Defining what makes a 'good' supervisor has also been a consistent theme in debate about academic identity. Halse and Malfroy (2010: 79), for instance, suggest the critical role played by supervisors in doctoral education with 'good' doctoral supervision seen as "crucial to successful research education programs" especially related to the further widening of participation in higher degrees. Indeed, good supervision "is the key to both quality and efficiency in higher degree research" with results attributed to good or bad supervision despite the impacts and pressures of increased massification of higher-level awards (Bastalich, 2015). The importance of the good supervision process is also seen in the

otherwise "ill-defined and ambiguous" conduct of doctoral study with a lack of clarity about what is expected and what academic life entails, compared to students' earlier experience of learning—the good supervisor is therefore the lynchpin in a confusing landscape (Cornwall et al., 2019).

Part of this view of the good supervisor is their ability to maintain a relationship at a distance encouraging independence in learning by focusing on guidance rather than direction of student activities. By carefully boundarying relationships with their students, they can guide this evolution into independent learners. Exploring boundary management in role adoption and role transitions throughout the doctoral supervisory journey, Benmore (2016: 1262) suggests four stages: early days, data collection, progression to PhD and completion, where supervisors "construct and negotiate roles to ensure effective manoeuvre through these phases" …… through their ability to manage "relational, emotional and physical boundaries".

Part of this process of separation is to embed in students the ways in which academics behave and their value system, so that they too can become a member of the academic community, learning how to comport themselves in order to be able to fit the expected mould (Wang et al., 2021). Also, established academics constantly re-achieve 'academicity' by maintaining or rejecting inappropriate behaviours and practices to retain and support their own academic identity (Petersen, 2007: 485). Through interaction with peers and normative and socialisation processes, what it means to be an academic is conveyed. Within this is the exercise of individual agency seen in the "choice and creation of self" (Watson, 2008: 426) given that social actors "are both constrained and enabled by context" (Brown, 2015: 299).

This emphasis on a process of adaptation and reinforcement to fit in indicates that identity is socially constructed (Hatch & Schultz, 2002) defined by the need to categorise self within a group (Brown, 2015). As suggested in the discussion of academic identity, identity work is a continual process of adaptation through which the individual defines who they are and makes sense of their role and status, measuring themselves with how they are seen by individuals and groups within their workplace (McInnes & Corlett, 2012). Constructing and negotiating

roles in order to meet the changing needs of the student and the context necessarily suggest 'identity work', where individuals construct and reconstruct identity as part of social interaction and the need to align behaviour to fit (Knights & Clarke, 2014; Reedy et al., 2016). In this way, an individual reflects their understanding of how they are regarded by adjusting their behaviours to signal their role within an organisation.

Identity work is therefore performed by an individual to create, support and recreate their view of who they are, despite the pressures of changing circumstances (Knights & Clarke, 2014: 337). Multiple identities emerge to deal with changing work and home needs (Knights & Clarke, 2014), allowing the individual to negotiate positive and negative relationships and to counter times when personal identity is seen as misaligned with the changing needs of the organisation (Brown, 2015). Here, supervisors were also family members, researchers, managers and teachers and might be expected to vary in how they saw and represented their identity within the workplace. This establishes and maintains individual academic identity in relation to an academic community setting—internally with students, colleagues and managers and externally with peers, examiners, companies, those hearing and reading student work at events and those involved in annual reviews and upgrades. In this way, individuals understand and respond to their place in the world, their context and what is expected from them (Ashforth et al., 2008; Degn, 2018; Stets & Carter, 2012).

Here, the study uses 'identity' and 'identity work' to capture the participants' understanding of the impacts of the pandemic on them as individuals and as supervisors. These concepts are defined and explored in studies across different sociological disciplines, but they are generally seen as flexible, responsive to context and socially constructed (Watson, 2008). In this context, carrying out work to create and maintain identity to fit in with the perceived expectations of others (Ashforth et al., 2008; Knights & Clarke, 2014) relates to the efforts made by supervisors who work to maintain their own academic identity (Petersen, 2007).

In the context of academic identity, the individual carries out identity work to fit shared understandings determined by specific historic, societal, organisational and media discourses (Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013). These themes of identity formation, academic identity and the definition of the

'good supervisor' informed our study. In understanding how supervisors saw their roles during changing times, the way supervisors defined their own academic identity, their view of a 'good supervisor' and their reference points internally and externally were key themes, especially over a year of rapid and dramatic change.

Methodology

The study reflects earlier work on identity and identity work in using qualitative research as a source of insights into the sense-making carried out as part of participants' formation and recreation of self (Degn, 2018; Kreber, 2010; Halse & Malfroy, 2010). Semi-structured interviews were the means to gather participants' views of their identity (Kreber, 2010), through online face-to-face interviews every 2 months over the period March 2020–2021, with initial discussion pre-lockdown. Between these, all six sent email contacts to illustrate the kinds of action being taken during lockdowns.

This was a purposive sample of six supervisors from different Business Schools in English universities, as seen in earlier studies of identity work (Bennett, 2017; Martin et al., 2018). Following contacts with 20 experienced supervisors across the UK, 6 participated in the complete series of interviews. An overview of the sample is shown in Table 7.1. There is an equal male and female split, with the range of roles within the university varying across gender lines. In this group, the male participants described their roles as senior researchers and led research groups; the women had committee and faculty roles in addition to being established researchers.

As can be seen, participants came from universities with different ages and focus, both from older research-intensive universities and from newer institutions with a teaching focus. This distinction is included given the discussion of 'what type of university this is' which formed part of the sense-making process by participants about their identity. Themes from the literature were raised by the participants themselves. Participants described their experiences and their perceptions of how contexts and expectations changed, including stories about how they had dealt with situations and people. While they knew the study focused on

Table 7.1 Participants in the study

Participant	University	Age range	Caring duties initially	Caring duties through 2020	Doctoral Completions/ current	Publications	Other duties
A Male	Research intensive	50–59	No	Yes	10 6	4	Guest lectures, research group leadership
B Male	Post 1992 Research and teaching	4–49	No	Yes	4 6	2/3	Chair faculty ethics committee, module leadership
C Male	Research intensive	40–49	No	Yes	11 7	3/4	Guest lectures, research group leadership
D Female	Post 1992 Teaching focus	40–49	Shared	Yes	4 9	2/3	Teaching masters, course director for masters course, doctoral programme director

Participant	University	Age range	Caring duties initially	Caring duties through 2020	Doctoral Completions/ current	Publications	Other duties
E Female	Post 1992 Teaching focus	30–39	Shared	Yes	9 8	1/2	Teaching, course director, masters programme director, member of faculty income generation and ethics committee, member of university quality and assessment group
F Female	Research intensive	30–39	Yes	Yes	6 5	3/4	Teaching at undergraduate level, masters dissertations coordinator, impact coordinator. Research group membership

academic identity and so had thought about the concept before the first interviews, they raised the idea of a good and bad supervisor, for instance, in trying to explain what the doctoral role was 'for' and how it worked within their faculty/university. Similarly, the table shows current supervisions as varying between 5 and 9, with all having a mixture of home and international students based in the UK and at different stages of their doctorate.

The resulting data were explored through repeated reading to allow themes to emerge around academic identity, how supervisor roles evolved over the year and the impacts on the individual supervisor of shifts in how they worked.

Findings

There are two sections. The first captures participant' views of the supervisory role and the way participants defined what a 'good supervisor' was during the study, showing how participants shifted their understanding of their role as a feature of the changes they had experienced during the duration of the research. The acceleration of the spread of coronavirus and associated socio-economic effects became a key thread in discussions of how their working practices had changed, blurring of personal and work environments together with their need to change to support their students. The evolution of views is shown in Table 7.2, which shows shifting views in the first 12 month of Covid-19 of what a good supervisor is, their key responsibilities and the most important aspect of their job.

The second discusses their view of increased administration and bureaucracy during the study. Seen as micro-management by participants, this second section also shows how these measures impacted on the sense of self.

Table 7.2 Shifting roles during 2020/2021

Stages	I am/a good supervisor is	Key responsibilities	Most important aspect of my role/issues
Pre disease awareness	Transmitter of expert knowledge and appropriate behaviours; retains distance but provides clear guidance for students. Guardian of standards	Standards and quality, developing students as researchers, knowledge transfer, mastery of my subject	Maintenance of critical standards, guidance to fit academic contexts Dilution of standards—Dealing with varying level of student ability and expectation, pressures from faculty to take more students
Early lockdown March–May 2020	Retains distance but is encouraging and provides clear guidance for students Guardian of standards	Standards and quality, developing students as researchers, knowledge transfer	Maintenance of critical standards, guidance to fit academic contexts, rigour despite the crisis Getting students to focus on student work, given the growing issues with borders and flights

(continued)

Table 7.2 (continued)

Stages	I am/a good supervisor is	Key responsibilities	Most important aspect of my role/issues
Lockdown June–December 2020	Manages increased university requirements and well-being issues for students Manages personal well-being and helps students do the same	Keeping contact with students, aiding them to get support from the university, keeping them in touch with their work	Supporting international students through this, welfare not work is not the priority Trying to work from home while children have no childcare/supporting the students with well-being issues while juggling my own issues
Continued lockdown January–March 2020	Being the voice of calm and clarity in the midst of confusion; keeping faith with students, supporting them with university bureaucracy	Retaining the relationship with the student, encouraging them to keep working and to turn in their work for review	Providing leadership in confused times where the university "drowns them with emails, meetings and workshops" (Participant F), supporting others through it, identifying with the students and with externals

The Supervisor Role—Distance, Regulation and the Good Supervisor

Pre-lockdown and during the first months of lockdown, participants described their view of their positive relationships with students as seen in Lee (2008), including:

1. Functional aspects—achieving milestones within agreed times, project management.
2. Enculturation—guidance in the behaviours and values deemed necessary to become a member of the disciplinary community.
3. Critical thinking—guidance for students to critique and analyse their work.
4. Emancipation—leading the student to be independent rather than dependent on supervisor guidance.

In these early stages, they stressed their *disciplinary* responsibilities in terms of upholding subject excellence and standards of work, contrasting their own attempts to uphold standards with the pressure to dilute their own working practice in order to fit university needs for increased numbers, support different types of doctoral students and operate new doctoral awards (Parker-Jenkins, 2018). During first two interviews, all emphasised their importance as guardians of standards with their role being to focus on that rather than on the student as a person, by being "determinedly non-directive" (Participant D) as their function was not only to maintain standards but also to support rather than managing the student's evolution into an independent researcher. This they felt was what made them a good supervisor,

> You are not there to be their friends .. you have to keep that distance between you so that they understand that…. (Participant B)

> I'm not their mother, and I'm there to provide support for their work, and not do it myself…you have to de-personalise yourself and focus on the subject. (Participant D)

There was much emphasis too on being careful not "to spoon feed" (Participants A and B) or "to cut up their food for them" (Participant F), similarly participants did not want "to do their work for them" (Participants C and D) or "think for them" (Participant E). These were strongly held beliefs which they felt underpinned their behaviours, about what it meant to be a good supervisor. This reflected earlier findings (Benmore, 2016; Parker-Jenkins, 2018) about the need to maintain boundaries between supervisor and student, with all participants explaining by the importance of keeping a gap and not being overly friendly or overly directive. This is characterised by Participant E "I'm not there to be their friend.. but to supervise their work.. they do it, I comment… that's the way it works… and the work has to be right …" (Participant E).

Further, Participants A and B decried the shift to over-friendliness observed in colleagues and explained the need for boundary management in terms of subject excellence and the importance of students working towards it themselves—and their role as supervisors within that.This was stressed by referring to them having "reached a certain level.. and if your students are going to find their way to that level then it's a journey, it requires their efforts" (A) and again that "there was no bypassing the work and effort that needs to be expended by the student, not by the supervisor" (B).

By the third interview, participants shifted their focus to reflect on how their roles and priorities had changed, on who they 'really' were and the difficulties in maintaining personal and academic identities in a rapidly worsening situation, due to the pressure felt from home, work and community contexts. A short easing of lockdown during the summer followed by increasing cases and deaths in September 2020 and a further lockdown added to the uncertainty felt by the participants about their own roles and what academic identity meant in the context of what they felt was a chaotic start to the new terms in universities across the UK. Those with children were home-schooling while working due to school closures. If able to access childcare once September came, they faced "an unmanageable backlog" (Participant D) while trying to cope with autumn term work.

In this time, their roles shifted to provide care and support for their students, especially international students who were far from home,

paying rent for a room in a shared room (often with other students absent and rooms locked) and with no outside space, all difficult during lockdown.

Participant Views on Increasing Administration During the Pandemic

One common view during this period was that their role had changed, and their academic identity was under pressure due to increased management actions during the pandemic.

Table 7.3 summarises a range of measures taken by universities and individual faculties during the pandemic when the workforce was confined to their homes or furloughed. As it is shown in each university, temporary contracts and zero hours contracts were terminated by May 2020. All participants expressed their feelings as "shocking" (4 participants) "dreadful" (3) and unconscionable (2). This had a very demotivating impact on participants, who felt that their institutions had shown themselves to be unethical (3), harsh (2) and uncaring (2) and all commented that these actions were "not what a university should be", "this isn't a US corporation.. we are supposed to be an ethical institution".

Participants were also very aware of the shifts in policy and sociology-economic conditions driving change in how doctoral programmes were offered, managed and run, reflecting Kiley's (2011) earlier comments about the introduction of workshops and seminars for research supervisors. For Participant A, this had become more than irritating, he flet it undermined his expertise and experience.

> I am in a very established researcher with proven international standing. …. to oversee how students respond to the discipline and to the subject and how they become immersed in what it means to be a real academic… I don't need reminding of responsibilities and duties in workshops led by junior staff and I can certainly do without these endless rounds of bureaucracy embedded in substandard IT systems marking so-called milestones…it wastes my time and that of my peers and is frankly insulting.

Table 7.3 "Imposition of new boundaries" (Participant A)—Managerialism

	Pre pandemic	Pandemic number involved	Action taken	Number involved
Contract termination for zero hours staff		all	Writing—to Dean (2), DVC (1), VC (2), union and newspaper (1)	6
Contract termination for temporary staff		5	Contract termination for zero hours staff	
Weekly staff meetings	Every 4 weeks	5	Bimonthly or more irregular attendance, usually with sound and video off so they "could get on with work" (F)	6
Weekly meetings with manager, HoD, etc	None scheduled	4	Initial compliance followed by postponement/refusal	6
New timesheets	none	2	Refusal/avoidance	2
Regular reporting in writing to a range of people	none	3	Initial compliance followed by postponement/refusal	3
Increased frequency of documents from students (annual review became quarterly)	annual	Quarterly/3	Refusal on the student's behalf	3
Messages/videos from the VC	None (2 participants) half-yearly or monthly (4 participants)	Weekly/6	Skim reading early on, deletion unopened	6
Messages/videos from the Dean	none	Monthly/6	Never opened 5; opened occasionally 1	6
Messages/videos from the PVC/DVC Research	none	Monthly/6	Read initially, skim read then deleted unopened	6

	Pre pandemic	Pandemic number involved	Action taken	Number involved
Messages/videos from the School of Faculty Research/Knowledge | Exchange Head	none	Fortnightly then after 6 months, monthly	Read initially, skim read then deleted unopened	6
Workshops on supervision	Every 3 years (6)	Twice yearly (4) Three times per year (2)	Avoided attending	6
Workshops on well-being	none	Frequent (6)	Initial attendance, but then avoided;	4 (2 avoided)
Workshops on new reporting processes	none	Monthly during the first 6 months (3)	“went and caused trouble” (A) Avoided the sessions and the new systems (B, D, E) Identified mistakes and faulty legal aspects and was then not invited to further sessions (B)	Varied (6)

'Undermining my authority' were also themes from Participants B, C, D and F who also found the content, repetition and length of workshops and the lack of differentiation irritating. This was "just a tick box exercise. It is particularly annoying to have to dedicate a half-day to an exercise led by people with comparatively little doctoral experience and nothing new to say. I have avoided it for two years but being pressured to attend this year" (Participant B).

As the lockdown measures came into force and home working was mandatory, participants felt that extended monitoring systems were evidence of further central administrative attempts to control how things were done. All talked about increases in the bureaucracy surrounding their work, which they felt to be both superfluous and cumbersome. They were working at home throughout the year due to the impacts of the virus, and during that time, new requirements were expected of them to record and measure their actions. These included timesheets and reports. As shown in Table 7.3, these were treated with suspicion and avoided. The timesheets were "allegedly to know when we are working and how … but as a professor I have never had to document my time this way… its supposed to be about trust… and recognition of the work you are doing" (Participant C).

The most common practice was the new online calendar or spreadsheet to record when and how doctoral supervision occurred, which was the duty of the first supervisor to complete. This was accompanied by new requirements to meet with students every other week, whatever stage they had reached. The systems were often inflexible, as seen in the case when an international student with well-being issues met with their supervisor every week to help them come through their difficulties, but the system rejected anything but fortnightly timings. Previous studies have commented on the incompatibility of serious academic work with over managerialism. Bastalich (2015), for instance, suggests that over-regulation may be detrimental to research quality and this accords with participants' views.

The beginning of lockdown was also accompanied by an increase in numbers and types of online meetings. These included weekly management, departmental and faculty meetings (in one case, held at 9 am each Monday) with new requirements regarding the frequency of supervision

meetings, the medium used and the recording of details about such meetings. "Years have gone by at a time without the senior management of the university feeling the need to communicate with those working in doctorates, now they won't shut up!" (Participant D). This increase was seen as an unnecessary distraction when time and effort were already strained.

