Experiences and perceptions of academic managers in a private higher education institution in England

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Declaration of original authorship

Declaration

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all materials from other sources have been properly and fully acknowledged.

Abstract

Private higher education institutions in the UK have recently gained considerable prominence in the educational landscape due to increased marketisation, internationalisation, and associated competition within the sector. However, while there is a growing body of research into academic leadership within the public sector, very little is known about the experiences of managers working in private higher education institutions. The aim of this study is to address this knowledge gap by exploring the experiences and perceptions of academic managers in a private higher education institution in England.

This study has undertaken a qualitative approach underpinned by a social constructivist perspective that focuses on the stories of 18 managers from a sample of senior, middle, and emerging managers. Life history interviews were undertaken with managers who all had a minimum of one year of experience at the institution. The data were analysed using thematic analysis based on the analytical framework of four interrelated concepts of academic career, organisational culture, professional identity and continued professional development.

The study found that the managers had different continuing professional development (CPD) requirements, which required tailored training plans aligned to their management positions. The research found that 'new managerialism' was embedded at the heart of the institution, viewing activities through a commercial lens that were focused on operating efficiencies driving higher education decision making. Such an environment requires managers with a specific disposition, specifically individuals who can work in quickly changing, highly pressurised environments, and embracing entrepreneurial activity linked to student recruitment and retention.

While not claiming to be generalisable, it is hoped that the implications of this research may be applied across similar institutions and contexts. The study found that of the 18 managers interviewed, 16 had not received any training connected with the duties of their role; therefore, managers were largely expected to learn on the job in a highly complex environment. Where training was provided, it was not tailored to individual needs or roles.

The study found that training for managers required a focus on distinct requirements, and a ‘one size fits all’ development plan was not suitable. Management positions were taken up by entrepreneurial individuals, whose characteristics were strongly connected with the private institution’s organisational culture and leadership development programmes should be designed with this in mind.

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Only Waheguru ji got me here; without my love for the guru, this task would never have been started or completed.

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List of Abbreviations

CPD	Continuing professional development
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
EdD	Doctorate in Education
FE	Further Education
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Academy
HOD	Head of department
ILM	Institute of Leadership and Management
IOE	Institute of Education
L&T	Learning and Teaching
PGCE	Postgraduate certificate in education
PHE	Private higher education
PHEI	Private higher education institution
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
VC	Vice-chancellor

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis investigates the opportunities and challenges encountered by academic managers working in private higher education (PHE) in the UK. It aims to understand what development opportunities managers have been offered when working in this private institution, why the managers decided to take up management positions, what it is like to work in a private higher education environment, and how these experiences impact managers' professional identities in the higher education sector.

This chapter presents an overview of the research. First, **identifying the problem**; second, the **origins of the study**; third, **management and leadership terminology**; fourth, the **research questions and research methodology**; fifth, the **theoretical framework** of the study; sixth, the **significance and outcomes of the study;** and finally, the **overview of the thesis**.

1.1 Identifying the problem

The higher education (HE) sector in the UK has undergone significant changes over the past 30 years, particularly changes to the sector's culture and management structures. In 1991, the government published a White Paper titled Higher Education: A New Framework (Trowler, 1998), which abolished the differences between universities and polytechnics. The fundamental features of the new framework were a single funding structure, together with the extension of both the degree awarding powers and the title of universities to polytechnics (Smith, 2002). Pre-92 universities were traditionally research-led, therefore much of the funding was provided for academics to conduct research activities. Whereas post-92 universities, the former polytechnics, were more vocationally based, therefore offering more practical courses, which often emphasised teaching and learning activities and student-centred learning. Both categories of institutions are assessed by the same quality bodies; however, their organisational structures and cultures were quite different before the 1992 changes. Deem (2003) argued that the former polytechnics of higher education emerged from a more bureaucratic and hierarchical tradition than their competitors. By the time polytechnics became universities, for many their management structures had changed from managers to vice chancellors and deans, and from

departments to faculties reflecting the culture change of the language used within the institutions, however for a number of institutions they still tend to use both sets of organisational language between roles and organisational structures (Argento & van Helden, 2021). The expansion of the PHE sector is a global phenomenon (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2012). In many countries, private higher education has existed for many years, although in the UK, the private sector began in the late 20th and early 21st century (Middlehurst & Fielden, 2011). Although the University of Buckingham was established in the UK in the late 20th century, the university does receive support from the taxpayer via subsidised student fees, although no direct funding for its teaching, although the governance and ownership is no different from UK 'public' universities (Scott & Callender, 2013). The other private providers who have received degree awarding powers all have restricted degree awarding powers, which must be renewed every 6 years, apart from Buckingham who has unrestricted degree awarding powers (Temple, 2013). The UK's changing government policies have accelerated the growth of private providers by encouraging more private funding for HE, which has brought a different business model to the sector. From 1997 to 2010 the Labour government operated immigration policies with a strong commitment to economic migration (Somerville & Sumption, 2009). This economic climate, together with favourable immigration policies for students (including post-study work), offered a positive environment for private institutions to recruit international students, typically for business and computing courses (Middlehurst, 2016). An assessment of the HE sector and the impact of this change resulted in private providers changing the HE landscape, often meaning that students could not easily distinguish between public and private institutions (Middlehurst, 2016). The private HE sector in the UK is largely run via partnerships and franchised models with public HE institutions. Moreover, there has been very little research into the UK's private HE sector as a whole, with the exception of a few (Fielden, 2010; Middlehurst, 2016; Williams & Woodhall, 1979). Therefore, it remains mostly unfamiliar, as there are not many statistics available on the private sector itself. This also results in very little being known about the academic managers working within HE institutions (Hunt & Boliver, 2023).

Hesa (2023) data suggests that there are currently 285 HEIs in the UK, of which approximately 50% could be termed private providers in the traditional sense of not gaining

public funding. However, making distinctions between public and private HEIs is difficult, as recent email communications with HESA suggest that *"there is no longer a distinction between publicly and privately funded, as institutions are either not registered with the Office for Students, registered in the Approved category or registered in the Approved (fee cap) category".* In this study, which commenced before this policy decision was made, the notion of a private HE institution refers to an institution that is not publicly funded; for example, for this study, a private equity firm funds the private institution. The HE sector in the UK has over 2.5 million students enrolled on both postgraduate and undergraduate courses (Hesa, 2021). HE institutions employ 233,930 people, of whom 43% are academic staff (Hesa, 2023), although as discussed above, distinctions of the data between private and public cannot be made due to the methods applied in registering with the OfS. The institution researched in this study opened in 2011 with one public university partner and approximately 20 staff members, and 11 years on, it has grown to over 450 academic staff members with seven university partners. Hesa (2018) data suggests that there were 58,735 students in HE courses at private providers in 2016/2017, a significant part of the HE market in the UK. This is the last data set made available from Hesa separating alternative providers.

Although the exact growth number of private higher education institutions in the UK are not available, the government has provided a commitment to encouraging growth in the private HE sector. A white paper presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (Department for Business & Skills, 2016), set out that it would *"make it easier and quicker for new high quality challenger institutions to enter the market and award their own degrees"* (p.6). The paper went on to express concerns that *"access to higher education remains uneven and how courses are inflexible, therefore, to address the concern more competition and informed choice will deliver better outcomes"* (p.7-8).

Some of the key players in the private HE sector include BPP University, Regents University London, Arden University, Greenwich School of Management, Global Banking School, and INTO. The growth of the private HE sector is on the rise with the number of providers and students compared to public institutions. The target market for private providers is typically international students, an area that has arguably experienced enormous growth (Fielden,

2010). Hesa (2023) data indicates that 86% of students studying designated courses at alternative providers were from the UK in 2016/17; students studying at the alternative providers attracted the highest number of business and administrative courses. Public universities are working with private institutions to validate undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The partnership between these institutions is essentially an additional income source for public institutions, as private providers have a robust and diverse marketing network to recruit large numbers of international students to highly sought-after city locations. Private providers are largely London-based, and several universities provide access to city centre locations that are not easily reachable for the public institutions.