Here, it was not just the extra time and effort to comply but also the uncertainty about their own standing and identity causing difficulties for participants, who felt "demeaned by the reduction of what we do to this.. book-keeping" (Participant C) rather than being seen as totally responsible and expert "masters of their disciplines" (Bastalich, 2015: 10). They felt that their identity as independent senior researchers and as good supervisors was undermined. "If you're a good supervisor then you already respond to students appropriately to guide and support them – this is the sort of micromanaging that really demotivates" (Participant D). Participants D and E similarly felt they were "not trusted to do their jobs" and their status and self-belief were undermined.

Discussion: Coping, Identity and Changing Roles Over Time

Mapping the stages of the pandemic during which the study was conducted, there are four phases (Table 7.2). In the first 2 months, there was gradually increasing awareness of coronavirus, with supervisors very focused on their roles as knowledge experts and upholders of standards, with distance between student and supervisor clearly defined. Discipline-based cultures were the primary source for participants to maintain their academic identity within terms of beliefs about "what is to be known and how, tasks to be performed, standards for effective performance, patterns of publication, professional interaction, and social and political status" (Clarke et al., 2013). This flowed into the next 2 months as lockdown became likely and occurred, with little shift in how supervisors saw their priorities in the role or what a 'good supervisor' would do.

In the period of lockdown, certainties of personal and academic identity expressed by the six participants were replaced by confusion as

their roles extended beyond guidance to pastoral care in a bureaucratised environment. All participants suggested that their academic identity had shifted, without consultation or choice, with them caught between bureaucratic pressures on the one side and human issues on the other. Participants A and B had been those with strong views on distance and not overstepping boundaries with students, but by the end of the study this had changed. While both still saw themselves as standard bearers for their subject and discipline and as consciously transmitting how to behave as an academic, they also stressed the need to empathise with students, to “put yourself in their shoes” (Participant A) and to take action to help them given the difficulties presented by the pandemic and the university’s “fragmented response to it” (B). Both felt that their institution had failed its international students by imposing more layers of bureaucracy to monitor them to meet government regulations while ignoring practical needs.

> I’ve always felt secure in my place within the university’s academic community, but this has really changed…. (B)

> I’m still part of a global subject discipline but my reference points and my benchmarks for my own behaviour have changed…. (A)

Identity work here was twofold. They carried out identity work in the interviews to maintain or deconstruct identities presented in previous interviews and they talked through what they were doing with others to maintain identity emphasised their leading and non-directive role and who they were in research excellence but into this dialogue, nurturing, support and parenting had been added. Making sense of what they perceived as extended or altered roles and responsibilities led to their discussion of “what the doctoral supervisor title really means” and what the associated responsibilities “really were” (B). All participants explained their shift to pastoral care and mutual support with their doctoral students as changing their views about the role they had occupied, with academic identity needing to encompass these aspects.

Participant A, who had initially taken the most traditional stance on boundary management as critical to good supervision, reflected that as

part of teaching you were always 'in loco parentis' however old the students were, so, rather than this being a change in academic identity, it represented a reminder of "who they really were as teachers and guides for their students". What had once been an established role with clear demarcation of guide and learner had transitioned. Friendliness was still an uncomfortable descriptor for some, but caring for the students in practical ways to support them through the crisis was mentioned by all participants. Here, a sense of self was constructed through interpretation of interactions with students, colleagues and managers and with family seen as proving or disproving their 'worth' or 'value'. University signals as to value and worth were more complex. Lack of worth was attributed to what they saw as the imposition of unnecessary bureaucratic activities and procedures centrally by the university upon them, which, they felt, demonstrated a lack of trust in their professionalism and a lack of understanding of what their roles really involved.

During lockdown and afterwards, their discussions of their worth changed. There were contradictions between the way "they were really regarded by the university" being seen as totally at odds with their worth as "critical foci for these students, fulfilling a range of roles to keep them on board and able to cope while struggling ourselves" (Participant F). Signals of how they were valued were taken from their perceptions of central university actions as what were perceived as extra control mechanisms were introduced (as shown in Table 7.3). The common view across the group was that they had become disconnected from the university and its concerns during lockdown and that reconnecting was proving difficult due to what they saw as a drift in core values.

This had encouraged them to reach out externally to researchers in other universities and to focus on their research work as a route to understand how they were regarded by a wider peer group. Through the different pandemic challenges, participants defined who they were and made sense of their role and status (McInnes & Corlett, 2012). In order to do so, they originally categorised themselves compared to other individuals and groups within their faculty and university although this shifted during the study; they measured themselves by the yardstick of

the good supervisor, but their view of what this meant changed during the study and with their perceptions of how they are seen and valued in both home and work contexts (Cornelissen et al., 2007).

Conclusion

This research discusses the impacts of managerialism on academic identity in the context of the pandemic. Earlier research suggests that the pandemic had amplified existing effects of managerialism via embedded negative policies (Shankar et al., 2021), due to the imposition of measures to monitor work activities, with various forms of noncompliance by participants (Soin & Huber, 2021), suggested in earlier research on the impacts of managerialism (Klikauer, 2015). Identity is based on our understanding of who we are and how we fit into the different contexts in which we live and work (Kreber, 2010; Scott, 2016). Increased attempts to control and monitor through new reporting systems and multiple new online meetings were interpreted as undermining individual authority and worth, leading to a disconnection between the participants and the university, exacerbating pre-pandemic dissatisfaction with managerial interference and meaningless metrics (McCarthy & Dragouni, 2021).

Here, their interaction with the university and different groups provided participants with what confusing signals about their value to the university and also what they saw as their place in the academic community, requiring repeated identity work to confirm "who they were". At the beginning of the study, all participants related to internal department, research group, discipline and professional networks, but by the end of the study this had become externally focused and disciplinary-related, as a response to what was described as a loss of faith in the values and focus of the university displayed through the pandemic, with the institution and its perception by others important in defining identity (Degn, 2018). This meant that the doctoral supervisor title, which initially had very concrete meaning for all six participants in terms of actions, responsibilities and status, was diminished, damaging participants' views of their role (Ashforth et al., 2008).

The pandemic impacts within universities meant that participants felt that they lost and radically reframed their identity, which had been threatened or diminished by being subsumed into new requirements, virtual working, lockdown consequences and changing family roles and responsibilities. Identity work is carried out to fit shared understandings determined by specific societal, organisational, media and historic discourses; here, participants felt they were operating outside of these, coping day to day to meet unrealistic and competing needs imposed by their organisation, without their usual frame of reference (Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013).

As suggested by Shankar et al. (2021), participants were already feeling undermined by additional bureaucracy before the pandemic, but the unprecedented situation was addressed by their organisation through layers of additional rules, meetings, measures, etc. In the words of Participant B, commenting on managerial decisions, "there was no logical way for them to cope during Covid-19" [given multiple layers of uncertainty] "and so they added more and more logical steps which led them nowhere as they had no other mindset to apply to the problem". Sadly, follow-up discussion with participants six months on showed that many of the measures imposed during the pandemic remained in force. Given these actions, the future for academic identity and its meaning to those holding the title seems uncertain.

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8

Power and Built Environment Course Delivery: A Modern Solution to Force Majeure

Samuel Osei-Nimo, Cindy Millman, and Emmanuel Aboagye-Nimo

Introduction

This chapter explores the challenges encountered in delivering higher education courses, specifically focusing on the realm of Foucauldian power and the Built Environment during the unprecedented disruption caused by the ongoing global pandemic. The sudden shift to remote teaching has transformed the traditional educational landscape, forcing educators to adapt their pedagogical approaches to suit the virtual realm (Bergdahl & Nouri, 2021). By delving into the intricacies of power dynamics and their intersection with the built environment, this study

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aims to examine how micro-level techniques of power, such as surveillance, manifested during the pandemic and created resistance, advocacy, and regulation among critical stakeholders.

The outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic has unleashed an unparalleled disruption in the field of higher education, challenging traditional modes of course delivery and pedagogical practices (Dick et al., 2020). In this era defined by force majeure, educators are compelled to navigate a complex landscape where the seamless transfer of knowledge and engagement with students is hindered by physical distancing measures and the shift to remote teaching (Oliveira et al., 2021; Turnbull et al., 2021). The pandemic significantly affected how courses are devised and delivered in higher education institutions. Government-mandated lockdowns rapidly disrupted formerly flourishing classroom environments, compelling education providers to rapidly deploy online learning technologies to facilitate remote student engagement. Izumi et al. (2021) state that the transition from education in formal classroom learning to online-based learning created enormous changes for both educators and students.

This chapter, therefore, explores the multifaceted challenges faced by educators in delivering courses in the Built Environment area in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK during the pandemic. By examining the power relations that emerged during the transition to online teaching and the virtual classroom, we seek to uncover techniques of power and pedagogical strategies that manifested in the Built Environment and Construction in HEI settings during this period and beyond (García-Morales et al., 2021; Sriharan, 2020). Gu et al. (2017) point out that the challenges of online education, such as course effectiveness, student collaboration, and weak interactions between learners and educators, are also inevitable in Built Environment courses such as project and construction management unless the courses are well-designed and practical pedagogical education methods are used. By employing Foucault's concept of power and governmentality, we unveil and examine the power dynamics, technologies of power, surveillance, and resistance in this context and offer a deeper understanding of how power operates within HEIs to enable us to question and transform existing practices and the 'new normal'.

According to Foucault, managerial practices of performance evaluation and efforts to frame, regulate, and optimise academic life are examples of governmentality in the modern university system (Morrissey, 2013). Foucault (2007: 108) defines governmentality as an assemblage of "institutions, procedures…calculations, and tactics" that enable a particular kind of power that "has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument". In contrast to discipline, which aims to reform designated groups by close monitoring, it is an attempt to regulate human conduct through calculated measures (Li, 2007). We have attempted to understand Foucault's notions of governmentality and control and how they might be used to critically view managerialism as a manifestation or practice of surveillance in HEIs, particularly the Built Environment schools, by asking:

Emerging Managerial Practices During the Pandemic and the Pedagogic Landscape in Built Environment Courses in HEIs

To address the above, we consider Foucault's notion of power and governmentality in evaluating the emergence of normative and dominant regulatory tools centred on surveillance, transparency, accountability, performance, and audit cultures (Jarvis, 2014), as well as the increasing subjugation of the academy to regimes of assessment based on metrics that have manifested during online teaching. In the context of Built Environment courses, it is essential to explore how learners in this field perceive online learning, especially with the practical nature of the courses and the need to integrate site visits and maintain in-person interaction to learn effectively. Thus, we examine the relationship between educators and students and assess how the power and control are organised as the locus of teaching was shifted to a new realm.

The Context of the Built Environment Course Delivery

Learning online is not wholly new, and numerous previous research has sought to identify relationships between learning outcomes and the effectiveness of online learning (Gui et al., 2021; Stewart et al., 2017). Nonetheless, these studies have not addressed the differences in courses the learners are undertaking or their expectations, implicit or explicit, once they have enrolled. This exposes a major gap in which the pandemic intensified because learners and educators from different courses across HEIs in the UK were abruptly forced into the online learning and teaching space without any significant preparation or acclimatisation. Zhang et al. (2019) argue that in Built Environment courses, visualisation enhances communication and industry stakeholders, learners, and educators, leading to a better understanding of project objectives. The sector requires its graduates to have hands-experience and thus has always required experiential learning in pedagogies of Built Environment classrooms (Gnaur et al., 2015; Wu & Hyatt, 2016).

However, with most Built Environment courses, such as Construction management, architectural technology, Building Surveying, Quantity Surveying, and Project Management for Construction, learners are expected to achieve their learning outcomes through practical application of knowledge, self-directed inquiry-ed learning, and more importantly, work site visits (García-Alberti et al., 2021). Wong et al. (2021) contend that online education becomes more complicated when it comes to a project-based industry like construction because students need access to on-site experiences. The opportunities to access sites to expose learners to real-life construction projects are limited for several reasons, such as project timeline constraints and high safety risks.

As such, creative measures have been instituted to offer learners an opportunity to experience site dynamics without having to be on actual sites. These are simulations based on real-life events and are often delivered by industry practitioners and educators with knowledge from the construction sector. The Construction Industry Training Board (CBIT) has supported such initiatives that have developed simulation experiences for learners to further prepare them for the real world. For example,

project manager and site supervisor roles, as well as the cost implications of some of the choices made in projects. Some of these training centres have been used to train professionals working on the highly acclaimed Hinckley Point C nuclear power project.

Abbasnejad et al. (2023) add that despite the importance of integrating online learning into Built Environment courses, very few studies have reviewed the importance in the context of the pandemic and the 'new normal'. They add that, for example, construction management students are expected to conduct site visits, read and interpret construction drawings, design 3D models of buildings, use metric scalers, and apply construction standards on the job, and the majority of these skills necessitate in-person interaction and collaboration with peers or instructors. Professional bodies supporting such courses include the Chartered Institute of Building, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, and the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists, all set up criteria for developing the next generation of professionals, including face-to-face engagement with academic staff and site visits.

In contrast to other industries, even well-designed online learning resources may not offer students enough information to gain the requisite construction management skills (Wong et al., 2021). Nonetheless, it is crucial to recognise that internet communication technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques have been developed to improve student interactions and real-life site visits, particularly for construction management learners. Incorporating new educational concepts, techniques, and resources in the context of construction management is usually difficult because many complicated procedures in construction, such as drilling, boring underground, and laying piles, cannot be learned by theoretical content (Chan Paul Leong, 2021).

The Role of Surveillance and Power in Educational Discourse

In order to facilitate online learning after the lockdown was enacted across many countries worldwide, most universities rushed to implement the necessary digital infrastructure. However, recent research agrees

that educational institutions were not ready to immediately transition to remote emergency learning (Schuck & Lambert, 2020). However, it was ultimately up to the educators to determine how to implement online teaching, which meant adapting their pedagogical approaches to include new tools like video calls and screencast videos and introducing new ways for students to interact with their courses through mediums like online discussion forums and group tutorials. Ford (2003) argues that when it comes to power discourse in the classroom, educators are usually concerned with their perceived lack of power and perceived misuse of it. She adds that students' power and their 'right to exert control' over themselves and others have also gained prominence in the current educational discourse.

The transition to online teaching during the pandemic disrupted established power dynamics and introduced new challenges that affected the authority and control traditionally held by educators. *Discipline and Punish* by Michel Foucault has undoubtedly been cited the most frequently in critical analysis of education. Foucault presents the examination's normalising technique, which "detects, measures, and classifies the deviations of an individual and of individual development from a norm" (Gordon, 2009: xvii). Numerous researchers have discussed the impact of the shift to online teaching resulting from the pandemic in the context of student experience and the challenges they faced (Dost et al., 2020; Gopal et al., 2021). However, it is important to note, as Morrissey (2013) argues, that in universities today, the underlying desire to plan for uncertainty and maximise productivity in an increasingly competitive neoliberal economy underpins the prevalence of 'key performance indicators' and a prevalent performance management culture that seeks to enable, regulate, and ultimately govern the contemporary academic subject.

In the context of online pedagogies, the work of Foucault focuses on the processes of monitoring and control that exist within institutions (Foucault, 1977). Educators who teach online may have been subjected to increased surveillance methods such as monitoring of students' online activities, attendance tracking, or assessment proctoring. These compliance and engagement indicators can generate a sense of ongoing scrutiny and governance for learners as well as educators, affecting the power

relations in the virtual classroom. Furthermore, the concept of the panopticon, as depicted by Foucault, involves the internalisation of discipline through the perception of being constantly observed. Educators may have perceived a loss of power in the online teaching context as students' activity and engagement became less visible.

As Vaz and Bruno (2003) point out, the majority of the debate about modern surveillance technologies focuses on Foucault's theoretical concept of the 'panopticon'. They do, however, emphasise that, in addition to the description of the panopticon, "other theoretical propositions of Foucault's are helpful in the study of new practices and technologies" of any type of surveillance (Vaz & Bruno, 2003: 272). It is stated that the modern studies of surveillance often over-emphasise the panopticon and, in addition, technological characteristics in describing the historical developments and emphasise the surveillance of 'them' upon 'us'. The pandemic threw an unprecedented gaze on the area of education delivery, especially as parents and the wider society, who were detached from education, suddenly became exposed to what happened in academic institutions, especially via the media and government. This created a constant negotiation of the public and the private discourses on online teaching and educational institutions, complicating the pedagogical performances and sustaining increasing pressures on educators to perform to the expectations of students, colleagues, administrators, and even themselves (Stern, 2011).

It is evident that the sheer presence and implicit embrace of neoliberal discourses of individualisation and competitiveness in the broader academy today can explain universities' adoption of a performance management system for its academic staff, in which individual subjectivity and performance are repeatedly assessed, constructed, and normalised (Morrissey, 2013). Morrissey further argues that measuring and managing the performance of the educator, especially online where lectures and student interaction were likely recorded, serves both a pedagogic and a psychagogic purpose, in which the evaluative gaze has the power to shape the subject. Psychagogy, a term used by Foucault in his 1982 lectures in contrast to pedagogy, indeed constitutes a critical political practice with a specific emphasis on self-transformation and

iterative transformation of one's behaviour in connection to actual political conditions, distinguishing it from more modern views of education as a critical political practice (Dorzweiler, 2021). Thus, in universities, the advent of prevalent, templated performance, and teaching evaluation practices institutionalises effective pedagogic and psychagogic structures that gradually define the limits of academic subjectivity.

Managerialism in HEIs

Deem (1998) defines managerialism as attempting to comprehend and classify measures to impose managerial techniques on the public sector and voluntary organisations, usually associated with medium and large 'for profit' businesses. Thus, regulation of the higher education sector is a form of surveillance in which quality assurance functions as both an instrument of accreditation and a mechanism to compel compliance (Jarvis, 2014). Gordon (2009) rejects the notion that the neoliberal university is independent of interventionist, doctrinal, and state forms of governmentality, contending instead that the university is the site of the production of normalising 'knowledges'. In this regard, Morrissey (2013) agrees, arguing that if the job of the university is to produce the 'governability of society', or how to be governed, then this will extend to the institution's immediate subjects as well.