Within publicly funded institutions, previous research has shown that academic management positions play a pivotal role in the sector. The changes to government policy in encouraging private institutions into the sector have meant that management positions are now even more critical, as it is the managers working in the institutions who are the key decision makers impacting long-term developments (McCaffery, 2018). This means that the skills, knowledge, and experience required to carry out HE management roles have been transformed from what the role entailed historically. Crisp (2022) found that in public universities both pre and post-92, academic managers experience high workloads and longer working hours than what the roles were traditionally known for; this is due to increasing pressures of responsibility and sector changes. It was found that formal leadership and management training was only offered to a small number, and many did not feel that they received enough feedback on their management performance.

What is not yet known is whether these challenges exist in private HE institutions. As private HE institutions grow and are driven through a business lens, management positions have also evolved, with the need for the roles to be all-rounders. The challenges faced by managers are framed within the changing notion of an academic career. With the growth of the private sector, different career opportunities are available through a variety of contract types. Deem (2004) discussed how historically, very different career routes existed in the public HE sector, one that focused on research and teaching. However, it is argued that career routes are no longer linear (Whitchurch et al., 2021). The variety of contracts and

opportunities available in the private sector have opened up new career paths, transforming academic career routes for managers.

This change must also consider the impact on professional identities within academia. Academics working in pre-92 universities were historically known as researchers whose credibility was built on research publications. Now other career routes are opening up for academics. This is an outcome of private HE institutions having different needs from managers working within their institutions. Consequently, this has meant that academics in private institutions are taking on management roles to develop their careers; therefore, the traditional academic identity is under threat (Degn, 2018; McCune, 2019). The private HE business model is different from that of the public sector; it is argued that it adds complexity for the managers working within it. Very little research has been undertaken to understand whether private institutions face challenges similar to those of the public sector. This study will address this knowledge gap between publicly funded and privately owned HE institutions.

1.2 Origins of the study

My professional work in the private HE sector has determined my choice, interest, and research focus. I will provide some background details as the researcher to better inform the reader of this study. I will highlight the critical philosophies underpinning this work and why these best suit this study; this interpretive approach aligns with Lichtman (2012).

The core concepts of this study emerged as I interrogated the literature to understand more from my own experiences of being a HE manager. As this iterative process developed there were strong connections of the four concepts that related directly to the research questions of this study and framed this research.

The reflexivity of the researcher's position should be acknowledged by the researcher in terms of influencing both the study and the findings; it is also vital to recognise that the researcher is 'integral and integrated into the research' (Savin-Baden, 2004). I have been an experienced established manager at the institution for the past 11 years. Holding the Dean of Learning and Teaching (L&T) position and having a strong passion for continued

professional development (CPD) I was in a position to observe the staff members who succeeded in management positions as well as those who struggled and eventually left this private HE institution. In addition, my long-standing history with the organisation has given me a thorough understanding of working in a private institution with public university partners. I have seen the staff numbers start at 20 in 2012 and grow to over 450 in 2023. These experiences, knowledge, and observations have shaped my interpretations of the data and affected my interactions with the research participants in the study (Berger, 2015); although these details cannot be changed, they are acknowledged both in the data collection and ethics of this study.

I am a female senior manager working at this private HE institution. I have worked at this institution for the last 11 years. I started as a programme manager (emerging manager) and, over these 11 years, have progressed my career through middle and now senior management. As I moved through the management positions of programme manager, associate dean, deputy dean, dean, and director, no structured training was provided to enable me to grasp the expectations of each of these management positions. In addition, I had a limited understanding of what success in the role and the private institution looked like, resulting in challenges in carrying out the role effectively.

Over the years, the institution has grown in both student numbers and partners. In 2011, the institution was only partnered with one university, and this has now grown to seven university partners. In addition, student numbers have grown steadily from 2000 in 2011 to over 12,000 students in 2023. The institution's growth has been phenomenal; it continues to expand with the vision of further partners and programmes, followed by innovative lifelong learning opportunities.

Similarly, my role has also developed. Initially, I spent a great deal of time recruiting new staff, in roles ranging from lecturing staff to emerging, middle, and, more recently, senior management positions. The institution's staff turnover was low, making me think that staff members were content and happy in their roles. However, as the institution grew, new staff members joined the private institution from the public sector, which I could see was a challenge for most. These staff members had taken on management positions in this private

institution, making assumptions that the titles were like those of the public sector. However, they soon realised that they had very different roles that did not align with their expectations. They had not considered the private organisational culture, the complexity of working with multiple public university partners, and the shift from research to a teaching institution; therefore, it was not a management position they could easily adopt. I felt that staff joining the private institution as external candidates did not always have the social or organisational capital to give them high opportunities to succeed. Based on my observations over the years, when managers from public institutions start their positions at the private institution, they often naively do not consider the disparities. In addition, the institution had not considered the implications of staff joining from the public sector in order to be able to highlight fundamental differences, so they were not offering any structured development opportunities to support these newly joining managers in their roles through staff development activities.

I had my own experiences with CPD at the institution. I sometimes used my three annual CPD days to attend generic training courses. However, although the training courses were helpful for general management approaches, I felt that little of the training was equipping me to carry out my duties in the role itself; the courses did not consider the challenges of this complex environment. The training that was offered lacked alignment with the actual role, for instance, it did not consider partnership working, stakeholder engagement, public university culture merging with the private institution, imposter syndrome, self-management, growth through self-reflection, and personal development.

As I observed over the last 11 years, the institution grew and there were several management openings for staff. However, most academics had no management experience, so they were not in strong positions to carry out these roles. There was an environment of learning ‘on the job’ but without understanding expectations or having the space to understand how to do the role well. There was a lack of opportunity to discuss situations and how to handle them effectively with more experienced managers; these were missed development opportunities. I realised early on that if I was ever going to broaden opportunities beyond private HE and build credibility within the HE sector, I would need to obtain a doctorate qualification.

The core motivation for this research has been driven by my learnings and experiences while working in this private institution. First, I was intrigued to know why staff with doctorate qualifications chose to work in a private HE institution instead of the public sector. I wanted to understand their motivations for pursuing a career with a private provider, as I had assumed that staff with doctorate qualifications would prefer to work in the renowned public sector. At the same time, I could see private institutions growing rapidly, with managers moving up the career ladder quickly. New managers were joining although where there was no structured development for their management roles, they were unsure of how to react to working in this environment. I encouraged continued professional development within my position as Dean of L&T. I firmly believe that staff within the institution could have done better if the right development opportunities had been offered to them, but also, managers joining externally could have had higher chances of success if they had been provided with the opportunities to engage with what they did not know. So, it depended on the institutions' opportunities and support mechanisms, together with the individual's growth motivations. Staff development is a significant concept connected to the academic profiles of HE managers.

I perceived my professional identity in the academic sphere as being impacted and often perceived as inferior to those in the public HE sector. Although the institution exposed me to numerous opportunities that I believe accelerated my learning as a manager and my career in HE in the private domain, this experience and knowledge of the sector were not always recognised. Therefore, this often creates a barrier between public and private institutions and does not permit entrance to the wider academic community.

Consequently, while significant for other academic managers in the public and private HE sectors, this study contributes to the professional and academic CPD literature in HE. My research embeds the personal beliefs of managers, the knowledge acquisition of managers, and the value of the unrecognised needs of CPD in the private sector to contribute to broader HE management development. These situations support the interpretive paradigm, which aligns with the social constructionist ontological perspective (Bryman, 2015), together with the life history interviews that have been chosen to obtain the data for this study (Goodson et al., 2016).

From my own management experience, moving into management is one of the ways to progress an academic career, mainly where there is no research route, as is the case in this private institution. However, a management route is not necessarily pursued because academics want to lead others or take on management responsibility. Taking on a management position has often led to managers having reduced time for research and teaching, even though this is typically the reason academics enter academia in the first place. A career route where management roles have been chosen will not necessarily support a teaching or research profile in academia. This could have a negative impact, mainly where the managers are far from their core activities (Johnson & Orr, 2020). In contrast, although management positions are complex and come with a heavy workload, it is acknowledged that some academics enjoy being managers; Deem (2004) referred to these as 'career track' managers. Therefore, some managers who do not perceive themselves as researchers do not see management as taking time away from their research, but instead as another route to progress in HE to achieve career aspirations, taking entrepreneurial routes in HE to achieve career goals.

There are many other reasons that academics choose to become managers. They are the voice of academics, a representative at the management level, who see themselves as supporting faculty (Bush, 2022). It has been argued that managers can contribute to management decisions to help make a difference (Waldman et al., 2019). There is still a demand for management positions within my institution. Where management positions have been advertised, they are not short of applicants, which indicates that some academics do want to take up management roles. The challenges that many managers face are the limited training and development opportunities offered to them in supporting them specifically for their role. With the diverse duties that make up management positions in the private sector, these leaders require training and development support to equip them with the skills to manage and carry out their roles effectively. This support is arguably limited for managers, making the roles more challenging (Deem, 2020). The complexity of the management roles can be overwhelming for managers who are new to their roles and level of management, even more so for those who are new to management altogether, and therefore not equipped with management skills (Altbach et al., 2010). There is considerable

research on managers working in the public sector, but research on managers working in private HE institutions in the UK is limited, and this study aims to fill this gap.

1.3 Management and leadership terminology

The changes in the HE sector have been huge, primarily due to funding regimes and the development of the marketisation and globalisation of education. This has resulted in management roles developing differently from the traditionally known positions in pre-92 institutions (Black, 2015). In publicly funded institutions, the role of managers has shifted from leading research and teaching to taking on many other responsibilities, including managing operations, administration, budgets, and resourcing responsibilities (Heffernan & Bosetti, 2020). The literature suggests that universities and the departments within them have become increasingly managerial (Deem, 2001; Smith, 2002). Yielder and Codling (2004) made key distinctions between management and leadership: management emphasises results and goals, arranging tasks and systems, whereas leadership focuses on human relations and organising people. It is argued that, in HE, both functions are required by managers, especially at the department level, as they are so closely integrated. However, pre-92 universities were traditionally governed by academics on rotating three-year fixed-term contracts; in contrast, the post-92 universities have filled management roles with permanent positions (Deem et al., 2007).

Similar transformational changes have occurred in several other public HEIs in the EU and globally, as it is argued that more efficient and effective management changes are needed within the HE sector (Carvalho & Santiago, 2010). Studies suggest that management is not something that exists only at the senior level, but is a culture that exists throughout the management levels of HE institutions. As the responsibilities within these roles increase, the role has become more managerial (De Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009). These changes bring institutional transformations with an increased dependency on managerial skills. The concepts of “leadership” and “management” cannot be separated entirely; there are several definitions and interpretations (Law & Glover, 2000), but the behaviours are not disparate. Belbin (2012) argued that leadership is not something that can be written into a role; it is instead a quality that an individual possesses. It is argued that academic leaders have drifted

into managerial roles without actual leadership (Yielder & Codling, 2004). The roles of managers and leaders are quite different. Although aspects of each are often present across positions, the foci and abilities needed by each institution differ. The post-92 universities have a more business-like style, favouring management over leadership within the hierarchy; management teams primarily consist of staff with managerial positions, but not always academic leaders (Yielder & Codling, 2004). Conversely, there are risks in following a set of competencies as a leader, which could result in "doing leadership" instead of ensuring that practical work gets done (Seddon, 2005).

In contrast, the private HE sector relies heavily on business outcomes and task focus, which aligns closely with management characteristics. What is not known is whether the same problems – the absence of CPD for managers, the reasons that management positions are taken up by academics, and the career plans of managers – exist in the private sector, as they are currently known to be challenges in the public sector. This sector has relied on conducting its activities following a business-like model since it started (Davies et al., 2001). This has resulted in private HE adopting a new managerialism approach, leading to formal academic management positions being a fundamental part of the private management structure (Deem, 2020). Although new managerialism is a well-established phenomenon, the term managerialism in universities evidences a strong desire towards greater responsibility, including performance, quality, target setting, and performance indicators (Deem, 2004; Deem & Brehony, 2005). Managerialism is strongly associated with the term 'management' in HE; it aligns with areas of order and control, fundamentally supporting duties of efficiency and effectiveness with focused organisational objectives (Elton, 2018). The private HE culture is firmly aligned with a commercial business-orientated approach, which prioritises management practices to maximise the efficiency and profitability of the institution (Mahdi et al., 2019). Management positions in HE reveal the organisational hierarchy; therefore, positions are invested in from the top. The private institution investigated for this research is a teaching environment incorporating a highly focused commercial setting; therefore, a great deal of business language is used within the institution, including management speak, corporate language, and economic targets (Smyth et al., 2017).

The changes from traditional pre-92 management roles to new managerialism within the HE sector are further impacted by the private organisational culture, revealing a problem. Management positions filled by academics in private institutions no longer align with traditional pre-92 management positions. Instead, new managerialism suggests that academic managers are required to hold a range of skills, including expenditure, value for money and finance in education, to fulfil the complexity of HE positions (Deem, 2020); it is these management tasks that subsume leadership activities.

This study will use the term 'management' in considering the role of managers in this private HE institution. Increasing evidence suggests that a managerial ideology is gradually taking over HE, an ideology already strongly driving the private sector (Kolsaker, 2008). With the increased focus on strategic planning and commercial marketing, post-92 HE institutions are further aligned with a more entrepreneurial approach in their response to sector changes than pre-92 institutions (Meek et al., 2010). Although leadership skills are necessary for this private HE institution, there was a need to prioritise technical skills over soft skills to align the business needs of the commercial activities. There are several studies on heads of departments (HODs) and managers working in the public setting, although it is not known if these problems are also present in the private HE sector.

1.4 Research questions

The main research question for this study is as follows:

RQ: What are the perceptions and experiences of managers working in the private HE sector?

For this research question to be addressed, the following sub-questions will be explored:

RQ1. What are the personal and professional circumstances that lead academics to become managers in the private HE sector?

RQ2. How do managers perceive and experience the organisational culture when working in the private HE institution?

RQ3. How do managers perceive their professional identity has been impacted by being a manager in private HE?

RQ4. What are managers' experiences of continuing professional development in private HE and future development needs?

1.5 Research methodology

The methodology applied to this study is briefly introduced here, and a more detailed discussion will be provided in Chapter Three. To thoroughly answer the research questions, the researcher utilised a narrative enquiry approach using life history interviews (Goodson & Sikes, 2001) by applying an interpretive paradigm. This approach was implemented to comprehend who the managers working in private HE institutions are; this cannot be explained separately from the broader context of the managers' backgrounds. All interviewees had at least one year's service at the institution, although the majority had three years or more. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews with the 18 managers.

The researcher extended the data, which informed the primary data collection via interviews. The sources included the researcher's own experiences and knowledge with insider observations. This data supported an understanding of the organisational practices in key areas of the study relating to private organisational culture and career professional development.

The research questions were constructed on the core concepts of academic career, organisational culture, professional identity, and continued professional development. These concepts are the foundations of the theoretical framework-related main research question (see Appendix 1).

1.6 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study was developed on the interlinked key concepts of academic career, organisational culture, professional identity, and continuing professional development. These core concepts were explored to understand managers' experiences

working in private HE institutions, the continuing professional development undertaken, and how working in private HE had impacted their professional identity. The development of the theoretical framework and concepts will be further discussed in chapter 2 (2.1).

The interrelationships between these concepts created the foundations of the theoretical framework of this study. It is argued that individuals' academic career routes are influenced by their families and early life choices (Roksa & Kinsley, 2019). These concepts influence the decisions made in one's career and the choices one makes to move into management positions. However, there is a need to understand the training and development of managers working in the private HE sector, and the development opportunities undertaken to take on management positions. Once someone starts working as a manager in a private institution, the organisational culture influences the shaping of their professional identity in the HE sector. Therefore, these concepts were seen to be the interconnected essential underpinnings linked to answering the study's main research question.

While the theoretical themes have been separated for this discussion, it is essential to acknowledge that all four areas are interrelated. Therefore, discussions will be linked to all areas within the review. In addition, this study will explore the relationship between these related concepts. The theoretical framework is expanded in the literature review in Chapter Two.