Therefore, in the case of the pandemic and the shift to online teaching and course delivery, it is beneficial to consider the interventional and preventative practices that were implemented and continue to exist in universities today. Teelken (2012) contends that universities are no longer viewed as ivory towers of intellectual pursuits and honest thought but rather as businesses driven by haughty individuals seeking to amass as much money and power as possible resulting from socio-economic and political developments. Universities throughout Europe have adopted private-sector organisational strategies, structures, technologies, management instruments, and values due to socio-economic and political developments (Deem, 1998).

Shepherd (2018) highlights the difficulty in defining managerialism, particularly in universities, because, as Teelin (2012) points out, the

features of New Public Management, which involve public institutions mirroring private-sector tactics, may predate managerialism. Deem et al. (2007), in an effort to explain the emergence of a more overt top-down corporate management approach in universities, have combined the terms neoliberalism and managerialism to identify the variant of 'New Managerialism' to further emphasise how 'governmentality' has seeped into governance and management practices of universities and colleges. All these developments have emerged in a space where academics have traditionally held positions of influence within universities, with the authority to regulate their own teaching and scholarship practices (Burawoy, 2005).

The emerging practices of the pandemic and the surveillance of online activities of both learners and educators thus represent a case of managerialism, particularly where the latter have increasingly been subjected to forms of surveillance, including through performance management systems (Le Grange, 2020). Le Grange (2020) even questions the terminologies around the online learning and pedagogies that have emerged during the pandemic. He remarks that platform pedagogy is frequently referred to as online learning (without the educator component), emphasising the learner as the client in the educational transaction. According to Peters (2013), contemporary universities have been used to support the 'new global economy' in the context of knowledge capitalism without engaging in much philosophical introspection. An example of this is the new funding models that were introduced by the coalition government in the UK in 2010, leading to greater student debt and the privatisation of higher education. The pandemic is seen by some educators in universities as part of a 'crisis trajectory' that has been going on since post-2009 (Mercille & Murphy, 2017; Shankar et al., 2021).

As per Al Mahameed et al. (2023), the pandemic acted as a driving force for a shift in ideology within universities, with the goal of modifying the culture of certain academic units and the responsibilities of the individuals within them. Under the guise of the 'new normal' and the shift to online teaching, managerialism has accelerated its entry into universities. This infiltration is depicted by the adoption of management principles and practices that prioritise efficiency, accountability, and

market-driven approaches within higher education institutions. Managerialism typically paves its way by characterising existing governance styles as obsolete and needing immediate reform (Kornberger & Carter, 2010; Mueller & Carter, 2007), including educational institutions (Connell, 2013).

Compliance and Resistance in Built Environment Course Delivery During the Pandemic

In the UK, HEIs have a long history of pioneering managerialism and market-inspired public sector reforms, such as the 'Research Excellence Framework' and 'Teaching Excellence Framework'. It is now typical to increase managerialism to meet the forms of measurement that such efforts demand (Al Mahameed et al., 2023). Managerialism in HEIs has been criticised, however, for its potential to prioritise short-term metrics and instrumentalise education. Critics argue that it may result in a narrow focus on specific outputs and a disregard for broader educational objectives (Klikauer, 2015; Vican et al., 2020). In addition, the pressure to meet managerial requirements can induce tension and add to educators' administrative responsibilities.

Because higher education has traditionally relied on personal, face-to-face connections between learners and educators, the COVID-19 pandemic had an immediate and significant impact on English universities and their abilities to attract more students.

The transition to online learning has resulted in administrative centralisation within universities where top-level management's decision-making authority has become centralised, resulting in bureaucratic systems prioritising efficiency and cost-effectiveness over academic autonomy and faculty involvement. This centralisation has constrained academic autonomy and stifled new innovative pedagogical approaches. Nonetheless, using Foucault's ideas, Gourlay (2015) argues that the rise of online technology has made open education achievable, liberating students from the restrictive and hierarchical syllabi offered by traditional

institutions of higher learning. In this sense, online education functions as a heterotopia of desire, democratising access to and participation in educational opportunities (Liu et al., 2022).

In the Built Environment courses across the UK HEIs, such as construction management, as mentioned in the earlier sections, face-to-face interactions and site visits are deemed necessary due to the nature of networking, safety exposure, and contextual understanding. The educator's role is not only viewed as invaluable due to the level of industry and theoretical expertise they offer but also because of their ability and knowledge in facilitating such access for the learners on their courses. Hence, when the pandemic resigned both parties to solely online learning, the educators found themselves in a vulnerable position. For instance, Underwood (2007) observed that as 'digital natives', students may be more proficient with technology than their 'digital immigrant' instructors and parents. Furthermore, educators in the Built Environment courses, such as construction management degrees, are often industry practitioners, and their students tend to value their practice-oriented teaching (Frank, 2005). Sandri and Holdsworth (2022) add that the pedagogy that shapes approaches in such courses' design and delivery is not only informed by assumptions made about the role of education, the teacher, and the learning process but also the experience and skills of the educator.

In this regard, Sandri and Holdsworth (2022) support the argument that critical thinking and self-transformation on the part of educators, particularly in Built Environment courses, can be well supported by a learner-centred approach in which the hierarchy of teacher over student is removed to create a critical learning community and equalise power in the traditional sense. Foucault (1977) argues that the notion of power is something that is exercised and argues that it is embedded in social relations, such as exist in educational institutions. Thus, the need to redress any balance between educators and learners in university courses, in the guise of the pandemic, is merely an opportunity for educational systems to foster an array of disciplinary practices (Anderson & Grinberg, 1998).

Anderson and Grinberg (1998) contend that the systematic study of any area is a form of disciplining. That is, attempts to construct a science of administration based on technical reasoning are behind the

separation of various areas of education on the grounds of differences in learner requirements. Foucault (1982) views researchers in education, like those in other disciplines, as engaging in 'dividing practices' that contribute to knowledge fragmentation and the development of a rationality which facilitates control. These dividing practices, according to Foucault, are intrinsically linked to systems of power and control. By dividing knowledge into specialised domains, institutions, and authorities can establish hierarchies, disciplinary mechanisms, and control mechanisms that govern and regulate individuals within those domains, particularly educators.

Through a Foucauldian Lens, compliance and resistance in Built Environment course delivery can be examined via the perspective of power relations, disciplinary mechanisms, and control techniques. Regarding compliance, educators and learners have been subject to rules and technologies of surveillance, tracking, and enforcement as disciplinary procedures meant to maintain control and order. Teelken (2012), however, suggests that educators often utilise 'symbolic compliance' to keep managerialism at a distance via adopting a pragmatic attitude of hovering between taking the developments for granted and completely embracing and accepting the managerial measures imposed upon them.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the new measures taken during the pandemic by HEIs in the UK to indicate the continuous presence and operation of power in educational contexts. The transition to online education necessitated the implementation of disciplinary mechanisms, surveillance practices, and the exercise of control, all of which have the potential to shape power relations inside the virtual learning environment. In this chapter, we also critically examined these approaches, particularly those enacted in the Built Environment courses, to assess how they may have perpetuated unequal power relations or stifled resistance, autonomy, and alternative forms of knowledge production.

The transition to online learning transformed power dynamics between educators and learners because of the physical separation.

Educators were forced to rely more on technical platforms and digital interfaces to assert their authority. This power dynamics shift gave learners new opportunities to oppose, negotiate, or evade control. Although this research does not adopt a student perspective, it is evident that where there have been issues of power and control on the educators, the learners often struggle. Through a Foucauldian lens, it is evident that measures of power and control exercised on educators can have severe consequences for students. Foucault's theories emphasise the interconnection of power relations and how they form and regulate individuals inside institutions. In the case of Built Environment course delivery, power dynamics in HEIs can influence the pedagogical approaches utilised by educators, particularly during the pandemic. In cases where educators are subjected to strict regulations or mandated curricula, they are often limited in their ability to adapt their teaching to fit the expectations of their learners, especially in Built Environment courses such as construction management, where students have particular expectations regarding course delivery and learning.

Overall, it is essential to note that from a student agency and autonomy perspective, when educators perceive power and control, it can impact learners' autonomy. Learners' sense of empowerment and ownership over their own learning may be eroded if they are subjected to intense surveillance, inflexible assessment practices, or limited independent thinking and decision-making possibilities. Learners may become passive, conformist, or unmotivated because of this. On the other hand, in terms of knowledge production and resistance, when educators are subjected to power and control, it might impede their ability to engage in critical pedagogies, develop open debate, or establish places for resistance and alternative forms of knowledge production. This can impact learners' ability to engage in critical thinking, challenge dominant discourses, and actively participate in their own education. Therefore, further research on cross-disciplinary learning and collaboration is warranted to explore how educators in Built Environment courses can engage with other departments or disciplines within their universities to exchange ideas, practices, and pedagogical approaches to adapt and enhance their teaching strategies in response to managerial pressures.

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9

Managerialism, Educational Equity, and Professional Development of Teachers: A Case of Grouplized Schools

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Introduction

The global pandemic has accelerated the global fragmentation of students, faculty, and educational institutions (Mutton, 2020). To promote education equality and the share of high-quality educational resources, school grouplization under the influence of managerialism has become a research focus in China (Fu, 2023). School grouplization in this study refers to a school community consisting of one famous school and several other schools.

At a macro level, school grouplization under managerialism influences has promoted educational equity, optimized the distribution of educational resources, and innovated and developed the school management system to some extent. For example, some scholars believe that school grouplization is an effective way to promote educational equity because it expands the fair opportunity for disadvantaged groups in society to

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enjoy high-quality education (Yang, 2014; Yu, 2006). School grouplization effectively expands high-quality resources in China's compulsory education system, and to a certain extent mitigates the long-standing uneven distribution of compulsory education resources in China. Zhou (2005) pointed out that the sharing of educational resources can be achieved through the redistribution of both educational funds and human resources such as personnel transfer, teacher exchange programs. In addition, school grouplization makes more schools integrate ideas in market economy development into school administration philosophy, applying modern enterprise management system to school management, and making the management of each school more standardized, institutionalized, professional, and modern.

At a micro level, school grouplization is conducive to the implementation of teacher professional development activities and has the potential to improve the overall teaching quality of the entire school group. Scholars summarized the positive effects of school grouplization on teachers as follows: school grouplization brings teachers from individual schools to a larger platform created by the group. Frequent inter-school communication and exchange activities enrich teachers' experience (Guo & Cheng, 2020). Professional development activities organized by school groups could increase teaching, research, and project collaboration among schools, create opportunities for teachers to flow between schools and learn from different teachers, and improve the teaching quality of the entire group.

Existing research mainly expects or rationalizes the potential benefits of school grouplization for teacher professional development. Little is known about the practice in these school groups. This study, thus, examines the professional development activities at a school group in Shanghai, China. It focuses on teachers' perspectives on professional development under school grouplization as an embodiment of managerialism.

From Traditional Managerialism to New Managerialism

Managerialism and constitutionalism are the two main governance models in the practice of administration. Managerialism has undergone the discussion from traditional managerialism to new managerialism. Traditional managerialism emerged mainly in the late period of the Industrial Revolution, and its core lies in standardization in order to maximize production efficiency and profit. British scholar Carter (1991) earlier summarized the core connotation of managerialism as "let managers manage" (p. 7), underlining the importance and independence of management as well as management specialization and professionalism. Carter believed that good management can reduce waste, concentrate resources, and improve organizational performance. In the ideal state of managerialism, goals are clear, people are highly motivated, costs are regulated, and red tape is diligently reduced. Hubbard (1995) summarized the content of managementism model into a trend of differentiation from administration to management, policy formulation and implementation, improvement and strengthening of financial management and control. Zhang and Liu (2007) argued that managerialism is a knowledge system filled by many management theories under the belief of "management first". Its main characteristics include supremacy of efficiency, generalization of management, instrumental rationality, and depoliticization of public administration. Hughes (1998) argued that the management of public sectors in developed countries has changed from traditional administrative mode based on the bureaucracy to a new public management mode based on market.

The new managerialism mainly appeared in the late 1960s and 1970s, and its core lies in organizational culture, human resources, and social responsibility on organizational efficiency and benefit. Drucker (1954) advocated that managers should pay attention to factors such as organizational culture, employee welfare, and social responsibility to achieve long-term organizational success. Senge (1991) used the term learning organization to describe an organization that constantly learns and innovates in order to adapt to the changing market and environment. Owen (2004) called a series of reform measures since the 1980s as

"new managerialism". British scholar Hood (1991) used a similar term "new public management" to explain the worldwide trend of government management reform movements led by the Great Britain and the United States. According to Hood, managerialism features hands-on professional management in public sectors, explicit standards and evaluation of performance, greater emphasis on output controls, and greater emphasis on discipline and parsimony in the use of resources. Farber (1993) added entrepreneur government—a government features mission, effectiveness, foresight, decentralization, and market-orientation—to the new managerialism. Ewan et al. (1997) categorized the new public management model into four types: efficiency driven, downsizing and decentralization, searching for excellence, and public service-oriented. New managerialism is a market-based approach that embraces both government regulation and market mechanism (or quasi-market or quasi-market mechanism). It aims to introduce competition, promote the privatization of public services, implement performance assessment, and reduce direct government regulation.

In general, the core of managerialism is the supremacy of efficiency. The difference between traditional managerialism and new managerialism is mainly reflected in the means to achieve efficiency. Traditional managerialism is committed to realizing administrative efficiency through bureaucracy, emphasizing the organization's mechanism and standardization, and paying attention to work efficiency and production efficiency. While new managerialism emphasizes the deconstruction of traditional bureaucracy through enterprise management methods. It also emphasizes the organization's humanization and culturalization, and pays attention to employees' psychological needs and social responsibilities, to further realize administrative efficiency. Managerialism and school grouplization.

The new managerialism permeates global educational reforms. New managerialism is an idea or ideology that prioritizes market needs, emphasizes standardization, and attaches importance to consumer choice. School grouplization features new managerialism in its administration. School grouplization is one of the trends in China's current education reforms. As a new form of school organization, school grouplization is gradually being implemented and popularized in China.

The essence of school grouplization is to integrate multiple schools together to form an educational group, optimize educational resources, and improve the overall quality of education.

The characteristics of school grouplization mainly include: resource integration, school collaboration unified management system teacher development through exchange and inter-school collaboration, and reduce education inequality through resource integration and management. In addition, the schools, as a unified institution, provide high-quality education services to the society and enhance the overall social image of the whole group. School grouplization is an embodiment of managerialism in the field of education because of the emphasis on (1) standardized management, (2) effective information sharing mechanism, (3) accountability, and (4) shared value and school culture. To be specific, the complexity and difficulty of management increase with the increased number in schools. Standardized management is to ensure the smooth connection/transition of various management work at different schools. The standardization also ensures efficient resource distribution and coordination. An efficient information sharing mechanism among all schools keeps administrators at different schools on the same page. The accountability system is to ensure that each school develops targeted management objectives and plans according to the school group's vision as well as the specificity of each individual school. School grouplization requires the establishment of common cultural values to keep all schools consistent in ideology, management, and culture. It is the glue of a school group.

Teacher's Professional Development in China

Scholars in China developed various definitions for teachers' professional development. Ye (2015) considers teacher professional development as a process teachers update, evolve, and enrich their internal professional structure. Zhu (2002, 2003) argue that teacher's professional development is a process of professional maturation based on the improvement and perfection of professional qualities including knowledge, skills, beliefs, emotions, and a transition of professional identity. Liu (2003)

points out that teacher's professional development is a dynamic process of continuous improvement and enhancement of teacher's professional knowledge, abilities, and belief system, driven by their professional awareness. Liu adds that teacher education programs are the main auxiliary approach to professional development. Zuo (2014) considers a teacher's professional development a lifelong learning process in different environments. Its learning outcomes are reflected in the transformation of teachers' concepts and teaching practices.

Currently, research on the influencing factors of professional development in China often categorizes teachers into different types and examines influencing factors according to the types. For example, some scholars (e.g., Lei, 2012; Li, 2014; Tang, 2006; Wei, 2014) have analyzed teachers at novice stage and expert stage and found that factors such as professional identity, educational beliefs, reflection, learning awareness, management systems, training and further education, and school organizational culture have a greater impact on novice teachers whereas motivation, autonomy, self-efficacy, reflective ability, as well as external factors such as schools, families, and society have a greater impact on expert teachers. Others (Li, 2005; Yan, 2013) have classified teachers according to subjects they teach. Although some factors are generally universal, these studies focus on subject differences during the professional growth process. For example, professional self-confidence, sense of achievement, sense of belonging, student sources, class hours, further education, and training have the greatest impact to the teacher who teaches core subjects like mathematics; while to non-key subject teachers, they are often limited in their development due to the constraints of the exam-oriented education model.

The internal–external dichotomy is also a commonly accepted classification method among scholars in this field. This method no longer categorizes teachers, but rather groups the influencing factors into two aspects: internal and external. Internal factors refer to a teacher's professional cognition, emotion, and consciousness whereas external factors include environment, management, and systems. Hao (2008) summarizes the internal factors that influence teacher's professional development as educational views, self-efficacy, understanding of professional development, and professional preparedness; external factors include teacher

education systems and management evaluation systems. Feng and Song (2014) believes that the internal factors are professional identity, career development motivation, self-awareness of professional development, and self-efficacy; external factors include education policy environment, school organizational culture, and school professional support environment.

Different scholars have different perspectives on what should be included in teacher's professional development. However, they generally agreed that a teacher's professional growth is a special process that does not simply increase with teaching experiences. It requires teachers to consciously develop and invest in extra time and efforts. Therefore, it is particularly important for researchers to identify those factors. Classifying teachers into different categories before the study fully respects teachers as special individuals and values their own development potentials. However, simply classifying the influencing factors into internal and external factors may separate them arbitrarily. Internal and external factors are inter-dependent and teachers are special individuals. Therefore, this study will not categorize influencing factors into internal or external.

Impact of School Grouplisation on Teacher Professional Development

Although studies on teacher professional development are plenty, limited studies examine professional development in grouplized schools. Researchers tended to report positive effects of school grouplization on teacher's professional development instead of portraying a more balanced account. Even if some literature mentions negative effects, they are only in a supplementary position. For example, Zhang (2015) specifically expounds on effective methods for promoting teacher professional development within an educational community in terms of teacher team building and the "clustering" effect within a team.

The findings are based on the experience of Yancheng No.1 Primary School Education Group. Xu (2018) studied 175 teachers in Jing'an

District of Shanghai Education Group and focused on the effectiveness of teacher professional development under school grouplization. The results indicate that teacher's developed their willingness to collaborate, extended their compatibility with teachers from different schools, and honed their pedagogical skills. This research also discovered issues such as a lack of belonging and increased burden on key teachers within the group but without elaboration in detail. Some studies depicted the utopian picture and ideal operating mode of an educational group. For example, Luo (2017) believes that an ideal school organization that promotes teacher professional development should have three characteristics: a flat organizational structure, an "adult" operational mechanism, and a cooperative organizational culture. These studies underline the impact of collectivism on teacher's professional development and neglect the differences between schools within a school group. These studies are mostly conceptual and empirical studies are needed in this area. To address such gaps, this study adopts a case study approach and explores the impact of school grouplization on professional development.

S Education Group

S Education Group was founded in 2015 with full investment from J finance group. S Education Group is a well-known brand in K-12 education in East China with SW Primary and Middle Schools as its main body schools (key schools). These two schools as the source and foundation for the entire group in terms of school culture and administration. In addition, S education group commits to provide high-quality educational services for K-12 education.

The group integrates Chinese and international education beliefs and aims to establish "century-old famous schools". S Education Group has rich experience in school managing and advocates standardized and efficient campus management. In addition, the group actively explores "Internet+" education as a way to learning as well as management.

At the end of 2022, S Education Group has established schools in more than ten cities. The group has also been entrusted by regional governments to manage a number of schools in more than seven

provinces in China, providing educational and managerial services for primary and secondary schools in these areas. S Education Group not only established multiple private schools, but also oversees the development of other education-related services such as S Education Development Services Co., Ltd. (providing trusteeship services for various public schools at all levels), S Wisdom Education Technology Co., Ltd. (providing online education platforms with courses and technical development consultancy to primary and secondary schools and other education institutions), and J Information Technology Co., Ltd. (providing logistical services to S Education Group). Recently, the group is actively promoting a "smart campus" education model through "Internet+" education.

As stated on its official website, the group is proud of its standardized and refined management, rich curriculum resources, and a high-quality faculty team to provide excellent education services to various districts in Shanghai, East China, and even across the country. It features a development model of core leadership, resource integration, and cultural sharing. S Education Group is currently a well-reputed education group with moderate scale and outstanding educational benefits.

The reason for selecting S Education Group as the research object lies in the completeness of the school types within the group. The member schools of S Group include the flagship schools, affiliated schools, and entrusted schools, covering both private and public schools. S Education Group almost encompasses all kinds of schools in China. Therefore, research on S Education Group represents comprehensive school environments. While enjoying the resources and benefits brought by group-based schooling, the teachers in S Education Group also face conflicts and confusion in their professional development, which may provide rich information and new understanding for researches on teacher professional development.

School Types

The founding of the flagship schools is the driving force behind the brand. These schools lead the development and growth of the education group. The flagship schools were established before the group. In other words, the entire education group was built on the model of the flagship schools. Although S Education Group rooted its service in education, it is essentially a commercial group seeking for profits, which is achieved through school expansion and branding. The establishment of affiliated schools served this purpose. Affiliated schools also bear the responsibility of promoting the group's excellent educational concepts and building a good reputation for the group.

Therefore, affiliated schools hold high standards in its governance from the beginning and also receive resource support from the flagship schools directly, such as high-quality curriculum resources, excellent management concepts, and talents input. Affiliated schools are expected to inherit and expand the flagship schools' legacy. Entrusted schools have a cooperative relationship with the group and this cooperation usually takes place in the senior leadership team of the trustee-schools. The most common forms of cooperation are for the group to provide teachers to participate in or be responsible for the management, curriculum planning, and student enrollment of the entrusted schools. Entrusted schools can be divided into two types: private and public. Although both accept the S Education Group's trusteeship, due to the differences in their private and public nature, private entrusted schools are more like affiliated schools, while public-entrusted schools are more constrained by the national and regional education administrative departments. For example, private schools can use more of the group's featured courses to attract students, while public schools mostly follow traditional teaching methods. Therefore, in terms of the degree of connection, the connection between public-entrusted schools and the Group is the weakest.

Participating Teachers

A total of 13 teachers from the S Education Group, including 5 teachers from affiliated private schools, 5 teachers from entrusted public schools, 2 teachers from entrusted private schools, and 1 administrative staff from the group. The interviewees all have bachelor's degrees or above, with 3 of them having a master's degree in education and 1 in public administration. The main subject taught by the interviewees is science (natural), with an average of about 15 teaching sessions per week, and the teacher with the most teaching sessions teaches up to 20 sessions per week. Additionally, most teachers need to undertake cross-grade teaching tasks. In addition to teaching, teachers are also responsible for technology festivals, science clubs, science popularization lectures, scientific research competitions, and other technology-related work in their schools. Furthermore, some teachers are also responsible for administrative tasks such as team building, procurement for schools, and academic affairs. For easy reference, we have compiled the information of the interviewees into Table 9.1.

Data Analysis

The data for this study was sourced from interview records of the participants. The authors conducted preliminary interviews with 13 research participants. The interview is semi-structured. The interview questions were modified based on the actual situation of the interviews. The team identified factors that may affect the professional development under school grouplization. In addition, the team entered the research site and conducted a one-year field investigation, observed teaching sessions and after-class activities, and facilitated six professional development events. The interview content mainly focused on two aspects: the teacher's experience working at a grouplized school and the impact on teacher professional development.

The analysis focuses on three aspects. The first aspect is the overall experience of 13 teachers. They are teachers in one education group. We attempt to find out the differences they've experienced after joining in a

Table 9.1 Participant information

School type	Number	Teaching volume/week	Grades	Daily work	
				Teaching	Administration
Affiliated school (S1)	A1	16	3	1. Curriculum design 2. Scientific competition	1. Class teacher
	A2	16	2	1.PBL design 2. Scientific competition	
	A5	17	3	1. PBL design 2. Scientific festival 3. Extracurricular activities	1. Procurement 2. Reimbursement 3. Management
	A9	18–20	2	1. Scientific festival 2. Scientific competition	1.Deputy class teacher 2. Party building
	A13	8	2	1. Scientific competition	
Public-entrusted school (S2)	A3	15–16	1	1. Scientific festival 2. Scientific competition 3. Extracurricular activities	1.club
	A4	16	1	1. Curriculum research 2. Scientific competition	1. Dean’s office leadership
	A6	14	2	1. Scientific festival 2. Extracurricular activities	1. Deputy class teacher

School type	Number	Teaching volume/week	Grades	Daily work	
				Teaching	Administration
	A7	13–14	1	1. Scientific festival 2. Scientific competition 3. Extracurricular activities	1. Deputy class teacher
	A12	14	1	1. Scientific festival 2. Scientific competition 3. Extracurricular activities 4. Curriculum research	
Private-entrusted school (S3)	A8	15	4	1. Scientific competition 2. Extracurricular activities	
	A11	18–19	2	1. Scientific festival	1. Deputy class teacher 2.Club

Note Interviewee A10 is a group administration without undertaking teaching tasks, so he is not included in this table

groupliized school, especially the differences on their professional development. The second dimension focuses on teachers in different school types (flagship school: S0; affiliated school: S1; entrusted public school: S2; entrusted private school: S3), investigating teachers' experience in different school types. The third aspect focuses on the subject matter, i.e., how grouplization influences science teachers' professional development.

The findings indicated that (1) according to participating teachers, school grouplization has a positive impact on teacher development by utilizing its abundant resources, effective management, and good reputation; however, too many activities within the group consume a large amount of teachers' energy, leaving them little time to focus on professional development; the education group's resources are not well-distributed according to teachers in different types of schools, and the teacher evaluation standards are inconsistent, leading to implicit inequality between different types of schools within the group and (2) the education group is influenced by the flagship school and has varying degrees of emphasis on different subjects, limiting the development of teachers in marginal disciplines such as science.

Findings on Overall Professional Development

The S Education Group provides teachers with a variety of learning opportunities, including teaching skill training, competitions, open-lectures, and inter-school exchanges. Teachers can utilize the multiple platforms catering to their professional growth needs. the teachers consider S Education Group a resource-rich treasure trove.

> Because the platform of our group is very large, I can use it to obtain some awards or to improve myself, which is helpful. I can take the essence of it. If I think it's suitable for me, I will do it. If it's not suitable for me, I won't do it. Anyway, the platform is very large and can accommodate a lot of things. (A3, interview expert)

> The teaching methods of S Education Group are very advanced. They have done a great job in Project-Based Learning in science and give students full autonomy. We try to learn from these teaching concepts and methods and apply them in our own teaching practices. Although there may still be a gap between us and the group, we will strive to learn some of their advanced methods and concepts, which will bring about significant changes to ourselves. (A4, interview excerpt).

> It can be said that the education group has promoted my career development. The rich educational resources and training opportunities within the group can help me go further on the path of career development. (A5, interview excerpt)

While these activities provide rich resources for teachers, they also create additional workload for them. As seen from the table we have compiled, the interviewed teachers have a heavy workload, not only in teaching but also in class management, school administration, and other routine tasks. In addition, science and technology festivals and research competitions are also interwoven into their daily work. On top of that, when the group issues task requirements to teachers, it inevitably overburdens teachers, leading to dissatisfaction. If activities, workshops, and events are held online, there are "relatively flexible ways" for teachers to handle these activities during the COVID-19. But once these events are held offline, participating teachers need to put aside their tasks at hand and rush to the venue, which itself is a trouble. Moreover, the geographic scope of the schools covered by the group is very wide, and some schools are very far away from the activity venues. This makes it even more difficult for teachers in terms of traveling time and distance. Negative emotions are quite common among the interviewed teachers for the reasons above.

> Sometimes, I am not very willing to attend the training provided by the group when the workload at school is heavy. Our school is quite far away from S Education Group. And if I go there, I will spend a lot of time on the road. After the training, I am not able to complete many of my school tasks. So I often have to work overtime. Although occasional overtime is acceptable, frequent overtime working can be harmful to my health. So I hope that many of the group's training sessions can be held online. If the

> training is online, those who want to participate can definitely achieve the desired effect, and those who do not want to participate will not waste their time. (A2, interview excerpt)

> Teachers usually have to arrange substitutions when they are absent from school. This can be a challenging task because every teacher is busy with their own work, and people may not be willing to substitute for you. This is the major issue. Because some teachers find it stressful to take on extra work and may resent you if you frequently ask for substitutions. If you ask for substitutions too often, they may start to think that you are not reliable. Although teachers are generally willing to attend training sessions organized by the group, they have many classes to teach every day, and it is difficult to find time to attend these training sessions. (A4, interview excerpt)

> It is inevitable that there will be some training sessions that increase teachers' workload in addition to regular teaching, such as annual training on professional ethics or other training that is unrelated to teaching. We are required to participate in these trainings, and it often takes up our time after work. Therefore, some teachers may not be very willing to accept these trainings. (A9, interview excerpt)

> As we have only been with the group for one year, what we feel the most is that work has been constantly added on without organizing and improving. Maybe the outcome of what we are doing can't be seen in a short term. But the most obvious change to us is that there are now more things to do. I don't think all the things we've done before are absolutely fit and must be maintained. During the entire process, we should also have a selection process instead of blindly holding onto everything we are doing and adding new tasks on top of it. (A12, interview excerpt)

Opfer and colleagues (2011) emphasize the important influence of school environment on teacher learning. They believe that teachers' attitudes are influenced not only by personal factors, but also by the institutional environment of the school. Creating continuous opportunities for teachers to learn, encouraging communication, cooperation and team learning among teachers, and creating platforms for resource sharing can all contribute to the development of teachers and schools. However,

Zhou (2014) found that teachers' time and resources are the important guarantee for the effectiveness for professional development. Education groups emphasize the former but neglect the latter, leading to an idealized imagination of professional development among teachers in the group, which overlooks the survival reality of teachers and unconsciously amplifies the time and resources that teachers can allocate on their own. Therefore, many professional development activities are merely a format and have not achieved practical results, and may even have negative effects.

Mismatch of Educational Group Resources and Inconsistent Teacher Evaluation Standards

Teachers consider the training and resources provided by the education group are suitable for affiliated schools, but not for entrusted schools. The main goal of the training provided by the group is to impart the teaching philosophy and campus culture of its flagship schools. The professional development activities are universal to all types of schools. For teachers in the affiliated schools, they can smoothly transfer what they have learned from these activities to their own school as these schools were constructed and managed similar to the flag schools. They may even subconsciously believe that the differences among schools are not significant, and the training can be applied to actual teaching for all of them.

> In fact, the differences between the schools are not very significant. We mainly focus on teaching content, curriculum, and teaching methods. Therefore, what the head office provides us is generally consistent and does not take the differences between the schools into account. Each school will bring back what they have learned and implement it in conjunction with their own school's characteristics. (A5, S1, interview expert)

> If I have any ideas or needs related to teaching, I can directly communicate with my leaders. And the requests will be granted easily if it is reasonable. (A5, S1, interview expert)

However, for teachers in entrusted schools, the professional development activities are too complex and inapplicable. There is a large gap between what they've learnt and what they really want. It's difficult to apply the things they learned into their actual teaching. Therefore, the teachers in entrusted schools do not see the same value of the training as teacher from affiliated schools.

> Our school is a public school, so we still need to focus on national curriculum and our management style is relatively traditional. So, their teaching and management styles may not be very compatible with our school. What's more, we are a rural primary school and the quality of our students is much lower compared to the students in flagship schools. Therefore, we can't accept their concepts. (A4, S2, interview expert)

> The S Education Group sent an English expert to lead our school's English curriculum, but his teaching approach was rejected by our English teachers because they felt that his teaching philosophy and curriculum system were not suitable for our students. However, he persisted in his ideas. When faced with such problems, as school leaders, it is difficult for us to mediate. We must respect the opinions of the group's expert, so. We try to persuade our teachers to listen to his arrangement and mediate the conflict. It's the only thing we can do. (A4, S2, interview expert)

> The students in flagship schools are different from those in ordinary public primary schools. The former has strong learning ability and comprehensive competence. So, their teachers require them to be independent and self-directed, which means that teachers may not give instructions and students have to solve problems through small group discussions and cooperation. However, the latter can't meet these requirements. If he insists on this teaching method, it is a limitation on me or it will be difficult for me to achieve the teaching goal. After all, students need to absorb knowledge. If not, it will just be a performance with no meaning. (A3, S2, interview expert)

School grouplization is a systematic education reform that requires integrating different types of schools into a group, sharing resources, and complementing each other's strengths to improve the overall teaching quality. However, there are some adaptability issues in implementation, especially on the use of training resources between different types of schools within the group. For teachers in the entrusted schools, their teaching content and environment may be different from the teachers in other types of schools in the group. Therefore, the group's resources are not suitable for them. Furthermore, due to administrative hierarchy and social relationships, the communication between the entrusted schools and the flagship schools is lacking, which is also an important factor exacerbating the problem of resource mismatch.

While the evaluation is overly strict toward private school teachers, the group adopts an incentive approach to motivate teachers in public schools. In addition to the issue of resource mismatch, the strictness of the reward and evaluation system in the group varies for the teachers from different schools. For public schools, the group can only make few adjustments in their existing administrative management system, so the group implements a performance incentive system instead to raise teachers' moral. Teachers from public-entrusted schools (S2) stated that the incentive system of the group can improve teachers' initiative and teaching enthusiasm, and even their quality of life to some extent.

> The S Education Group has introduced an additional teachers' performance assessment to motivate our initiative and enthusiasm. This assessment is divided into first, second, and third prizes based on a proportional hierarchy, with appropriate cash rewards. This is a significant change for our school. (A6, S2, interview expert)

For teachers in private schools, however, the system is overly harsh. The original reward and punishment system in private schools is more severe than that in public schools. Private schools transplant the reward and punishment system of the group directly into themselves after joining in the group, which means teachers in private schools are working under dual reward and punishment systems. In the interview, we found that the anxiety of private school teachers toward punishment far exceeds

their expectations for rewards. Such a strict system greatly reduces the enthusiasm of some teachers in private entrusted schools.

> It is impossible for people not to make any mistakes in their work. However, it is important to consider how the mistakes are viewed and what level of punishment is appropriate. For example, if one complaint by parents means half a year's bonus (equivalent to 20,000 yuan) deduction, I think it is quite heavy and it will also result in a disciplinary record in the personnel profile. Such a thing can easily make a teacher maintain a certain distance from the school, which is not good. I do not like this kind of system. Moreover, when this kind of system is implemented, the only thing teachers can do is to be more careful in their teaching. However, when your life and work are full of fear, or driven by fear, you may leave this place soon. (A1, S3, interview expert)

In the management of an education group, teachers expected the evaluation system to be fair, transparent, and consistent for all. However, in practice, differences in teaching environments, conditions, and other factors among different schools may lead to inconsistencies in evaluation standards. This may create feelings of unfairness among teachers in affiliated schools, which undermines their motivation and enthusiasm for work and even leads to thoughts of resignation.