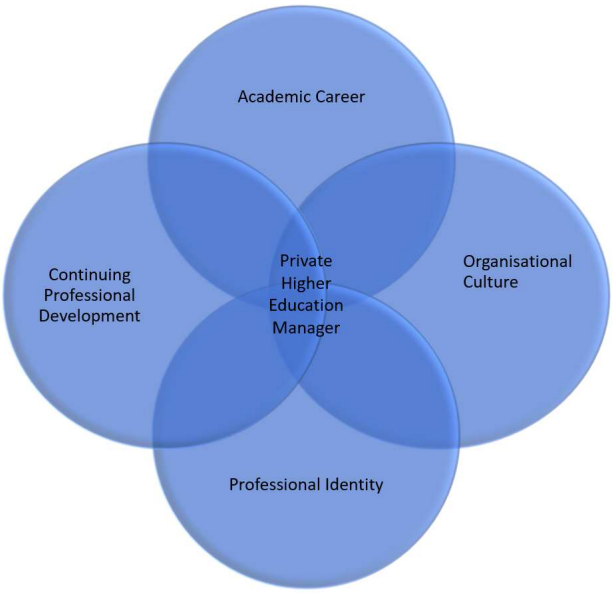

Figure 1.1 Theoretical framework; learning of managers working in private HE

Academic career

An academic career is a route that individuals have taken in their working life. However, Deem (2004) argues that historically, careers were very different from what they are in HE today. Several factors relate directly to academic careers. However, this study's fundamental makeup of academic careers explores family influences on career opportunities and the decisions taken to work in private HE. The influences of family, early choices in access to opportunities, education, and role models highly impact one's career route and career choices.

Historically, academic careers were linear, where academics would complete their education, in many cases, take on a research position or a fellow teaching role with the university where they were carrying out their PhD, to follow with a teaching position as a lecturer and, in many cases, continue in this position for years (Floyd & Preston, 2019).

Organisational culture

Organisational culture in a private HE setting is explored to understand how it might differ from the more established public HE culture and how it impacts managers. The commercialisation of HE is different from the public setting (Jessop, 2018); therefore,

understanding the impact of this on managers provides a deeper insight into what it is like to work within this organisational setting. Organisational culture is a fundamental component of working practice that develops the professional identity of the staff working within the institution.

The importance of this theme, HE organisational culture, will impact the working conditions and priorities of managers working within it.

Professional identity

Professional identity is central to understanding how academic managers perceive themselves (Jenkins, 2014). Professional identity provides insights into managers' perceptions of themselves as teachers, researchers, managers, or a combination of these roles (Dashper & Fletcher, 2019). Professional identity in the HE sphere is fundamental in research and teaching; therefore, part of the role would include creating a professional identity of how one perceives oneself, but also how one wants others to perceive them. Professional identities are made up of multiple layers. It is not as simple as labelling staff in academia as researchers, academics, or managers; Clegg (2008) suggests that aspects of the family support the makeup ones identity.

Past and present career experiences shape the professional identity of managers. Once managers realise their identity, they are more inclined to assume roles that match their thinking and career trajectory. As academics move into management positions, their identities will develop, so the tensions and synergies between the facets of managers' identities need to be understood (McCune, 2019).

Continuing professional development

Continuing professional development was explored in this study to understand what formal and informal training opportunities have been made available to these managers to enable them to perform their management roles. This understanding of CPD offered within the organisational cultural environment allows a greater understanding of managers' experiences at the institution. Research into CPD suggests seven categories or modes of learning, including courses and conferences, professional interactions, networking,

consulting experts, personal research, learning by doing, and learning by teaching (Becher, 2018a).

It is already known that the training offered to academics stepping into management positions in the HE sector is minimal (Floyd, 2016). What is provided is very much generic training for the masses, which does not always consider the role itself, the individual's experience, knowledge, or understanding of the position specifically. Therefore, it has been argued that the meaningful professional learning and development available for HE managers is minimal (Gonaim, 2016; Hempsall, 2014). The importance of gaining insights into this theme through a more comprehensive study will help to gain in-depth knowledge of the motivations of academics becoming managers. It will uncover why managers have chosen the management route within private HE. The research from this study will inform the training opportunities made available to managers in private HE, which will lead them to take up management career routes.

The above overarching themes will be further developed individually in Chapter 2 to build the foundations of each theme and emphasise the connections between them. First, there is a need to understand who the managers are working in private HE institutions to gain an appreciation for future management positions, training, and development needs, and career trajectories. Comprehending the organisational culture of the private institution where managers work with the perceptions of themselves and their professional identity enables an increased grasp of private HE managers. The notion of marketisation and neoliberalism of education has long existed, and is achieved through the increase of private education providers, franchises, partnerships, and pathway colleges.

Private institutions are very much committed to the students, their needs and support mechanisms. The focus is not research; although this plays a role in the learning and teaching sphere, it is not the primary focus for academics and management teams. The institution's culture will impact the professional identity of its staff.

1.7 Significance and outcomes of the study

This research is significant, as there is still very little understanding of the managers working in the private HE sector. This study addresses the disconnect between managers working in the private HE sector and the level of preparedness in taking up management roles through CPD opportunities, understanding private HE organisational culture, and how this impacts a manager's professional identity. Although there already exists some research on managers working in the public HE sector and levels of training (Clegg, 2003; Deem & Johnson, 2003), the present study is significant, as the friction between public and the private commercial higher educational environment differs both from their strategic priorities, as well as tensions between research and teaching importance (Deem, 2004; Henkel, 2000; Huang et al., 2018).

This research does not aim to provide findings that can be generalised to all managers working in HE. However, it will support academic managers in similar contexts connected with the findings of this study for them to reflect on their positions and the roles of others (Silverman, 2011).

A thorough understanding of managers' career trajectories will support future potential managers interested in working in the private HE sector. In addition, it will help private HE institutions understand fundamental differences in culture and professional identity for current and potentially new managers joining the institution. Finally, this study will support L&T faculties and senior managers within the institutions to embed fundamental development practices into the organisational strategy to fully support their leadership teams in their roles.

Therefore, two focal points of this study are to examine the training offered to private HE managers and how working in the private organisational culture impacts the professional identity of people working in the HE sector. Specifically, the study aims to explore the perceptions of HE managers, their experiences of being managers, and their future career trajectories. Thus, managers' perceptions of CPD can provide future improved CPD plans for managers working in private HE.

In summary, this research aims to provide evidence of the working experiences of managers in the institution and look at how improvements to the sector could be made in areas of staff development, mainly focusing on training and development opportunities offered to managers in HE to support them in their roles.

Having explained the fundamental purpose of this work, the following section provides an overview of the thesis structure chapter by chapter.

1.8 Overview of the thesis

This thesis is organised into eight chapters. Chapter 2 comprises a critical literature review connected to the research questions. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology, discussing the qualitative interpretive approach that has been applied. Chapters 4 (RQ1), 5 (RQ2), 6 (RQ3), and 7 (RQ4) present the research findings and analysis for each of the theoretical themes and research questions. Chapter 8 summarises the thesis, providing a conclusion and recommendations, and identifying areas for future research.

After this brief overview of the theoretical framework and structure of the thesis, the literature related to the main research question will be systematically reviewed in Chapter 2 in line with the theoretical framework.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This research aims to study the experiences of managers working in the private HE sector. Therefore, this chapter explores the literature on the four concepts illustrated in the theoretical framework (see Figure 2.1). The four key areas are academic career, organisational culture, professional identity and continuing professional development; these themes will help to provide theoretical insights into the study, which are focal to this research and are therefore used as the foundation in structuring this chapter. As discussed in Chapter 1, these themes are intertwined; however, they have been separated for the study. It is essential to acknowledge that they are interlinked, and the discussions will connect to all areas within this review.

2.1 Origins of the core concepts

A theoretical framework is a function of elements being studied as an integrating mechanism working across 'concepts, expectations, beliefs and theories' that support the research (Maxwell, 2022). A theoretical framework cannot be used from previous studies, these are not "readymade in the literature" waiting for researchers to utilise (Maxwell, 2012). The researcher formulates the theoretical framework in order to support the scaffolding of the study. Much of the structure and of the theoretical framework is formulated from the researcher's own insights in viewing the research problem including their professional practice. Therefore, the theoretical framework is used as a lens to explain and understand the theories of existing literature as an interpretive framework theoretically (Ngulube et al., 2015). The theoretical framework for this study has been used to organise the literature review to provide contextual clarity, coherence, and structure within each of the theoretical concepts. Organising the literature in this way allows for a well-defined approach to categorise and understand fundamental theories of the literature (Varpio et al., 2020). With this in mind, the approach allows for the categorisation of key models and theories to be explored in a systematic way, ultimately allowing readers to understand the concepts but also grasping the relationship between the concepts of the literature. The theoretical framework and key concepts can be viewed below (Figure 2.1).

Creating a conceptual framework is a complex process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The sources used in identifying the four concepts for this research were discovered from the researcher's professional experience working in private higher education, her observations, together with the work of others, the existing research and theories combined (Leshem & Trafford, 2007; Maxwell, 2008). For this study, the conceptual framework followed guidelines from Miles et al. (2013) who discussed starting with tentative constructs related to the research to then refine the relationships between them in forming a framework that supports the research design and interpretation. As the researcher continues to interrogate the literature and develops their knowledge, they can continue to refine the framework, resulting in producing a theoretical framework. The framework provided the researcher a critical view of what was happening in the field of study (Maxwell, 2012). It became evident that the four key concepts were crucial in understanding and exploring HE management experiences in the private HE sector, as shown in Figure 2.1 and therefore these were used as the conceptual framework used to frame this thesis.

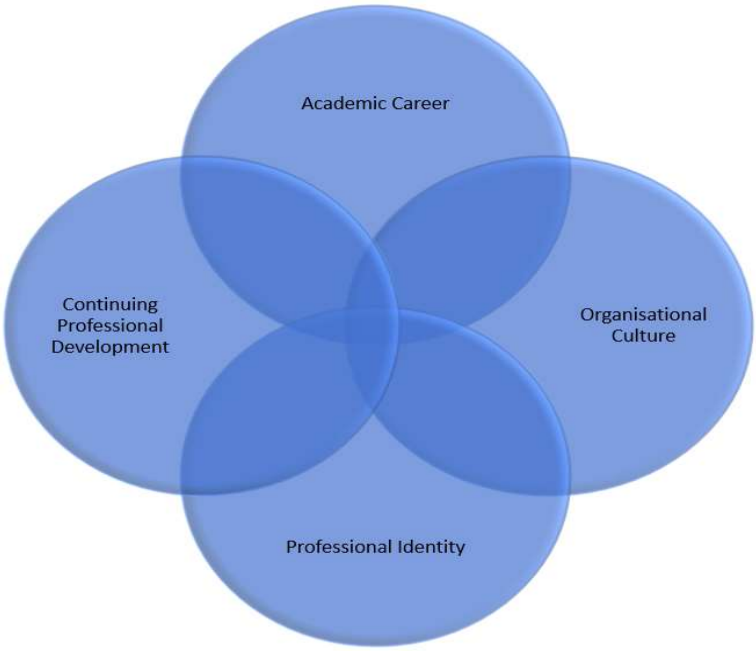

Figure 2.1 The study's theoretical framework

To meet the aims of this study, there is a need to understand the experiences of managers working in private HE by exploring theoretical ideas of academic career, organisational culture, professional identity and continuing professional development.

The academic career concept will be explored to understand the notion of a professional academic career in the private HE setting and how academic careers were traditionally perceived in the public setting. The organisational culture in private HE is different from the public HE sector. The theme of organisational culture delves deeply into the fundamental workings of the private setting, as professional identity is influenced by the organisational culture. This theme will offer insights into how managers perceive their professional identities, questioning perceptions of internal identity, and how external members perceive the professional identity of managers within the sector. Next comes an exploration of managers' experiences of continuing professional development, the development opportunities made available to managers in taking up their roles, and the training and support provided to them in becoming managers

Traditionally in pre-92 universities, academic staff were not looking to move into management positions, but instead sought to raise their research profile or focus on teaching. It is already known that most academic careers in higher education from pre-92 universities were taken on to grow subject specialist knowledge. A study from Deem (1998) discussed that there were a minority of managers from post-92 universities who actively searched out managerial positions, these staff accepting the role of manager, who were referred to as 'career track' managers. However, in private HE, progression into management routes is taken by many, as it is a chance to move up the ladder and grow one's career, demonstrating that management routes in private HE are agile, and individuals are entrepreneurial, driving their career forward at any cost. In summary, this is changing the HE academic career landscape, moving away from the traditional routes that academics join early in their careers and continue for the remainder of their employment.

2.2 Academic career

The notion of what forms an academic career is shifting as the academic environment develops, and private HE institutions become part of the wider sector. It has been argued that changes in academic careers will bring positive and negative experiences for managers, impacting career trajectories (Hollywood et al., 2020).

2.2.1 Career theory and family background

Over the years, there have been many studies conducted relating to areas of career, career trajectories, women in academic management, and academic culture connected to organisational structures (Correll, 2004; Grimshaw et al., 2002; Kenny & Fluck, 2022; Morley, 2013), although there is now a shift to the individual, their self-assessments, their career choices and aspirations (Correll, 2001). Academic careers are changing from linear routes to boundaryless careers (Arthur et al., 2005); however, there are few studies specifically about managers working in private HE institutions and their career trajectories. This section reviews the literature concerning academic careers. First, it will review the literature on career theory. Second, it will examine how family influences the career choices of managers working in private HE. Third, it will describe what educational opportunities were made available to managers and why managers decided to work in the private HE sector.

The culture in which individuals are surrounded will influence their career choices, both by the abilities of others around them and by the socioeconomic impact embedded within their culture. Consequently, in early studies, Correll (2004) argued that culture would restrict what individuals believe they are capable of, which would have a longer-term impact on career choices and sculpting career aspirations. Roksa and Kinsley (2019) argued that social learning occurs in early childhood; this environment shapes the cultural behaviours that impact an individual's choices and personal decisions. The direct learning that takes place is communication and working with others; subsequent communications outside of the immediate family include school, friends, and community.

A study undertaken by Roksa and Kinsley (2019) in a post-92 institution found that respondents from family backgrounds where the family appreciated education influenced the children, as the parents hoped this would improve the child's life chances. In addition, it was argued that several individuals from working-class backgrounds had overturned the expected customary academic limits when they joined grammar schools instead of their local comprehensive (Floyd, 2012b). Therefore, family backgrounds shape choices in the early years of education and career, impacting longer-term career decisions.

The educational choices of managers working in private HE are closely connected to their family backgrounds and notable people (Camarero-Figuerola et al., 2020). Family makeup vastly influences the opportunities made available to managers; the prospects they seek are steered by this group, particularly the structures around their upbringing. Families can help or hinder what individuals believe they can access in their careers and their capabilities; therefore, their career aspirations and personal abilities are driven from a very early age (Butler & Muir, 2017). Similarly, notable people are highly influential role models; for example, teachers can positively or negatively shape career choices, and teachers who do not believe in their students' success can negatively impact career aspirations and career choices (Evetts, 2003). Consequently, the quality of teachers' managers' access during their educational experiences would depend on their family's socio-economic status, family structures, value systems, and traditional or non-traditional backgrounds. Many are shaped by cultures within these environments (Butler & Muir, 2017).

This study focuses on the careers of managers working in private HE. It considers the role of family, notable people, their educational opportunities together, and their previous job roles. Combined, these factors will allow for an understanding of how their career trajectories were shaped.

2.2.2 Career choices

It has been argued that what forms an academic career differs from what it may have been perceived as historically (Ates & Brechelmacher, 2013). In public HE institutions, academics join this sector to conduct research or teach. The intention is not to move into management positions, which bring a diverse range of additional duties and can be perceived as a

distraction from their primary work. Floyd (2012b) argued that HODs are taking on much of the management and bureaucratic tasks, which result in time and focus away from both research and teaching responsibilities. Zacher et al. (2019) argued that academic careers involve research, teaching, and administrative duties. However, scholars could potentially engage in one or two of these roles, whereas a professor might expect reduced responsibilities in both research and teaching.