In general, "uniformity" is the biggest feature of the education group. Through a unified administrative system, the group coordinates teaching concepts, school management, and educational research. It can maximize the sharing of resources. The biggest advantages of this school governance are vertical and efficient, and it is particularly suitable for education groups of a certain scale. However, when the group expands further and involves public schools, emphasis on "uniformity" becomes somewhat ineffective. Firstly, "uniformity" makes weak resource adaptability, unable to meet the needs of teachers in different types of schools, which is one of the sources of "implicit inequality". Secondly, due to the issue of management rights, "uniform" management cannot be achieved in public schools, especially on teacher's evaluation. Therefore, the group has to move from "uniformity" to "non-uniformity" in this area, which results in "implicit inequality" between teachers in different schools.

How to make education groups better adapt to the development of teachers from different schools during the expansion process is an urgent problem that needs to be addressed in school grouplization.

Teacher Development in Marginal Disciplines

Although there are many opportunities for communication and exchange within the education group, most activities revolve around the key subjects (Chinese Mathematics, and English), especially English. It is quite difficult for minor-subject teachers to obtain relevant resources. The participating teachers in this study are mostly science teachers. Science is a marginal subject in all provinces in China except for Zhejiang province. Therefore, professional development activities at the group rarely feature science teachers. Science teachers received limited professional guidance from the group and can only rely on their own exploration. To make matters worse, some schools in Zhejiang would hire experts from outside to pair up with their own teachers for mentorship before joining the group in order to meet the development needs of their teachers. However, after joining the group, these external experts were replaced by the group's internal teachers, and mentorship in subjects like Chinese, Math, and English could be found within the group, but there were few experienced teachers for science courses in the group, so this growth path for science teachers was cut off as well.

> S Education Group is a foreign language elementary school which pays a lot of attention to English teaching. So, the whole group pays much attention to English. (A4, interview expert).

> S Education Group seems to place more emphasis on English, so there aren't many activities focused on science. So far, I have only attended one training session organized by our group, which was a training on science conducted by a university. There seem to be few trainings specifically for science. I haven't taken part in more competitions or events related to science since joining in S Education Group. (A6, interview expert)

> Before joining in S Education Group, there was a mentorship program in our school. Although there weren't enough experienced science teachers in our school, the leaders would hire famous teachers who were not too far away from us as our mentors. They would come and observe our classes for 2–3 times each year, and then give us some suggestions to make us grow better. We also had regular communication. However, after being taken over, it seems that major subjects, like Chinese, Mathematics, and English, all have their own in-school mentors to guide them. So, the external mentors like this have not continued. As a result, teachers like us don't have professional guidance. (A6, interview expert)

Ding et al. (2021) found that high correlation between teacher happiness and professional development opportunities and access to resources, far higher than salary levels and school funding. This indicates that a teacher's sense of happiness is determined by the opportunities they have for professional development and the abundant resources they can access to. The group positions itself as a Chinese-characteristic international education system. The emphasis is on "international education". Thus, English is the most highly valued subject in the group. Meanwhile, in the current framework of exam-oriented education, Chinese, Math, and other exam-driven subjects also occupy a pivotal position within the group system. In comparison, the investment and support for other subjects are relatively little. This could lead to the limitation on the development of teachers who teach marginal disciplines within the group and a significant decrease in their sense of professional happiness. As a result, they are unable to obtain the same support and resources as key subject teachers, lack opportunities to communicate with experienced teachers outside the school group, and have difficulty in further improvement on their career.

Conclusions

The differences in hardware and software of the school and the vertical management system lead to the lack of feedback from the group on teachers. In an enterprise, the use of vertical management is for its easy control and management, rapid information transfer, and high degree

of specialization. At the same time, there are some disadvantages. (1) High management cost. Because the cooperation between departments requires frequent communication and coordination, the management cost of vertical management mode is usually high. (2) Low innovation ability: Vertical management mode is usually conservative and traditional, and the acceptance and application of new ideas, new concepts, and new technologies are relatively slow. (3) Low organizational flatness: the organizational structure of vertical management mode is generally more complex and hierarchical, so it often lacks flexibility and adaptability. Managerialism advocates the organization and management of enterprises through division of labor, hierarchy, responsibility, system, and other ways to achieve the maximum degree of efficiency and benefits. One of the most important is vertical management system.

The parent schools of S Education Group have an excellent student base and are located in Shanghai, an international metropolis, with excellent hardware, and software facilities. In the process of its grouplization, it keeps learning international excellent and advanced teaching models. With the comprehensive support of students, facilities, and teaching concepts, it can achieve many teaching objectives and teaching styles that are difficult for ordinary schools to achieve. For some directly affiliated schools in Shanghai, due to the similarity of their location, they can carry out similar teaching mode. But for trusteeship schools, especially public trusteeship schools, the hardware conditions are difficult to match up with parent schools, and student academic performance and the school management system do not match the parent schools. Teachers in different types of schools in the group face large gaps in student performance, school hardware and software conditions while participating similar professional development activities.

Shanghai S Education Group currently has more than 50 schools, including direct schools and trusteeship schools. With such a huge organization, there are many levels of management within the group. The distance between the upper management and teachers is relatively long and the feedback information is not transmitted directly, which makes it difficult for teachers to understand their own problems and deficiencies in a timely manner. In addition, a large system makes it difficult to get effective guidance and help. Remote schools and trusteeship schools

are more susceptible to this problem due to geographical distance and management differences.

Vertical management system in this study resulted in poor feedback transmission, which have a negative impact on teacher growth. Therefore, S Education Group can consider adopting a more open and flexible management mode in which teachers can easily report problems and needs to the upper management, and at the same time, the upper management can better understand the actual situation and needs of teachers. The group should establish an effective and specialized feedback mechanism more extensively to ensure that the problems and deficiencies of teachers can be timely conveyed to the upper management for targeted help and guidance. Teachers are encouraged to actively participate and put forward constructive comments and suggestions so that teachers have more say in the development and management of the group. Secondly, the Group should strengthen the management and support for remote schools and trustee-schools, including strengthening the attention and communication to these schools, providing more matching training and resources, to ensure that teachers can get effective help and support in teaching and development.

The profit-seeking nature of the group produces a reward and punishment mechanism that affects teachers' enthusiasm. Managerialism emphasizes efficiency and effectiveness. Such emphasis aligns with the goal of an organization for profits or other forms of benefits. Therefore, its profit-seeking essence is mainly embodied in the pursuit of maximum efficiency in a short time. Managerialism usually pursues short-term interests and ignores long-term sustainability.

In S education group, the profit-seeking nature of the group generates a unified reward and punishment evaluation system on teachers in different types of schools. For example, if the reward and punishment evaluation system put too much emphasis on teaching results and student test scores, then the parent schools and some affiliated schools are more likely to achieve good results and thus get more rewards and opportunities. For remote schools and trustee-schools, due to the lack of teachers and hardware conditions, their scores may be relatively low, and teachers in these schools may face more punishment and pressure.

In addition, the evaluation system only focuses on short-term teaching results and does not pay attention to the long-term development and professional growth of teachers. Some teachers of non-key subjects and general education may be affected. They pay attention to the foundation and quality cultivation of students instead of test scores in the teaching process, and the achievements in these aspects may not be reflected in a short term. Therefore, the evaluation system needs to consider the actual situation and needs of different teachers and cannot simply evaluate teachers based on student performance as the only standard.

The geographical location of parent schools and non-parent schools leads to the limited development of teacher groups in different disciplines. S education group is founded by parent schools, which may have strengths and resources in some subject areas and therefore may value these subjects over other subjects. As a result, the professional development of teachers in non-key disciplines is limited. They may not have access to the same support and resources as teachers in key disciplines, lack opportunities to communicate with other peers, and find it difficult to further improve their teaching.

S Education Group is located in Shanghai, focusing on English and international teaching, and its advantage resources are concentrated in English, mathematics, and English subjects. In Shanghai, there is no provincial level entrance examination for science, but in Zhejiang, there is a high school entrance examination for science, and the paper scores account for the largest proportion among all subjects. For science teachers in Zhejiang, joining the group reduced the support and resources from the group and, at the same time, they still need to maintain high-level student academic performance. Therefore, education groups should focus on teacher development in all subject areas and ensure that they all have access to appropriate support and resources to improve education standards across the group.

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10

The Anathema of Digital Divide in the Nigerian Higher Education: Lessons from the Pandemic

Hakeem Adeniyi Ajonbadi, Femi Stephen Olawoyin, and Olatunji David Adekoya

Introduction

The impetuous and widespread emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically impacted every aspect of human life (Correia, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges across different sectors, forcing most of them to adapt rapidly to various changes in the delivery of goods and services (Laufer et al., 2021; Modeme & Adeogun, 2021). According to Van de Werfhorst et al. (2022), one of the most affected sectors was education, particularly higher education, as educational institutions had to resort to online platforms to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on academic activities. As a result, there has been a global disruption and abrupt shift in the educational sphere,

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with conventional modes of learning transcending into virtual settings. While several institutions across the globe have adapted seamlessly to this transformation due to their advanced digital infrastructure, Nigerian higher education has confronted significant challenges. The tenacious issue of the digital divide in Nigeria has been amplified, revealing the stark disparities between learners who can access digital resources and those who lack this capability—an anathema that must be vigorously addressed (Odularu et al., 2023).

The concept of the digital divide refers to the inequality in accessing technology, digital resources, and the internet among social groups based on various factors such as income, geography, and education (Laufer et al., 2021). Although this digital gap is detectable in diverse nations and regions, Nigeria's issue remains significantly acute and entrenched, especially in the education sector. The sudden shift to digital learning revealed the significant disparities in the access and utilisation of digital resources in different countries, with Nigeria experiencing a considerable digital divide (Mordi et al., 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic led to paradigm shifts in most sectors globally, including higher education. Learning institutions were forced to use online-based methods to facilitate and continue academic activities (Adeleke, 2021; Van de Werfhorst et al., 2022). The shift strained the existing infrastructure and exposed the existing digital divide in many countries, including Nigeria. According to Correia (2020), the digital divide refers to the unequal distribution of access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) among users. This situation is especially prevalent in developing countries, where ICTs deployment within higher education institutions (HEIs) has yet to reach universally acceptable levels (Murgor, 2015).

Against the above backdrop, through a literature review, this chapter discusses the anathema of the digital divide in Nigerian higher education inspired by the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter highlights the effects of the pandemic on the digital divide among HEIs. It stresses the implications of the divide for the continued growth and development of Nigeria's educational sector. This chapter intends to contribute to the broader discourse around digital literacy and the integration of technology in higher education in Nigeria, exploring the

challenges experienced during the pandemic and proposing recommendations gleaned from various scholarly sources that could facilitate the process of bridging the digital divide in higher education. This chapter uncovers both infrastructural and socio-economic challenges experienced in the adoption of online-based platforms and suggests strategies that can be employed to bridge the digital divide.

Global Perspective on Digital Divide

The phrase "digital divide" was coined in the 1990s to represent the rising disparity in access to and usage of ICT between individuals, households, businesses, and geographical regions (Martens et al., 2020; Odularu et al., 2023). The idea arose in response to the realisation that the benefits of digital technology were not being dispersed evenly, resulting in discrepancies between areas, countries, and socio-economic groups (Jaggars et al., 2021). Since then, the notion has expanded to include not just variations in fundamental information and communication technologies (ICTs) access but also differences in digital skills, ICT usage patterns, and the ability to use digital resources for socio-economic development (Choudrie et al., 2020; Eli-Chukwu et al., 2023; Hussain, 2020).

The concept of the digital divide pertains to the uneven distribution and varying levels of proficiency in utilising ICTs across individuals, households, and geographical areas (Gladkova et al., 2020; Laufer et al., 2021; Odularu et al., 2023). Various factors can contribute to the digital divide, including the disparities pertaining to income, education, age, gender, and geographic location. For instance, in a study of five developed countries (New Zealand, Sweden, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland), sociodemographics alone accounted for up to half of the variance in the usage of the internet, with age being the strongest predictor (Büchi et al., 2016). Their study suggests that despite having physical access to the internet, low-usage groups like older adults and those with less education and internet experience risk being more cut off from the economic, social, cultural, and human capital that may be attained through internet use. In another study that examined the digital

divide in 108 countries, Park et al. (2015: 92) found that factors such as "per capita GDP, tertiary education entrance rate, the ratio of the urban population, and the share of service trade in GDP" were factors leading to the global digital divide. Furthermore, in a study of 110 countries that examined the determinants of technology usage, Pick and Nishida (2015) found that judicial independence and innovation capacity are significant determinants for ICT utilisation in Europe, while in Asia, tertiary education, foreign direct investment, and innovation capacity were the most important determinants. Additionally, higher education, press freedom, and foreign direct investment played a significant role in ICT utilisation in Africa—Latin America.

The proliferation of ICTs, including the advent of smartphones and high-speed internet, offers numerous prospects for enhancing education and fostering human development (Correia, 2020; Lythreatis et al., 2022). Modeme and Adeogun (2021) opined that the paradox lies in that instead of promoting universal progress, these technologies are unintentionally exacerbating social inequality by being underutilised or inaccessible to a significant portion of the population. For instance, by examining the digital divide between urban and rural distance learning students in South Africa, Lembani et al. (2020) found that urban students' educational experiences differ greatly from those of students in rural, peri-urban, and metropolitan settings with limited access to ICT. Another study that investigated the digital divide in Pakistan's education sector discovered a greater digital divide between faculty from public and private universities in terms of access to skills, physical level, usage level, and usage level in terms of age and gender. This digital divide was also found to be more pronounced regarding university type (Soomro et al., 2020).

Since the advent of the digital age, access to and usage of ICT has become increasingly critical in shaping economic, social, cultural, and political landscapes globally. Without question, the widespread use of digital technology and the internet has enabled millions of individuals to engage in new forms of communication, gain access to information, and participate in the global knowledge economy (Eli-Chukwu et al., 2023; Gladkova et al., 2020). According to research, the digital divide highlighted the differences between those with access to ICT and the

necessary abilities to use it successfully and those without. This disparity, known colloquially as the digital divide, offers substantial obstacles to social equity, economic progress, and global inclusivity (Choudrie et al., 2020; Correia, 2020; Esteban-Navarro et al., 2020; Gladkova et al., 2020; Hass et al., 2023), which has been further exacerbated since the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Odularu et al. (2023), the COVID-19 pandemic has upended the traditional educational paradigm, prompting widespread adoption of the "emergency remote teaching" technique. The implementation of measures to safeguard public health, while essential, has had the unintended consequence of exacerbating the pre-existing digital divide that exists among various countries and socio-economic groups (Correia, 2020; Modeme & Adeogun, 2021). In contrast to developed nations that have seamlessly adopted digital learning and welcomed advancements in educational technology, several developing countries, such as Nigeria, have encountered challenges related to insufficient infrastructure, restricted digital proficiencies, and a dearth of reasonably priced information and communication technologies (Adeleke, 2021; Mordi et al., 2023; Odularu et al., 2023).

Dimensions of Digital Divide

Based on the review of existing literature, this chapter identifies various dimensions of the digital divide, which can be broadly categorised into three layers: access, usage, and socio-economic benefits (Choudrie et al., 2020; Eli-Chukwu et al., 2023; Gladkova et al., 2020; Loglo & Zawacki-Richter, 2023). The following subsections offer a brief overview of these dimensions.

Access

The digital divide's access dimension pertains to the inequality in fundamental access to information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, encompassing computers, mobile phones, and internet

connectivity, whether in personal, professional, or communal settings (Lythreatis et al., 2022; Modeme & Adeogun, 2021). According to Abah (2019), the access gap in the Global North has been decreasing as a result of extensive infrastructure expansion and the widespread adoption of ICT services. On the other hand, within the regions commonly referred to as the Global South, the issue of unequal access to information and communication technology (ICT) persists. This is largely attributed to insufficient infrastructure, restricted affordability of ICT services, and various socio-cultural factors, as noted by Lythreatis et al. (2022).

Usage

According to Reddick et al. (2020), the digital divide's usage dimension pertains to the discrepancies in the frequency, types, and intensity of ICT usage among various individuals and groups. Azubuike et al. (2021) argue that the usage divide holds greater significance than the access divide, as it pertains to the capacity of users to effectively utilise ICT for a range of objectives, including communication, education, commerce, and civic participation. Jaggars et al. (2021) have identified several factors that contribute to the usage divide, including an individual's socio-economic status, level of education, age, gender, cultural background, and availability of social support.

Socio-Economic Benefits

The digital divide's socio-economic benefits dimension pertains to disparities in individuals' and communities' capacity to attain concrete advantages from ICT, such as increased productivity, income, and general welfare (Azubuike et al., 2021). Similarly, Trotter et al. (2022) assert that the effective utilisation of digital resources is contingent upon certain prerequisites, including sufficient accessibility, pertinent competencies, accessible materials, and communal backing. The act of bridging the digital divide is perceived as a strategy to attain more extensive development goals, including but not limited to poverty alleviation, social

integration, and economic advancement (Esteban-Navarro et al., 2020; Modeme & Adeogun, 2021; Odularu et al., 2023).

According to Adeleke (2021), the digital divide manifests at various levels across geographical, socio-economic, and demographic divides. Geographically, disparities can be observed between urban and rural areas and between developed and developing countries (Azubuike et al., 2021; Eli-Chukwu et al., 2023; Jaggars et al., 2021). Socio-economically, the digital divide disproportionately affects disadvantaged groups, such as the poor, the elderly, the disabled, and marginalised communities (Hussain, 2020; Lembani et al., 2020). Demographically, gender- and ethnicity-related digital divides have been observed, both within and across countries (Eli-Chukwu et al., 2023; Modeme & Adeogun, 2021).

Digital Divide and Its Impact on Higher Education System

Although the digital divide has been extensively discussed in the context of social and economic disparities, it is also worth exploring how this divide manifests within higher education. The digital divide in higher education is the unequal access to and use of technology, digital resources, and connectivity among students, educators, and institutions (Correia, 2020; van de Werfhorst et al., 2022). This inequality not only refers to the possession of digital devices but also to the skills, knowledge, and attitudes towards technology, which are necessary for effective participation in today's digital society (Adeleke, 2021; Correia, 2020; Lembani et al., 2020; Odularu et al., 2023).