A study undertaken by Chakravarthy and Lorange (2008) in a post-92 institution investigated a research-intensive institution in the UK through a commercial lens; they examined how university staff incorporate commercial activities within their roles, which could be perceived as entrepreneurial. Entrepreneurial skills are displayed by "entrepreneurs who start to transform enterprises and add value through the organisation of resources and opportunities" (Ferreras-Garcia et al., 2019). Managerialism is relatively new in the HE sector, and the diversity of managers working in public HE institutions is limited (Morley, 2013). However, it is recognised that post-92 universities are working in similar spaces with some parallels to that of the private HE sector, although post-92 universities are not as commercialised as private HE institutions, where a commercial approach is taken in all aspects of the business model.

Academics move into management positions as they reach a certain stage in their careers, which Floyd (2012b) referred to as 'turning points'; he argued that when academics are ready for their next challenge, this could mean that they move into management positions which affect their career trajectories. Historically, Deem (2003) recognised that some academics enjoyed management roles, so they consciously took up positions to move away from research and teaching. Therefore, moving into a management career depends on individual needs, aspirations, and motives. These changes have meant that management roles, such as Head of Department, have also changed; over time, the roles have become multi-dimensional, and university managers are finding themselves with expanded roles from what was traditionally perceived (Klofsten et al., 2019). The decision to move into management positions is not taken lightly, with varying motivations as to why one might want to take up this role.

Nevertheless, in the private HE sector, the progression routes are driven by management roles instead of teaching or research recognition, which could be argued to push academics into management roles as an opportunity for advancement. Deem et al. (2007) referred to these individuals as 'career-track managers'; they argued that these individuals want to move away from teaching and research to achieve their goals through management routes. Due to changes in academic careers, linear progression routes do not exist (Ooms et al., 2019); instead, staff may begin their careers in academia through teaching or research routes, although they quickly progress into junior and middle management positions.

Further reasons for individuals to move into management posts include status, financial gain, and the opportunity to influence decision-making and bring about change. The roles of managers in HE have been explicitly transformed in terms of managerialism (Deem, 2020). The funding routes for universities have moved from being government-led to universities taking responsibility for their income through the recruitment of student numbers; this has resulted in university managers taking a more active role in student recruitment responsibilities. Therefore, being an academic manager can be perceived as an attractive position for many. Although Lewis (2018) argued that the benefits recognised were often associated with having freedom and authority, after being in the position, it was soon realised that most seemed restricted in their roles.

Academics start their careers as lecturers or researchers; management positions are usually taken later in one's career, and academic management is not usually a starting point in a career; the role of HE managers is multi-faceted (Bolden et al., 2012). As individuals move into management positions, this can bring challenges for managers and colleagues, because they have not had the training to occupy these professional roles. Decisions to move into management posts require a shift in mindset from academic to academic manager. Hill (2004) found that two significant themes emerged when new managers took up posts. Firstly, becoming a manager required an intense mental alteration; managers had to reform their behaviours from managing themselves to managing others; secondly, becoming a manager was mostly a procedure of learning through experience. Being a new manager meant that understanding the role happened through real situations and experiences within the role.

Academic managers progress through their careers either by research publications or teaching in subject specialisations; subject specialisation is a route that naturally occurs through subject teaching or subject research. Gmelch (2004) argued that HE managers must be generalists; future managers will be trained specialists, although for them to advance in their roles, they will need to rise above the specialist areas. These multifaceted roles and responsibilities result in skills and knowledge outside specialist areas, requiring a broader skillset to handle multiple management responsibilities. Even though it is argued that academics who take on management roles should be engaged in relating academic core values as opposed to managerial processes and behaviours (Bolden et al., 2012), academic management careers require management skills and are rooted in academic culture. Emotional intelligence plays a significant role in managing others. Research suggests that managers must be willing to learn about themselves and, if needed, adapt, and change, but also to be resilient as the pressures and feelings within the role grow (McCaffery, 2018).

2.2.3 Summary background of managers

The literature review found that there were some significant aspects in the family that influenced career decision-making, including:

- The culture that managers are surrounded with in their families will shape their thinking regarding their abilities and career choices.
- Social learning is learnt early on; it is these cultural behaviours that influence personal decision-making and career choices.
- In cultures where the family appreciates education, this leads to children having similar values embedded; families drive this, hoping it will improve the life chances of their children.
- Notable people may positively or negatively influence one's perception of their capabilities, impacting career decisions.
- Management positions are multi-dimensional, and commercial organisations highly value entrepreneurial traits.
- New managerialism has meant that traditional management roles are evolving.

This section of the literature review discussed academic careers and related theories. It focused on the influence of the family on career choices, along with the educational opportunities made available to them. Thus, this section has highlighted areas of career and career theory that impact managers working in HE. However, there is a gap in the impact of this in private HE, which underpins RQ1 of this study: **'What are the personal and professional circumstances that lead academics to become managers in the private HE sector?'**

One's career trajectory is shaped by the experiences and knowledge gained through the world of work (Sum & Dimmock, 2013). Although there is no specific career route for managers working in HE, staff are promoted from within the institution (Deem et al., 2007). Managers reveal that the opportunities made available to them and the influences of organisational culture coupled with career professional development are the supporting mechanisms that fundamentally impact the professional identity of managers, which then inspire and shape the career trajectories of managers.

The next section of this chapter critically examines the literature about the next theme in the theoretical framework of HE organisational culture.

2.3 HE organisational culture

In pre-92 universities, academics entered higher education who were passionate about research and their subject areas, so they continued to conduct research to develop knowledge. In comparison, private HE institutions are teaching-led, so the culture is not focused on research, which carries similarities with post-92 universities. Academics in private institutions often take professional routes through management opportunities to progress their careers. It is argued by Chong et al. (2018) that the culture of the organisation will impact the culture of leadership. The marketisation of education drives changes in HE organisational culture. Alvesson (2012) defines organisational culture as 'the discussion of the importance for people of symbolism, rituals, myths, stories, and legends, the interpretation of events, ideas, and experiences that are influenced and shaped by groups within which they live'.

2.3.1 Marketisation of HE

Neoliberalism is defined as the market superseding HE from being a public good (Giddens, 2013). In HE, neoliberalism is said to promote a free market, offering a range of options to the HE market due to the deregulation and privatisation of education (Lubienski, 2006). It is argued that neoliberalism is needed because it creates competition in the HE sector and can lead to a more effective and efficient education system (Kaplan, 1997; Roberts & Peters, 2019; Shearer, 2020). This section will review the literature related to the organisational culture of private higher education. It will mainly focus on how the privatisation of HE has impacted the work of managers. It will consider the organisational culture of private HE, a comprehensive interpretation of the working practices that influence managers' work.

Private HE institutions are for-profit organisations that characterise the fastest-growing sector (Altbach et al., 2009). The term 'privatisation' is represented in many ways; some significant areas include the marketisation of education services using fees, the deregulation of economies to allow private providers to enter markets, and the elimination of barriers to capital (Whitty, 2000). Economists believe that the privatisation of education allows for improvements in the education sector. For example, resources are used efficiently, ensuring that suppliers also strive to be economical and allowing customers extra choice (Belfield & Levin, 2015). In addition, students are willing to pay high fees to study in UK universities as international students, even more so for the top-ranked providers (Frank & Cook, 2010).

The organisational culture of HE has changed due to funding reforms for universities. A review of the HE sector was undertaken by Browne (2010) in the report, 'Securing a sustainable future for HE'. The report focused on tuition fees with the reduction of government funding; this resulted in students themselves being expected to make more significant contributions to pay for their education. Since this change, there has been a shift in the HE market. Student expectations have changed as paying customers, leading to a change in the relationship between students and the university. Students are called customers, and universities are service providers (Garrick & Dearing, 1997). This change has added a strain to universities' survival under commercial pressures. It is argued by del Cerro Santamaria (2020) that the marketisation of education goes against the HE ethos of

research and education; marketisation has resulted in education being a commercial commodity that students can consume. Williams (2016) argued that limits are needed in the marketisation of education; the thought of universities making a profit could take the marketisation of education too far, sending the wrong message of HE culture, whereas the ethos in recent decades has been to ensure access to education for all. The increase in students referred to as customers by traditional universities raises concerns, as education is not regarded as a product or service (Bunce, Baird, & Jones, 2017).

2.3.2 Private HE organisational culture

The culture of a HE institution and the corporate organisational culture created a new private organisational cultural sphere. Public HE institutions are similar to the corporate world in many ways, focusing on organisational goals, attainment, and vision (Ramachandran et al., 2011b). Expansion of the private HE sector was facilitated in 2010 when the government pledged to open the HE sector, broadening the HE market (Department for Business & Skills, 2011). This shift in the sector has resulted in private HE institutions becoming part of the wider HE sector, although private and public cultural disparity continues to exist.

Deal and Kennedy (1982) argued that culture concerns the patterns of behaviour that have developed historically and are conveyed by language and symbols. The term 'organisation' is defined as an open system in continuous communication with its many surroundings, consisting of a few subgroups, departments, hierarchical layers, and physically scattered divisions (Schein, 2010). Together, the terms 'organisation' and 'culture' refer to the make-up of the faculties, departments, and groups within the private institution, bringing the behaviours and symbols that could differ across layers, divisions, and subject areas. Therefore, the organisational culture is multifaceted. Organisational culture allows an understanding of the organisation's fundamental beliefs, perceptions, and underlying assumptions; universities are complex organisations, and private HE institutions bring other considerations that create a multifaceted culture (Alvesson, 2012).

The dimensions of culture were seen by Al-Husseini et al. (2021) as existing on three levels; the first is a culture that allows others to observe and can be seen. In the private HE sector,

this is surrounded by notable signs, including the working environment, the actions of the staff, multiple university partners, the management structures of the institution, and the commercial roles that do not exist in the public setting. The second level is constructed within the institution's organisational strategies, goals, and mission. For a private HE institution, the organisation's goals and vision impact managers working there. Having the vision to grow student numbers as a private equity firm is a very different culture from what exists in the public HE setting. This culture impacts the managers' roles or even restricts them with their academic working practices. The final level of culture reveals the values of the organisation. In private HE, it is the views, traditions, expectations, and approaches of the organisation that affect the working practices of managers, which shape their decision-making. Having the backing of a more comprehensive organisation and expertise in training, consulting, and learning are all factors that can contribute to the organisational culture and the product offering.

It has been argued that managerialism within HE has produced a culture of audit and examination that challenges the traditional work of academics in HE (Deem, 2020). Managers spend much of their time juggling the organisational culture; there is a need for managers to gain an understanding of the organisational culture to be able to work effectively within the cultural parameters. It has been argued that organisational culture is formed by the leaders within the organisation (Schein, 2010). Therefore, the management workforce in the institution influences the organisational culture, impacting managers together with the academic staff and the decision-making; it is the coding of people's thinking and keeping in mind the differences in the groups that need to be understood in shaping culture (Hofstede, 2001).

2.3.3 Organisational culture in an academic setting

A strong academic culture is perceived as having a high similarity of organisational goals and values among staff working there. While academics are known within their institutions, schools, and faculties, they also belong to a broader network across universities and countries globally (Mishra, 2020). Professionals in HE tend to be experts in their field; the academic culture within the HE sector is highly driven by the autonomy academics have

within their roles. Academic culture values academic autonomy and the freedom to work independently to develop academic credibility through the composition of research and the acquisition of knowledge (Henkel, 2005). Academics are perceived as members of a professional community and viewed as experts in their fields; they collaborate when required and form new knowledge within their subjects. Factors that make up this academic culture are autonomy, critical judgement, and self-interest within this profession (McCaffery, 2018). The idea of not having independence and flexibility as an academic could be viewed as sitting outside of the known culture in HE; this could bring challenges in not allowing academics to feel part of their broader network and academic community (Choi, 2019).

The better-known or more familiar organisational culture is one in the public HE sector that is recognised by many due to the longevity of its presence. Culture in most public institutions is created by learning, a learning environment in which academic roles, including lecturers and professors, strongly define this academic setting; however, in many cases, the university setting is distracted by the bureaucracy hindering these environments (Cardoso et al., 2019). Although it is accepted that public institutional cultures may have similarities to private institutions, there are also differences in the working practices, decision-making, and commercial heritage. These dissimilarities are of interest in distinguishing the culture of managers working in private institutions. Hofstede (2011) suggested that culture is "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others". Understanding the organisational culture of managers operating in private institutions allows for more significant insights into how managers think, which impacts the influence on culture. It also sets the culture for newcomers as they join private institutions, where the culture may not be familiar to them. Historically, Trowler and Knight (1999) claimed that it is down to new staff to assimilate the invisible organisational culture. This can be challenging for new staff, as they might find components of the organisational culture unacceptable or not grasp it. There is an expectation that new entrants will accept the organisational culture. Some will understand and absorb the culture, but others will fail to do so, resulting in struggles within the institution or often departing from the institution. The challenges of joining new academic institutions,

particularly moving from public to private institutions, could result in not being fully aware of the working differences. Schein (2010) argued that culture for newcomers, whether that be into the role or organisation, would need to "learn the ropes" before they were accepted as members. Once others in the organisation believe that the new manager understands the organisational culture and grasps 'how things work around here', they are acknowledged within their role.

The HE organisational culture will diverge, determined by whether the institution is a teaching or research-focused organisation. The significance of teaching can impact managers' thought processes, which affects decision-making that influences institutional culture. Floyd (2019) argued that more decision-making must be fed into broader institutional decision-making processes, which will help support organisational culture. Leal Filho et al. (2018) argued that all staff engage with teaching, and managers oversee teaching, so all staff act to see the importance of teaching. The management culture in teaching-led institutions focuses on the efficiency of staff teaching, whereas research-intensive institutions instead drive research objectives together with publication outcomes. Barnett (2012) argued that the balance between teaching and research are decided by the university and imposed by the employee contract. With the division of academic staff being 'research concentrated' and 'teaching led', the management culture can cause a divide between cultural and organisational objectives.

2.3.4 Commercialisation of education

Private HE institutions are often criticised as businesses focusing on profits rather than students. The commercialisation of education across the HE sector is, by many, perceived negatively, although this competition in HE offers opportunities for students. Bok (2009) defined commercialisation as universities profiting from student- and staff-related activities, including teaching, research, and campus-related activities. Since the annual increase in tuition fees for students, the notion of students as consumers has grown within the sector, resulting in academic institutions conveying the importance of income and maximising revenue (Natale & Doran, 2012). Consumerisation of HE has led to an increased number of private institutions in HE; new post-92 institutions are not as focused on research as pre-92

institutions, but more on the students' skills and employability, which are acquired through their courses. For institutions to successfully focus on the student and not the research, this results in consumerisation, which empowers the students as the buyers of education. Kindlein and Schwaiger (2015) discussed how universities have moved from knowledge generators to service providers. However, Budd (2017) argued that students are far from the consumerisation belief and want to learn rather than being perceived as customers. Managers in HE institutions realise the importance of considering the competitiveness and customer satisfaction of students as students decide which institution they will attend (Bunce et al., 2017); this allows more significant opportunities for choice, thereby increasing the competition among institutions.

The commercialisation of education will likely undermine the academic culture and purpose of the research (Lynch, 2006). From a commercial perspective, research functions can be perceived as subtracting from the resources to drive commercial growth (Marginson, 2004). Although research within an institution helps create longer-term value to develop the reputation of the HE provider, the effects are speculative. On the other hand, institutions that are not research-focused could have damaging implications for the quality of teaching.

As HE evolves and private providers become a more significant part of the sector, changes are reflected in HE managers' titles and positions. De Boer and Goedegebuure (2009) suggested that vice-chancellors are similarly now chief executive officers, as well as other commercial roles that have been introduced, including chief financial and operating officers. Although universities in the private sector are corporate organisations, Dearlove (2002) argued that academics should run universities; this brings tensions of running university institutions as businesses against HE university providers. Similarly, this conflict affects managers who decide to take up management positions within the private HE environment. Management work has become more complex, and managers are being asked to take on more responsibilities early in their careers (Klofsten et al., 2019). Managers once responsible for programmes and student learning are now accountable for partnerships, budgets, and several academic staff members. These changes in management roles have resulted from staff being individual contributors and moving to managing and leading

others, which are demanding roles. Many managers had misjudged how challenging it would be to cultivate countless people and technical skills (Miller, 2019).