The term digital divide has become increasingly significant in higher education, a phenomenon highlighting the widening gap between populations with access to digital technologies and those lacking it. As technology evolves rapidly, it is becoming an essential component of education systems worldwide. Digital tools and resources are widely used to deliver courses, enhance learning experiences, and enable communication among students, faculty, and staff. However, such advances have also had consequences, with a distinct digital divide emerging in higher

education, leading to educational disparities and challenges in teaching and learning processes (Cruz-Jesus et al., 2016; Lai & Widmar, 2021).

A primary aspect of the digital divide in higher education is hardware accessibility. Students need devices such as smartphones, laptops, and tablets to access course materials, collaborate with peers, and engage in e-learning activities (Correia, 2020). However, financial constraints and socio-economic factors can limit the availability of these devices for certain groups. Consequently, those with access to these devices have more opportunities for academic success (Adeleke, 2021; Hussain, 2020).

According to Correia (2020), internet connectivity also contributes to the digital divide. Internet access is essential for performing online research, accessing digital libraries or course materials, and participating in virtual classrooms (Hussain, 2020). In this regard, disparities in internet access can result in an uneven playing field among students. Digital infrastructure greatly affects the level and quality of internet connectivity. Students living in rural or underdeveloped regions are more likely to experience slower internet speeds and unreliable connections, impeding effective online learning (Laufer et al., 2021).

Beyond hardware and connectivity, digital literacy has become essential to higher education (Van de Werfhorst et al., 2022). Acquiring digital literacy skills helps individuals effectively use digital tools, interpret online materials, and communicate in online settings (Choudrie et al., 2020; Jaggars et al., 2021). The digital divide in higher education encapsulates the disparities in digital literacy skills among students, where some might lack the skills required to successfully navigate online educational resources, placing them at a significant disadvantage (Odularu et al., 2023).

The digital divide in higher education has wide-ranging impacts on teaching and learning outcomes. Firstly, unequal access to technology and connectivity can hinder students' ability to engage with course content, participate in lectures or discussions, and collaborate with peers (Abah, 2019). This disparity can lead to decreased academic performance and reduced overall satisfaction with the educational experience (Loglo & Zawacki-Richter, 2023; Reddick et al., 2020).

Moreover, the digital divide can exacerbate existing socio-economic inequalities among students. According to Hussain (2020), students from lower socio-economic backgrounds often have limited access to digital resources, which can affect their academic success and limit their opportunities for high-quality education. Similarly, Eli-Chukwu et al. (2023) opined that digital exclusion can result in students falling behind in their studies and struggling to match the pace of their peers who possess the necessary digital resources and skills.

The rapid shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown the digital divide in higher education into sharp relief. As educators around the world raced to adopt digital teaching methods, students lacking technological access or digital literacy faced significant barriers to educational opportunities (Martens et al., 2020). Trotter et al. (2022) concluded that without urgent action to address these disparities, the digital divide will continue to widen and deepen educational inequality.

Digital Divide in Nigeria's Higher Education System

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, is currently contending with various economic, political, and social obstacles that have significant implications for its educational sector. The tertiary education industry, which encompasses more than 170 institutions such as universities, polytechnics, and colleges, confronts many complex challenges, such as insufficient financial support, obsolete course content, and inadequate educational materials (Adeleke, 2021). The digital divide hinders the integration of ICTs into Nigeria's higher education system, resulting in a significant gap between Nigeria and other countries worldwide (Azubuike et al., 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the discrepancies between individuals who have access to digital learning resources and those who do not, thereby underscoring the digital divide in Nigeria. The temporary cessation of higher education institutions posed a challenge for numerous students, particularly those from rural and low-income

backgrounds, who had difficulty accessing consistent and high-quality learning opportunities (Aworanti, 2016). Furthermore, a considerable number of educators lacked the necessary resources and skills to effectively conduct remote learning, significantly impacting the quality of pedagogy (Mordi et al., 2023).

To better understand the context, it is crucial to explore the origins and manifestations of Nigeria's digital divide. Abah (2019) asserts that the initial digital divide emerged from a lack of ICT infrastructure, inadequate funding and investment, and insufficient literacy among higher education stakeholders. Several authors have analysed these digital divide manifestations within Nigeria's universities. Jaggars et al. (2021) contend that many students and academic staff lack access to the online teaching platforms needed for distance learning. Azubuike et al. (2021) added that students living in rural areas may face even more significant barriers due to geographical isolation, low levels of ICT infrastructure, and socio-economic factors. In addition to infrastructure issues, Odularu et al. (2023) highlight the low levels of digital literacy among students and the faculty's resistance to adopting e-learning systems.

COVID-19 Pandemic and Impact on Digital Divide in Nigeria

COVID-19 and the subsequent measures to curtail its spread exacerbated the digital divide across Nigerian higher education institutions, as universities were compelled to pivot swiftly to online learning. Professors and students needed access to the internet and necessary digital devices for effective teaching and learning, which illuminated a significant gap in access and resources. Several researchers have attempted to quantify the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Nigeria's digital divide (Choudrie et al., 2020; Gladkova et al., 2020; Hussain, 2020; Modeme & Adeogun, 2021). Adeleke (2021) conducted a survey on the readiness of Nigerian universities for e-learning during the pandemic; through this survey, the researchers found that only 19% of respondents considered themselves well-prepared for online learning. Likewise, Odularu et al. (2023) demonstrated that 78% of Nigerian students

faced difficulties adopting e-learning systems. These studies highlight the urgent need to address the digital divide in Nigeria's higher education sector, given the potentially lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching and learning methodologies.

A growing digital divide has exacerbated pre-existing disparities in Nigeria'shigher education system. These implications resonate across students' access to quality education, reduced opportunities for growth and development, and hindered socio-economic progress. Students who lack access to digital infrastructures are disadvantaged regarding effective learning and growth (Eli-Chukwu et al., 2023). As many HEIs in Nigeria have transitioned to remote learning, the digital divide effectively means that a significant proportion of the student population cannot engage with their coursework, hindering their academic performance and development (Sulaimon et al., 2020).

Furthermore, this widening digital divide could reinforce the socio-economic disparities within Nigeria. Researchers have argued that access to quality higher education is vital for socio-economic growth and development (Choudrie et al., 2020; Soomro et al., 2020). According to Lai and Widmar (2021), if the digital divide perpetuates, it could exacerbate the country's socio-economic issues, contributing to a vicious cycle of poverty and underdevelopment.

Challenges in the Digital Divide During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Infrastructural Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the rapid transition to online learning for educational institutions worldwide. In Nigeria, however, institutional capacities have proven to be inadequate in providing such an environment (Adeleke, 2021). Many higher education institutions have outdated ICT systems, unequipped personnel, insufficient bandwidth, and limited accessibility to essential digital tools for remote learning (Abah, 2019; Modeme & Adeogun, 2021; Odularu et al., 2023). Furthermore, Nigeria faces ongoing power supply challenges,

where frequent outages and unstable connections exacerbate students' and educators' difficulties as they attempt to access online platforms. Furthermore, unreliable internet connectivity was identified as a crucial infrastructural factor that affected the effectiveness of online delivery for the few higher education institutions that were forced to react to the unprecedented impact of the pandemic (Mordi et al., 2023). Adebisi and Odiachi (2020) reported that Nigeria experienced significant inconsistency in internet connectivity, particularly in rural areas, during the pandemic. This affected higher institutions' efforts to transition to online learning platforms, raising concerns about the effectiveness of e-learning in the Nigerian context. In addition, the pandemic also exposed the limited access to digital resources across the Nigerian education sector. During the pandemic, the inadequate number of computers, laptops, and other digital devices limited students' and lecturers' access to online learning resources (Azubuike et al., 2021). This was a significant challenge, especially for students and lecturers in rural settings where access to digital tools is much more limited.

Socio-Economic Challenges

Closely related to infrastructure deficiencies, socio-economic inequality plays a significant part in Nigeria's digital divide. The burden of obtaining technological devices and maintaining internet connectivity primarily falls on students and educators. Considering Nigeria's soaring poverty rates, acquiring personal devices such as laptops, tablets, and reliable internet connectivity remains a luxury for many learners and instructors (Mordi et al., 2023).

Notwithstanding the availability of digital infrastructure, the lack of digital literacy among students and educators further complicates the prospects of remote learning during the pandemic. Many individuals have limited experience navigating and exploiting digital platforms effectively. The insufficiency of digital skills has perpetuated disparities in students' learning experience and advancement across the nation (Onwuagboke et al., 2015; Ukwoma et al., 2016). A significant challenge experienced during the pandemic involves the limited digital

literacy levels among students and lecturers in Nigerian higher institutions (Modeme & Adeogun, 2021; Odularu et al., 2023). Insufficient digital skills have had a negative impact on online learning, as students struggle to navigate e-learning platforms, and lecturers face challenges in delivering course content and assessments effectively.

Furthermore, the poor socio-economic situation in Nigeria, leading to financial constraints, impacts the digital divide experienced in Nigeria's higher education. For instance, Sulaimon et al. (2020) stated that low-income households had been disproportionately affected by the economic hardship resulting from the pandemic. As a result, these households were less likely to afford laptops, smartphones, or internet packages needed for online learning.

Proposed Solutions to Bridge the Digital Divide

Infrastructural Solutions

The provision of widespread, high-speed, and affordable internet services is vital in alleviating Nigeria's digital divide. The Nigerian government and other relevant stakeholders need to prioritise the execution of the National Broadband Plan and facilitate an environment encouraging extensive network coverage, competition, and affordability. In addition, investing in affordable and reliable internet connectivity across the country, particularly in rural areas, is crucial in bridging the digital divide (Eli-Chukwu et al., 2023; Trotter et al., 2022). It is essential to encourage collaborations between the government and private sectors, aiming to extend telecommunication networks across Nigeria to facilitate seamless access to online learning resources.

Furthermore, the Nigerian government, in collaboration with higher institutions, should launch initiatives aimed at increasing the availability of digital tools for students and lecturers (Adeleke, 2021; Loglo & Zawacki-Richter, 2023). This could involve developing schemes for the

provision of laptops, computers, and other digital gadgets at favourable prices or creating computer labs on campus with adequate devices and internet access for all students.

Socio-Economic Solutions

Investment in digital infrastructure within higher education institutions is imperative to encourage online learning and research in these trying times. Nigerian universities and colleges should consider multi-modal options encompassing digital and non-digital platforms. For instance, institutions can adopt a blended learning approach or facilitate collaborations with community radio and television stations to ensure academic continuity (Adeleke, 2021; Azubuike et al., 2021; Eli-Chukwu et al., 2023; Hass et al., 2023; Jaggars et al., 2021; Sulaimon et al., 2020). The promotion of digital literacy through capacity-building programmes is significant in closing Nigeria's digital divide. Higher education institutions can integrate digital literacy training sessions into their curricula, supporting students and educators in developing essential skills pertinent to this digital age.

Given public institutions' capacity and resource constraints, forging collaborations with private sectors can potentially accelerate digital transformation in higher education. By partnering with private tech companies and telecom operators, institutions can access vital resources and expertise that facilitate digital access for students and educators.

Furthermore, to mitigate the economic barriers to digital learning, it is essential to provide funding support and scholarships to students from low-income households (Modeme & Adeogun, 2021). This will empower economically disadvantaged students to acquire the necessary tools for online learning and ensure that no student is left behind.

Ultimately, Nigerian higher institutions should prioritise the development of digital literacy among students and lecturers (Odularu et al., 2023). This can be achieved by incorporating digital skills training into the curriculum, providing workshops and training sessions for teaching staff on digital learning tools, and supporting students with the necessary technical support to navigate online learning environments effectively.

Managerial Implications in Addressing the Digital Divide In Nigeria Higher Education: Policies and Initiatives

The digital divide in higher education is a matter of great urgency that demands collaborative action from governmental bodies, academic institutions, educators, and students alike. The provision of hardware, connectivity, digital literacy training, and the establishment of inclusive digital learning environments can reduce the disparity between individuals who derive educational benefits from technology and those who do not. Addressing the digital divide in higher education is a moral and societal obligation and a crucial factor in securing a just and lasting future for all.

A comprehensive strategy is necessary to tackle the issue of the digital divide in higher education. Initially, guaranteeing accessibility to reasonably priced and dependable hardware and connectivity is paramount. It is recommended that governments and institutions allocate resources towards enhancing the digital infrastructure and offering subsidies or affordable devices to students who face economic challenges, as suggested by Trotter et al. (2022). According to Azubuike et al. (2021), the provision of essential learning tools to students can be facilitated through the implementation of initiatives such as "One Laptop per Child" and public-private partnerships.

Furthermore, it is imperative to introduce digital literacy initiatives and instruction across all tiers of the educational framework. Lythreatis et al. (2022) suggest that educational institutions can offer workshops and resources to assist students in enhancing their digital literacy abilities and to aid educators in adjusting their pedagogical approaches to digital contexts. According to Hass et al. (2023), the integration of digital literacy into academic curricula and accreditation standards will guarantee that graduates acquire the necessary competencies to thrive in a swiftly digitising society.

Finally, creating inclusive digital learning environments is crucial to addressing the digital divide. Educational institutions should prioritise accessible digital content and support services for students with

disabilities or special needs. Implementing Universal Design principles in the development of online materials and offering alternative means of assessment can promote equitable learning experiences for all students, regardless of their background or level of digital knowledge (Loglo & Zawacki-Richter, 2023; Martens et al., 2020; Soomro et al., 2020).

Conclusion

The digital divide in Nigerian higher education is a multifaceted issue that requires urgent and extensive redress. The lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic have underscored the need for a comprehensive and concrete action plan to ameliorate this schism in access to quality education. To bridge the digital divide, it is essential for stakeholders in Nigerian higher education to develop robust strategies that address these challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the sharp divides in Nigerian higher education, accentuating the need for earnest and comprehensive solutions tailored to address the country's extensive digital divide. Guided by lessons from the pandemic, stakeholders must commit to fostering a holistic and sustainable educational environment via investment in digital infrastructure, broadband connectivity, capacity-building, and public-private partnerships. Ultimately, the responsibility of bridging the digital divide in Nigeria extends beyond higher educational institutions; it requires the collective efforts of policymakers, civil society, private corporations, and communities. By addressing the current limitations and fostering digital inclusion, Nigeria can assure that, notwithstanding any crises, its learners continue to receive a consistent education in a world that increasingly depends on digital proficiency and connectivity.

This chapter suggests improving internet connectivity and digital resource access, providing financial support for low-income households, and enhancing digital literacy. Developing robust ICT infrastructure, investing in digital literacy training, fostering public-private partnerships, and leveraging local content are paramount in narrowing the gap

between students, communities, and institutions. Through the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders, Nigeria can construct a post-pandemic educational landscape which aligns with global standards of digital equitability and accessibility. Furthermore, the government and higher education institutions must work collaboratively to build an inclusive digital learning environment and ensure that Nigerian higher education can benefit from digital advancements in today's globalised world.

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11

Early-Career Teachers Experiencing the Pandemic in Greece and England: A Critical Comparative Study of Subjectivity and Governance

Vasiliki-Eleni Selechopoulou

Introduction

This study offers a snapshot of a new educational reality, as it was experienced by early-career primary school teachers (ECPTs) in Greece and England during the 2020–2021 phase of the COVID-19 global pandemic. It seeks to form an understanding of how this sudden shift affected the professional selves of the new teacher workforce. This paper argues that the pandemic has intensified the efficiency-based and outcome-oriented discourses that have pervaded education in England and Greece, offering, however, also the leeway for imagining alternative ways of being.

The motivation behind this paper was a concern with the way centralised governing practices that intensified during the pandemic could be crystallised in the two educational systems. The trigger point

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was that during that period discussions around the replacement of face-to-face teaching with permanent online teaching provision in remote areas in Greece intensified. This highlighted the urgency for reflection on the effect similar governing practices could have on the future of novice professionals.

In most cases, during the pandemic, the central regulation of school education increased, with government mandates being issued and enforced at short notice (Kim & Asbury, 2020). As the 'normality' of school life was disrupted, teachers were expected to adapt to new ways of acting. However, according to relevant research, limited official guidance and support made it hard for them to face the challenges presented by COVID-19 (Atiles et al., 2021; Raikou et al., 2021). As suggested by UNESCO (2020), school closures affected teachers' working conditions and their position in the school system, resulting in high levels of stress and confusion among them.

As a limited number of studies focus on ECPTs, this study aims to extend previous research using Foucault's theory of the subject to frame its findings. ECPTs' professional subjectivity, during these initial steps of their careers, is still very malleable. Hence, this study focuses on them, as opposed to their more experienced colleagues, as it is expected that the effects of the exercised governing practices on them will be more intense. Moreover, the comparison between England and Greece will add to the literature and enable a deeper understanding of the power negotiations involved in the formation of ECPTs' professional selves during the pandemic. The two countries were chosen as, although very different at a national, economic and cultural level, they are both dominated by neoliberal political ideologies that drive the reforms in education and have both been influenced by the European education policy orientation (Jones, 2016; Traianou, 2019).

Hence, this article addresses the following research questions: *How have the COVID-19-related governing practices affected ECPTs' position and field of possibilities in Greece and England? What is the impact of these governing practices on the way ECPTs relate to themselves and others as professionals in Greece and England?* These insights can assist ECPTs to reflect on the subject positions they currently occupy and inform the direction of future education policy.

The chapter starts with a short overview of the policy context in Greece and England during the pandemic and continues with a literature review and a presentation of the theoretical framework. Methodological aspects of the study are discussed and followed by a presentation of the main findings. The paper closes with the main conclusions and suggestions for further research.

COVID-19 Education Policy in England and Greece

The COVID-19 virus was characterised by the World Health Organisation as a pandemic on the 11th of March 2020. Countries took measures to prevent its spread, which directly affected the operation of primary schools and the working conditions of the teachers (WHO, 2020).

COVID-19 Measures in England

In England, the measures against the spread of COVID-19 included a series of primary school closures and re-openings. The government announced the closure of primary schools on the 23rd of March 2020, with only keyworker and vulnerable children still attending school in person (Williamson, 2020). Schools remained closed until the end of May when they were offered the option to re-open for transition years (Year 1, Year 6).

During the school year 2020–2021, primary schools closed again on the 4th of January. Similar to the 2019–2020 school closures, keyworker and vulnerable children were able to attend school in person. Children with no or limited access to technological equipment were also added to the definition of vulnerable students. English primary schools re-opened on the 8th of March until the end of the school year (Leahy et al., 2021). Figure 11.1 shows the timeframe of school closures and re-openings in England.

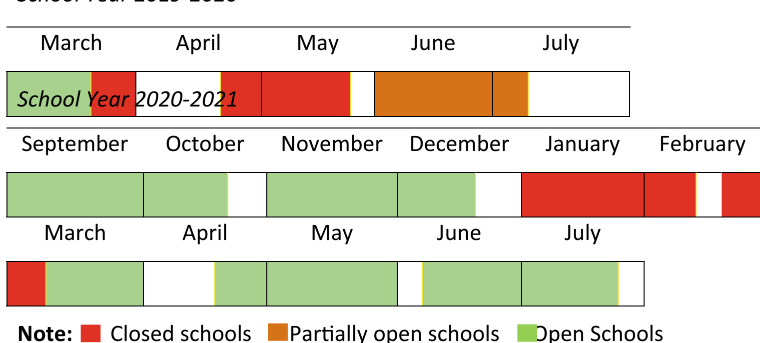

Fig. 11.1 Primary school closures and re-openings in England for the 2019–2020 and 2020–2021 school years

While schools were closed, they were legally obliged to provide online provision. This was organised locally by each school, although government guidance was provided (DfE, 2020c). On the other hand, while schools remained open, teachers provided online tutoring to pupils shielding at home. Some schools also introduced a weekly rota for face-to-face teaching. Therefore, teachers had to plan and organise material for both face-to-face and online instruction.

Changes due to the pandemic also affected in-school life. Each school was divided into year group/class 'bubbles,' namely small clusters of pupils and staff that were able to interact with each other, following the safety guidelines. Although students were able to interact only with other students in their 'bubbles,' members of the teaching staff could work across different groups, if deemed necessary (DfE, 2020a).

All pupils and staff had to follow social distancing guidelines and wear a mask in communal spaces. Teachers were discouraged from using the staffroom, unless necessary, in which case their presence should be kept to the minimum. In the classroom, guidance suggested the use of a forward-facing desk layout to ensure maximum social distancing. Moreover, central guidance suggested the introduction of staggered break and start times (DfE, 2020a).

Accountability measures in schools were also affected. Ofsted, in-school inspections and standardised assessment tests (Year 2, 6) were

suspended '*to alleviate the pressure on school leaders and their staff*' and no performance data were published for the duration of the pandemic (DfE, 2020b: 1). Furthermore, official guidance suggested that teachers' performance management, including teachers' pay advancement and appraisal, took into account the special circumstances (DfE, 2020a, 2020b). In the case of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), assessment should be adjusted to the new context. Moreover, for trainee teachers, there was a relaxation of the criteria linked to their qualification, as teaching practices were in some cases limited (DfE, 2021).

COVID-19 Measures in Greece

Similar to the case of England, in Greece the government announced a nationwide closure of schools on the 11th of March 2020, which lasted until the 1st of June (Kikilias, 2020). Then, primary schools opened until the end of the school year (which was extended until the 26th of June).

At the start of the autumn term of the 2020–2021 school year, primary schools closed on the 16th of November, until mid-January. During the period extending from the 8th of February until the 15th of March, the increase in cases led to local school closures. Multiple local lockdowns resulted in a third nationwide closure of primary schools until the start of May 2021 (Δ1α/Γ.Π.οικ. 16320, 2021). From the 10th of May until the end of the school year, which was once more extended, primary schools remained open. Figure 11.2 illustrates the timeframe of school closures and re-openings in Greece.

While schools were closed in Greece, no pupil could attend. However, there was a provision for special-purpose leaves for working parents (Decree 17787/520, 2020). During that period, teachers had to provide synchronous online classes in the afternoon for all pupils. For public schools, the length of the teaching hours was limited to 3 hours per day.

When schools re-opened for the first time in June 2020, the COVID-19 measures involved splitting classes (maximum per class: 15 students) and the use of masks in class. However, in September 2020, classes returned to their normal sizes. Forward-facing desks and staggered breaks were introduced. Moreover, some schools allocated specific break spaces

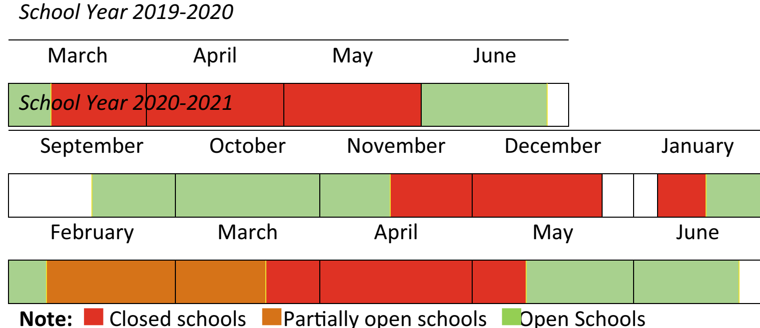

Fig. 11.2 Primary school closures and re-openings in Greece for the 2019–2020 and 2020–2021 school years

for each year group, where pupils were supervised by their teacher (NBHO, 2021).

Concerning teachers' working conditions, in the school year 2020–2021, three-month working contracts were introduced to cover the operational needs of public schools due to COVID-19 (L4722, 2020). These working contracts were addressed to ECPTs who already face precarious working conditions and high levels of unemployment (ECPTs in Greece work on temporary substitute contracts that last until the end of each school year). Most of the three-month contracts were renewed until the end of the school year, based on the needs of each school unit.

Teachers Amidst the Pandemic: A Review of the Literature

Despite the pandemic being a recent phenomenon that continues to affect school systems globally, there is a body of literature aiming to address its effects on teachers. The findings of those studies can help us form an initial understanding of the subject positions and negotiations of early-career teachers during this period.

Recent studies show that one of the biggest challenges teachers faced during the pandemic was gaining access to the education system—a

twofold challenge. The first access issue is described in the literature as the 'digital divide' and affected both teachers and students. It is related to limited access to technological equipment, stable internet connection and/or appropriate workspace during remote teaching (Miller, 2021; Padilla-Rodriguez et al., 2021). Whereas the second issue affected mostly early-career teachers and is related to difficulties accessing the profession and securing a long-term appointment (Rodriguez et al., 2021).

Moreover, the transition to online teaching increased teachers' workload. In some cases, teachers had to prepare more detailed plans and material to enable parents, as unqualified tutors, to teach children at home, and/or had to plan for both synchronous and asynchronous teaching (Fonternelle-Tereshchuk, 2021). Kim and Asbury (2020) identified that, as teaching hours decreased and paperwork increased, teachers' felt that their profession turned into administrative work.

Online teaching, as well as socially distanced face-to-face teaching, had also an impact on the relations formed in the school system. As accurately described in Teng's and Wu's (2021: 291) study, online teaching is 'a one-man show.' Therefore, especially for ECPTs who were new at their school of employment, building relations with colleagues and senior staff became a major challenge. Existent in-school relations were also disrupted, making it harder for teachers to collectively understand their new working reality (Atiles et al., 2021; Berry, 2020).

This new reality also forced teachers to renegotiate the way they related to themselves. Tension was created between teachers' personal and professional selves, as the physical school space expanded to digital space and invaded teachers' and students' private lives (Fonternelle-Tereshchuk, 2021; Rodriguez et al., 2021). Moreover, the COVID-19-related changes intensified the expectation of teachers to be entrepreneurial and innovative professionals (Kim & Asbury, 2020; Teng & Wu, 2021; Teruya, 2021). As Berry (2020) indicated, the new pressures faced by teachers, who were engaging with efficiency-focused discourses throughout their careers, led them to feel less productive during the pandemic and thus, question their professional adequacy.

On the other hand, the pandemic has also offered conditions for change and reflection (Teruya, 2021). It presented an opportunity to contain the effects of the prevailing accountability-based discourses

pervading school education. Research shows that teachers enjoyed more flexibility regarding what was taught, and a chance was provided to reevaluate the aims of education (Kim & Asbury, 2020; Miller, 2021; Rodriguez et al., 2021).

Theoretically Framing the Research

To add to the existing literature on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on teachers, this study draws on Foucault's theory of the subject. This theory enables an understanding of both the institutional constraints and individuals' freedom to navigate within them (Veyne, 2010). In Foucault's theory, the subject consists of different aspects (e.g. personal, political, professional). Each one reveals a different form of subjectivity, described as a way of being and acting, engaging both the body and the mind (Foucault, 2000: 290). In this case, ECPTs are multi-faceted subjects, whose formation is context-bound and shapes how they think and act.

The formation of the subjects is related to them being subjected to a form of power. Power is conceived by Foucault as a web of unstable relations, where one party seeks to regulate the action of the other (Deleuze, 1988; Foucault, 1989, 1991, 2008). It can be externally imposed, governing ECPTs' field of possibilities, namely the limits of their action and conduct. Or it can be internalised to the point that it attaches the subject '*to [their] own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge*' (Foucault, 1982: 781; 2000; Olssen, 2006).

However, a prerequisite for the existence of power is freedom. Freedom is not a liberation from power, but subjects' agency to move within a predetermined field of possibilities (Foucault, 1991, 2000, 2008). Thus, ECPTs, as free actors in the game of power, can engage in negotiations and provoke changes. These changes are possible through a particular practice of freedom, resistance. Resistance aims to overturn the balance in the existing power relations enabling the alteration of ECPTs' field of possibilities (Deleuze, 1988; Foucault, 1989).

Moreover, via different practices, subjects can engage in a self-constitution process, shaping their own thought and actions (Foucault,

2000). The goal of these practices is the direction of the self towards a desirable end through changes in one's conduct and practical skills. The self-constitution process relies heavily on thought as a way of critiquing and experimenting (Foucault, 1988, 2000, 2016). Hence, ECPTs as free subjects can problematise and reconstruct the imposed individuality by seeking new forms of subjectivity (Foucault, 2000, 2016).

The Study

The purpose of this study is to address how COVID-19-related education governing practices have affected ECPTs' field of possibilities, position and professional selves in Greece and England.[1] The data were collected through in-depth interviews with 32 ECPTs in Greece and England (16 in Greece, 16 in England). For this study, ECPTs are identified as teachers with up to 4 years of teaching experience as classroom teachers in primary schools. Table 11.1 includes more information regarding the participants of the study.

The data were collected throughout the 2020–2021 school year through online interviews. The research was granted ethical approval by the researcher's institution. For the analysis of the data, I utilised critical discourse analysis as it provides a way of exploring how discourse as an enunciation is related to power regimes and affects subjects' reality and thought (Breeze, 2011; Fairclough, 2012). Critical discourse analysis was used as a methodological and theoretical strategy as the aim

Table 11.1 Participants' Demographics

		England	Greece
Female		13	14
Male		3	2
Public schools	Maintained school	8	12
	Academy	7	
Private schools		1	4

[1] This study is part of a bigger research project focusing on ECPTs' professional subjectivity formation in Greece and England.

was to move away from a merely descriptive analysis of the data and problematise the power dynamics and practices in the schools and their effect on ECPTs' professional selves (Wodak, 2014). The analysis was a multi-layered process. I engaged in multiple readings of the interview transcripts. As I read through them, I attempted some initial coding. Then, I started framing the codes with theory, questioning them and identifying emerging patterns and deviations. Through this process, four themes emerged:

i. ECPTs' position in the profession
ii. ECPTs' field of possibilities: Renegotiation of boundaries
iii. Relating to others: Experiencing the change
iv. Relating to one's self.

In the following sections, the findings will be presented developing the four themes separately for each country and then comparing them in a deeper discussion.

ECPTs' Professional Subjectivity in England

In England, the educational system is founded on devolution and hierarchical accountability (Jones, 2016). However, the COVID-19 pandemic altered the reality for teaching professionals, affecting the available subject positions and the appropriate conduct and relations.

ECPTs' Position in the Profession

The collected interview data reveal complexities around the subject positions available to ECPTs during the pandemic. The ECPTs that were undertaking their training or their NQT year at the start of the pandemic reported a disruption in their training and/or induction.[2] The

[2] Teaching practices were also suspended for long periods in Greece. However, none of the participants was a trainee, because most ECPTs in Greece (especially those working in the public sector) are employed years after their training and usually after long periods of unemployment.

decreased duration of the teaching practices, the limited training and peer-learning opportunities and the lack of in-person contact within the school community challenged their position while accessing the profession. Isaac, going through his second year of teaching, described:

> I think it was very unfortunate timewise that I was doing my training and NQT year during COVID-19. I feel like I've been thrown into the deep end. It was just ridiculous that we were then given a class.

Changes and lack of support led to ECPTs experiencing internal tension. For most of the participants, the restrictions led to lower professional confidence, self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy. This challenged their ability to assume the position they were expected to in the school units. Interestingly, despite the aforementioned challenges, Georgina was asked to take on a middle leadership position while being a trainee teacher:

> About halfway through my training year, I went from being a trainee teacher to being the Year 3 Lead teacher.

In the performative environment of British schools, Georgina, while still forming an understanding of her professional self, was expected to be responsible, overcome difficulties and perform (Juhila et al., 2017).

However, she was not the only one having to face external expectations that (re)shaped their position in the school. Despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic, ECPTs were expected to be responsible for the success and stability of the school system (Teruya, 2021). They were expected to keep the outcomes at pre-COVID levels and meet the set targets as if nothing had changed.

> The idea that you were still expected to get [the children] to the level that they were predicted was insane. (Isaac)

Simultaneously, the ECPTs felt that they became 'on-demand' workers, who were expected to provide their services at all times. Maggie with two years of teaching experience found that school tended to resemble a business-like work environment.

> I think everything is now more on-demand. I think it's that understanding that school isn't a corporate that blurred a lot more.

Amidst this situation, it was common for ECPTs to experience moral tensions between the school's expectations, their ideals and their ability to follow the given instructions. Emilia's example illustrates how encountering performative expectations led to negotiations that generated ethical dilemmas:

> Filming lessons about how to teach something. The union and the teachers say we don't have to do it. But think about the kids. You're their teacher. You are supposed to show that you care.

The responsibilisation of teachers, namely the expectation of them to act responsibly, which was in many cases mobilised by their moral duties, is a phenomenon described in the literature around governmentality and efficiency-based discourses in education. In responsibilising contexts, teachers' professionalism is often linked to being entrepreneurial and prioritising work, without relying on or expecting state support (Juhila et al., 2017; Teruya, 2021).

The data of this study show that the pandemic has made the effects of responsibilisation more visible. ECPTs were loaded with more duties and expectations, while there was insufficient institutional support. They were moved down to the list of priorities, which influenced their professional position and the limits of their actions. Despite this, ECPTs remained free actors, who could negotiate their position. An example of this active negotiation was the decision of some of the participants to sign Section 44 and to declare with the support of the Union that they did not feel safe returning to the school unit. This way they were able as professionals to negotiate the limits of their possible actions.

ECPTs' Field of Possibilities: Renegotiation of Boundaries

The effect of the COVID-19 regulations extended further from ECPTs' position to a rearrangement of their field of possibilities. The pandemic

challenged ECPTs' perception of time. During online teaching, ECPTs reported that working from home was linked to an unconscious prolonging of their working hours.

> With remote learning, there was a huge blur. I'd find myself in the evening sitting down in front of the TV with my laptop working. (Emily)

ECPTs' workload also increased during online teaching without the extra effort and time being reflected in their pay. Participants contended that, during asynchronous teaching, they had to devote more time to planning to facilitate parents delivering the lesson at home. Moreover, in many cases, teachers needed to prepare for both face-to-face and online teaching, *'doing double the amount of work' (Maggie).*

Moving from online to face-to-face teaching, the return to schools did not signify the return to 'normality,' as it was known. In-school COVID-19 measures, like the introduction of staggered breaks and additional break duties, affected the time boundaries and in some cases deprived ECPTs of their break time.

COVID-19 measures also led to a renegotiation of spatial boundaries for ECPTs. Online teaching extended the school space to teachers' homes. Maggie described teaching from her kitchen as '*quite invasive*.' Remote teaching also generated spatial challenges that affected ECPTs' working conditions, including the lack of appropriate working space and the requirement to *'sit in front of a computer 6 hours a day' (Misem).*

The return to school was also accompanied by spatial restrictions. Spatial boundaries became more rigid, restricting ECPTs' movements and interactions. The restrictions were enforced in all the areas of the school, as Emily and Sabrina, each having three years of teaching experience in schools, described.

> Outside the classroom, everything feels a lot more regimented. There have to be these bubbles and you're not allowed the free flow. (Emily)

> I think it's very restrictive. We have to have forward-facing desks, we can't sit on the carpet, we can't sing, and it feels a little bit lost and strange. (Sabrina)

Reflecting on the above, it becomes clear that spatial limitations both during online and face-to-face teaching were directly linked to the bodies of the ECPTs and the professional choices they were able to make. They narrowed their possibilities of action, down to the teaching methods they could utilise. For example, group-based teaching was no longer considered appropriate.

On the other hand, online teaching was seen by some ECPTs as a chance to experiment, innovate and *'broaden their way of teaching' (Misem)*. The ECPTs, experiencing a new situation, explored new possibilities, stretched the limits and engaged in alternative ways of action (Foucault, 1988).

However, negotiating one's limits was not always a simple process, as illustrated by Georgina's case. Georgina was at the time an NQT teacher. Her experiences showed how COVID-19 restrictions were meticulously extended to the ECPT's body.

> My nose ring came out this year for "Covid-19". They just said it's cleaner and it looks more professional.(…) We've got to have our hair up all the time and I hate that because it affects my confidence. Before Covid-19 that was never a thing. But you choose your battles, don't you?

This case raises concerns about the power imbalances made possible during a period when central in-school decision-making was intensified. It illustrates the legitimisation of domination in hierarchical school relations during the pandemic and raises concerns for its crystallisation in the future (Foucault, 1989). The pandemic also affected another aspect of the in-school power dynamics and ECPTs' possibilities of action in England, as monitoring processes were suspended. Being the first time that accountability measures were limited allowed an understanding of how these practices affect ECPTs' professional selves.
For some, the lack of the 'eye of power' in the classroom changed the in-school power balance and empowered the teachers (Foucault, 2008).

> I just don't feel like I'm under the microscope, which is really empowering. (Maggie)

However, for others, it showed the effects of long-term exposure to such practices. For example, in Emilia's case, the internalised need for monitoring and external control caused feelings of uncertainty.

> But because of Covid-19, I'm not being monitored. I like being monitored. (Emilia)

Participants' experiences illustrate how COVID-19 restrictions (re)shaped their field of possibilities concerning the time and space boundaries and the in-school power balance. These changes had an immediate effect on ECPTs' bodies and teaching, dictating what was considered possible and acceptable. Therefore, they set limits to their thought and action, which could, however, be negotiated or contested (Foucault, 1989, 1991, 2008).

Relating to Others: Experiencing the Change

The COVID-19-related regulations, setting the limits to ECPTs' possibilities of thought and action, also affected the relations formed within the school community. The data illustrate the influences on ECPTs' relations with the school leadership, their colleagues and the parents.

Concerning ECPTs' relations with the school leadership in England, experiences vary. Some participants highlighted practices of support and empowerment that broadened their professional choices (Foucault, 1991). These varied from the limitation of the monitoring processes in place to allowing teachers to have an afternoon off, if needed, during online teaching. On the other hand, authoritative school leadership increased the pressure on some ECPTs, who faced unchanged high expectations and/or no institutional support. Snowed under unchanged expectations, ECPTs felt powerless and unprepared to deal with the COVID-19 reality.

The feeling of powerlessness was also intensified by the lack of interaction with their colleagues.

> It got very lonely very quickly last year. I feel like we are kind of building back but it has definitely changed. Something has been lost. (Isaac)

Moving to online and then back to face-to-face teaching altered the school community and *'influenced the support network' (Georgina)* formed by and for teachers within it. In some cases, teachers mentioned that since they couldn't mix with staff outside their 'bubble,' the opportunities for peer support had declined.

> I think I probably needed more than they were able to give. (Maggie)

Especially ECPTs that were new at their school of employment experienced this situation as exclusion from the school community and described themselves as *'outsiders' (Paris)*. Even the staffroom, as a space for interacting and exchanging, became inaccessible and regimented.

Participants, however, attempting to maintain their relationships with their colleagues, also reported cases of experimentation with different ways and channels of communication. These included social media platforms and outdoor meetings. A few of the participants also illustrated a different point of view, addressing how the adversity of the situation encouraged colleagues to form stronger relations and collectively face any challenges.

> I think it's made our team stronger, so it made me feel even more part of a community than I did before. (Sabrina)

The pandemic also altered the relations between parents and teachers, causing the latter concerns regarding the power balance between these two actors.

> I'm possibly too friendly with the families. It's quite a balancing act and I think that's going to be a big challenge for me to go back to a more formal relationship. (Maggie)

The experiences of the participants were not homogenous. Some felt more empowered through their in-school relations, while others powerless and disconnected. In all cases, however, the data illustrated the impact of the relational aspect on ECPTs' professional selves and the way COVID-19 signified a shift in the existent in-school power dynamics.

Relating to One's Self

The shift of the power balance during the pandemic altered ECPTs' position, field of possibilities and relations. Inevitably, these changes extended to the way ECPTs relate to their professional self, creating both tensions and new opportunities.

ECPTs in England stated that their new professional reality found them not properly equipped or prepared. Despite the feelings of uncertainty, ECPTs felt accountable for students' well-being and carried the burden of the school's success. Facing high external expectations led to an imbalance between their professional responsibilities and their personal self and needs, as illustrated by Isaac, who concluded his NQT year during the pandemic.

> You did feel like a lot of responsibility for holding these children through this time. You were so far down in the list of priorities. I think looking around you can see that on teachers' faces. I can see it in myself. (Isaac)

This situation challenged the balance between ECPTs' personal and professional selves. As the NQT Georgina mentioned:

> I think because it was such a stressful situation with the pandemic, it didn't really cross my mind to think about myself.

Especially for ECPTs with children of their own, maintaining a balance between their personal and professional life was particularly complex, as they had *'to be a teacher for [their] class at school, but also a teacher for [their] children at home' (Misem).*

The pressure to maintain a steady performance, cultivated from the long-term engagement with efficiency-related discourses, was in some cases translated into feelings of guilt, as the ECPTs felt they were not productive and efficient enough.

> I feel like I'm a bit of a burden. Nobody's ever said that. But I feel guilty. (…) When I am working from home, I feel constantly like I am not doing enough. (Maggie)

The described feeling of guilt constitutes yet another example of the prevailing responsibilisation culture and its effect on ECPTs. It illustrates how external expectations are imprinted in ECPTs' minds, shaping their thought (Foucault, 1989). Teachers saw as a necessity the need to act as if *'everything's fine' (Paris)* and nothing has changed, as illustrated in the following statement, offered by Furta, who worked one year in primary schools.

> Always in your best mood, no matter what is going on with Covid-19 and stuff. We always have to be positive, we must be happy, like an actor. (Furta)

Therefore, ECPTs felt pressure to perform as if they were playing a role in the physical/digital classroom during the pandemic. However, Holly shows how through critical reflection they could set their own limits and maintain the balance between their professional and personal self.

> The children need their social life and so do I. If I'm spending every minute of every waking day working, I'm not going to be happy. And if I'm not happy, they're not gonna be happy.

The 'new reality' also offered opportunities for ECPTs. Being early-career professionals, they found it easier to adapt to online teaching. Participants, like Misem, who had already two years of teaching experience, saw remote teaching as an opportunity to reinvent their professional selves and stretch the limits of their skills and knowledge.

> I've done so many courses during the lockdown. I did any free course on dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism. I call myself a perpetual learner because I don't like to stop.

Summarising, the pandemic challenged ECPTs through the alteration of their position, the possibilities of their actions and their relations with others. This was directly reflected in the way they related to their professional selves, either through internalising external pressures and expectations, or critiquing them and experimenting with alternative forms of being (Foucault, 1988, 2000).

ECPTs' Professional Subjectivity in Greece

In the already centralised Greek educational system, the pandemic intensified and legitimised the centrality of power, directly affecting the position, action, thought and relations of ECPTs.

ECPTs' Position in the Profession

In the Greek education context, participants emphasised issues related to accessing the school system. The pandemic worsened their already precarious working conditions. The introduction of 3-month contracts, which were accompanied by the reward of extra points for future appointments, challenged ECPTs' professional position. Roxani, having been employed through such appointments, shared her reflections.

> I started in October to substitute for the vacancies of COVID-19 leaves. I just think they [the government] are taking advantage of teachers' need to be appointed. I did this only because I want to have the professional experience to be appointed and for the salary of course. (Roxani)

Following many years of short-term contracts for ECPTs in Greece,[3] the introduction of even shorter working contracts raised further concerns about the position and commodification of teachers.

Moreover, ECPTs also stressed challenges posed by the late notice of appointment in public schools amidst the pandemic.

> You don't even have time to book tickets, especially during COVID-19 when it is forbidden to move from one municipality to another. It is kind of ironic. (Aggeliki)

Teachers' commodification and the turn towards responsibilisation discourses aggravated during the pandemic, through the lack of state support. Teachers reported that *'no providence, no planning'* and *'not*

[3] Permanent appointments in Greece have been suspended since 2008, when the last appointment competition was held. They restarted in 2021 with only 3,700 permanent appointments of primary school class teachers.

even psychological support' (Kalia) were available to them. The Ministry transferred the responsibility to each school unit.

> We started in schools without a Government Gazette being issued. Amidst the pandemic, we had to agree upon an internal regulation for no reason. (Aggeliki)

Teachers were expected to take full responsibility for the school's operation. With the return to face-to-face lessons, teachers were expected to be the *'COVID police' (Danai)*, imposing restrictions and monitoring their own and students' action. This new orientation altered ECPTs' in-school position and required them to take on the role of the 'master' imposing discipline and obedience (Foucault, 1989: 166). This new role, being in direct opposition to their professional ideals, led to feelings of guilt expressed by many of the participants, like Roxani.

> When I first uttered these words, when I had to tell the children not to hug, not to play, I didn't know how to act. I felt very bad, very ashamed.

Participants' efforts to professionally position themselves during the pandemic proved to be a complex process involving individual negotiations regarding access and their roles within the educational system.

ECPTs' Field of Possibilities: Renegotiation of Boundaries

Changes, however, extended to what was considered possible and acceptable in the schools. During online teaching, time boundaries became flexible. ECPTs had to dedicate more time to planning and preparing the lesson. And although for public schools the teaching hours decreased, this was not the case in private schools, where the working hours were prolonged.

> It is really hard because you expect not to have fixed working hours, to work all the time. (Sandra)

Moreover, in private schools, the ECPTs had to conduct hybrid lessons or alternate between face-to-face and online teaching, which increased their working hours but not their salaries.

Changes extended to spatial boundaries. ECPTs in Greece, like in England, stated that working from their personal space was quite invasive. Moreover, parents' involvement in the process limited ECPTs' possibilities of action and communication, as Cleo describes:

> I tried to be in a space where nothing was visible. It felt awkward having multiple households watching you. You couldn't freely talk to the children, because they might then be targeted by other parents. (Cleo)

However, online teaching was experienced differently by the participants. Some of them found working from home very restrictive professionally, while others described it as an opening to new possibilities and experimentation.

The return to face-to-face teaching was followed by the introduction of more rigid time and spatial boundaries. Staggered breaks and allocation of *'specific places in the schoolyard' (Kalia)* led to the confinement of movements and ECPTs having no breaks, as they needed to constantly monitor their students.

> Teachers have to be outside to look after their children. So, I actually do not have a break. (Antonia)

Moreover, the forward-facing layout of the classroom and the social distancing rules limited ECPTs teaching practice repertoire.

> This year I feel that my instruction is under restrictions. We can't exchange objects and we can't do anything that entails group work. (Musa)

Interestingly, one participant noted that, with respect to maintaining social distancing and after realising that the forward-facing layout was ineffective, the school community collectively decided to rearrange the children into small groups. This facilitated the implementation of group work in class.

The spatial and time limitations set a stricter disciplinary frame for the teachers (Foucault, 1989). The new norms regulated what was acceptable and possible. However, ECPTs, navigating in their field of possibilities, chose either to conform to the set restrictions or to experiment with alternative courses of action.

Relating to Others: Experiencing the Change

The way ECPTs were positioned and expected to act during the pandemic also influenced the way they related to others. In contrast to the English context, Greek ECPTs didn't mention relations with leadership affecting their actions and decisions during the pandemic, possibly due to the limited accountability in the Greek education system. However, Greek participants reported similar experiences to England, regarding the way they related to their colleagues. Some reported attempts to form communication channels, using social media platforms and outdoor meetings. But for most ECPTs the lack of communication and frequent contact cultivated feelings of isolation and distance from the school community as *'now [they] are all just boxes on a screen' (Roxani).*

Moreover, the lack of infrastructure in public schools made it impossible for teachers to deliver online lessons from the school premises. The teachers were *'each at their home because the school internet connection could not handle' (Iro)* all of them.

Additional compounding factors to ECPTs' isolation were the terms of their employment.[4]

> Especially I, as a substitute teacher, am in the school for a short period. Once I started forming relations, we lost contact – not even a message. (Cleo)

[4] ECPTs in Greece have been employed as substitute teachers under fixed-term contracts only for the duration of the school year since 2008.

ECPTs with three-month COVID-19 contracts experienced further tensions in their relations with other professionals. These new flexible working contracts and the rewards that accompanied them fostered competitiveness within the sector.

> A lot of issues, discussions, conflicts were created in the professional community. I read awful things that made me feel guilty for working under a three-month contract. (Roxani)

On the other hand, in private schools, ECPTs reported the central importance of their relations with their designated partner teachers. These relations could be either supportive or oppressive. Erato described the empowering effects of supportive partner relations, highlighting also the challenges when this relation fails:

> You have a very close connection with the partner teachers. We are lucky to be compatible, so we avoided moments of stress and pressure.

Participants also stressed how the pandemic altered their relations with parents. For some of them, this new reality secured *'enough distance' (Musa)* and set boundaries for parents, while for others it enabled *'intense interference' (Aggeliki)*.

A deeper insight into the effects of the pandemic on in-school relations offered ECPTs' own critical reflection. The participants consciously critiqued the problematisation of relations and how it affected the way they think and act as professionals.

> We are just tired, we've had enough. It is very impersonal and we grow more and more distant. (Ioanna)

> I have to adapt but it is hard because it is not natural. And it has an impact because now we think about things we didn't before, to sit next to someone, to properly wear the mask. (Danai)

According to the participants' experiences, the pandemic challenged how it is appropriate to relate and communicate with others. In some cases, it

created stronger bonds and opportunities for solidarity. However, more often the effects of social distancing were feelings of powerlessness that limited ECPTs' actions.

Relating to One's Self

The multifaceted changes in ECPTs' position and relations led to a renegotiation of their understanding of their professional selves and were usually accompanied by a high level of exhaustion. Akin to England, teachers in Greece did not feel prepared to face the demands of the new reality. Internalising the external expectations, they felt personally responsible for the success of remote education.

> Even when the internet went down, I thought it was my responsibility because the lesson got interrupted. We got stressed for things that were not our responsibility or at our discretion. (Cleo)

In Greece, extra pressure and tension were experienced by the teachers in public education, who felt responsible for compensating for the state's inadequacy in terms of preparation and equipment.

> The Ministry stated they would give away tablets. In my school, the tablets given were only four. We started to despair. We didn't know whom to help. (Roxani)

ECPTs had to take on the needs and difficulties students were facing, as they were seen as representatives of state education. It should be noted, however, that the ECPTs did not hesitate to be critical of what the government proclaimed and the decisions made centrally. This critical stance of the ECPTs, as a conscious practice of freedom, is crucial for the formation of their professional selves (Foucault, 2016).

Moreover, like in the case of England, COVID-19-related changes in school education also provided opportunities for *'more creativity' (Tolis)*, new skills development and further training. ECPTs seized the opportunity to experiment, practice and learn, orchestrating the reformation of their professional selves (Foucault, 1988).

Discussion

This comparative study explored the formation of ECPTs' professional selves through the negotiation with the boundaries set by the national and school-level governing practices, during the 2020–2021 period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings of this study show that the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged ECPTs' professional subjectivity in different ways in both countries. In the Greek educational system, the pandemic exacerbated the precarity of ECPTs' employment and working conditions, leading to the further commodification of professionals. Simultaneously, despite their insecure position, ECPTs were expected to compensate for the lack of infrastructure and preparation on the Ministry's part. Without external support, ECPTs had to respond to the changing reality and take on further roles and responsibilities.

On the other hand, in the English educational system, the expectations of ECPTs remained unchanged, despite the school-life disruptions. Interestingly, however, the suspension of the monitoring processes widened ECPTs' field of possibilities. However, in some of the cases, it also indicated how surveillance has been deeply internalised by the teachers, even at early stages of their careers. Moreover, the new reality shed light on in-school power imbalances and hierarchical relations, which determined the limits of the ECPTs' actions. This was not reported in Greece, as the highly centralised regulation precludes high levels of in-school power difference.

Despite the differences, in both countries, ECPTs were called to secure the success of the school system, sometimes at the expense of their own rights and limits. Especially during the pandemic, performing efficiently and responsibly became a priority. ECPTs were *'deeply responsibilised for the conduct, the cost-effectiveness and outcomes of their work'* (Juhila et al., 2017: 24). This responsibilisation of teachers, as conceptualised in relevant research, differs from professional freedom, as the expectations and possibilities of ECPTs' action are strictly predetermined (Teruya, 2021).

Hence, in a very short period, ECPTs had to develop technologies for adapting to the COVID-19 reality's limitations. In both countries, the variables of space and time were altered. During distance teaching, the

boundaries became fluid, while during in-person teaching, they became more rigid (Rodriguez et al., 2021). This affected ECPTs' professional positioning and problematised their relations with others. The difficulty to connect with colleagues also minimised the opportunities for a collective understanding of the new working reality as was also highlighted in the relevant literature (Atiles et al., 2021; Berry, 2020). Hence, the chances for collective negotiations and resistance were limited.

Within this context, ECPTs in Greece and England adapted by conforming to the external regulations and expectations, or by exercising conscious critique and directly confronting external demands. Some of the participants also illustrated how the changing reality allowed opportunities to explore new modes of action, reevaluate priorities and reinvent their professional selves.

Concluding, COVID-19 proved to be the lens through which the practices and channels of power in education became more apparent. It highlighted the in-school hierarchy and how central regulation is achieved with minimum involvement of teachers in the decision-making process. Therefore, it made obvious how ECPTs' position and field of possibilities can be influenced by external policies and expectations, and in-school actors and regulations, without cancelling their ability to resist and negotiate. What remains to reflect upon, is what could be the impact of this new reality on the future of the profession, and whether, understanding the needs and challenges of ECPTs, could facilitate a revaluation of their current position.

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