Quality in education is perceived as placing student needs at the centre of decision making, which is anticipated to give students the best learning experience. When students are secondary in decision-making, this can hurt the students' learning journey. Bunce et al. (2017) and Woodall et al. (2014) argued that students are perceived as consumers in HE; they believed that students who identify as consumers have little interest in the knowledge being taught, and for some, the focus is to 'have a degree'. In cases where institutions start to take this type of consumer-based approach, it can be perceived as a high-risk factor in their operating structure. Marginson (2018) argued that if institutions lose sight of their values, the desire to make money can spread throughout the institution. It is managers within the institution who influence the HE culture. Therefore, these groups need to develop a culture that emphasises the students' needs and inspires others to follow. Paais and Pattiruhu (2020) argued that an organisation's culture can affect its managers' growth.

The commercialisation of education often happens in HE institutions, a phenomenon that has been around for a while. However, it is argued that academic misunderstandings can encourage commercialisation within an institution. To keep profit-making within reasonable limits, the institution must have well-defined values embedded within quality and integrity (Jessop, 2018). Nevertheless, the more universities provide globalised education, the more challenging it can be to separate education from commercial aspects; inevitably, this will impact the institutional culture and conduct of academic managers.

2.3.5 Faculty and department cultures

Each HE institution will have its own organisational culture. However, often sub-cultures are formed within more defined working communities inside departments and faculties within the university. There are often conflicts between faculty cultures and staff who are teaching-orientated, research-orientated, as well as administrative departments; culture within the institution is said to be influenced particularly by leading cultures in academic departments (Ball & Lacey, 2019; Knight & Trowler, 1999). Faculty and department cultures are formed in smaller organisational groups, which subject groups shape. As a result,

disciplinary cultures are rooted within universities, splitting groups of academics, which can create barriers to academic communication (Daumiller et al., 2020). Therefore, sub-cultures within institutions often differ from organisational culture, which could bring diverse challenges for managers and academics. These challenges include working practices, decision-making, and the misalignment of culture, resulting in altered working within the same institution, although more of an aligned culture within departments and faculties. Cultures at the department level develop as social engagement and subject knowledge grow among staff members. Of course, broader organisational cultures may be implemented across university institutions. However, these will not necessarily be implemented within departments, as there could be opposing views of beliefs and practices (Becher, 2018a). Managers working within a faculty would be more likely to have a system of shared beliefs among their working group (Dill, 2012). Therefore, managers can feel divided between their faculty and organisational cultures, so bridging this gap can often take time and effort.

Historically, Clark (1986) found significant differences between faculty members depending on their discipline, learning values, and way of life. Communities are tightly knit regarding their fundamental philosophies, beliefs, and shared views of excellence within their discipline. Where staff members have loyal understandings, any divergences from this known culture or attempts from outsiders to alter this will be disregarded (Becher & Trowler, 2001); where disciplines are different and not tightly joint, this can lead to members lacking a focused mutual unity and an identity. The culture of a department and the management of a faculty is one that works within and has a more substantial impact on their way of working than their discipline has (Ball & Lacey, 2019). Therefore, faculty cultures should not go unnoticed; institutions should explore ways of embracing faculty cultures. However, they should also explore the institutional culture to search for ways this can be integrated into faculties to give managers every opportunity to have a level of consistency among the organisational culture and across faculties. This type of practice can also support the move away into sub-cultures and help to keep the organisational cultural values at the centre for all managers.

The social integration of staff members supports the creation of a rich learning culture within working communities. ‘Communities of practice’ are defined as groups of people

connected by the activities they carry out collectively (Wenger et al., 2002). Within HE, managers are connected to multiple communities across faculties, departments, management groups, classroom teaching, research, and discipline areas, among others. These bonds created within communities form collegial communication that supports the growth of the academic culture. The academic community is said to be made up of areas including university traditions and sacrifices by prominent faculty staff and considering academic freedom (Thornton, 2020); the growth of the community results in socialisation required to foster the academic culture. Communities of practice imply that organisational culture develops over time; the groups of people within an institution work together and then create their communities. Although communities of practice are self-established social structures and processes, these structures collaborate due to the prominence of shared activity (White & Weathersby, 2005). With professional management working relationships, there are immediate working communities, although, over time, these communities would develop as the needs of the manager's role develop. As time goes on, communities renegotiate, and their capabilities develop; it is argued that communities of practice are fundamental practices of learning organisations (Dei & van der Walt, 2020). Cultural bonds build in and outside faculties, as staff collaborate to publish and share research interests. Teams will also build teaching communities with common themes in discipline areas. Academic communities are intense within academic lives, which are said to be stimulated by learning, and the pursuit of excellence within one's subject specialism (Gersick et al., 2000).

2.3.6 Private HE lecturer disposition

The notion of disposition in this context refers to the attitudes and behaviours of managers working in the private HE sector. Bourdieu (1988) defined habitus as a "system of continuous and transferable dispositions". He referred to disposition as the individual's positions and tendencies focusing on how they think, feel, act, and understand. Asimaki and Koustourakis (2014) argued that dispositions emphasise the non-conscious values that lead an individual and their behaviour. The behaviour that supports the working of managers in the private HE sector, their inclinations and conduct, can work for some in this environment, although it does not suit the characteristics of others. Some thrive in the fast-paced and

busy, changing environment with a highly diverse cohort of students and partners, although this is not an environment that suits all personalities.

Traditionally, academics working in public university environments have been exposed to the public organisational culture, with the ideology of only the elite being able to gain a higher education (Trow, 2010). Studies suggest that historically most students entered university either directly from high school or soon after completion, and most were in their late teens or early 20's, very few had families to care for; As this was an elite system the large majority of students came from families with an above average income and where parents themselves were commonly well educated (Kember et al., 2021). However, higher education today looks very different, where the elite higher education system has long gone and the student body has become very diverse (Altbach, 1999; Olssen & Peters, 2005). Academic management dispositions support the increase of diverse student populations entering private institutions by widening the participation of student groups (Dunbar, 2016). Some institutions are made up of research-focused groups, as opposed to teaching deliverables. The lecturer's disposition in the private sector works in an environment where teaching is the focus. It takes an entrepreneurial outlook of guiding and supporting students in their learning through similar experiences that the academic managers would have had in their educational knowledge.

The dispositions of managers make up a large proportion of the culture within an institution and will influence how things are done. Sathorar and Geduld (2019) argued that structural and institutional forces condition humans, although individuals can go beyond them, therefore they claimed that dispositions are not static and develop over time. When working in HE, much of the disposition is determined by approaches to learning, teaching, students, and education as a broader concept, but also the experiences of education continue through community and agency (Bautista, 2018).

2.3.7 Summary of organisational culture

The literature found that there were some significant aspects of culture from various areas that influenced managers working within HE, including:

- The HE culture has developed with the growth of private HE institutions across the sector, resulting in a new environment that differs from the traditional public-facing culture better known to most academics.
- Funding reforms have resulted in changing landscapes for universities. Neoliberalism has meant that student expectations of education have moved from an education-receiving to a customer-receiving environment.
- Academic autonomy is a significant factor when working within academia; although led by research when working in a teaching institution, the level of autonomy could differ significantly.
- The commercialisation of education has meant that students have more choices, increasing competition among HE institutions. The commercial aspects result in making a profit together with having a highly commercial outlook in decision making when viewing the broader academic student experience.
- Faculty and department cultures will naturally form among working teams; these groups work together within subject areas, although it can be difficult for faculty and department cultures to align with organisational cultures.
- HE lecturer disposition recognises that there are specific tendencies and behaviours managers have that suit them when working in the private HE sector. There is recognition that the private environment is not suited to every academic's character. It would be foolish to think that one could move from the public sector to the private sector without considering one's disposition and organisational fit.

This section of the literature review discussed research linked directly to factors that impact managers working in the private HE sector. First, it explored the HE organisational culture to understand how the culture of the sector, institutions, faculties, subjects, and academics impact the experiences of managers' working practices. Thus, this section has highlighted areas of HE organisational culture and how the commercialisation of education has changed the role of managers together with the offerings from institutions. This creates a gap in understanding the impact of HE organisational culture on managers working in the private sector, which underpins the second research question of this study**, 'How do managers**

perceive and experience the organisational culture when working in the private HE institution?'

The organisation's commercial priorities shape a private institution's organisational culture. In the private setting, this is led by a profitable outlook of education, which is a critical driver in creating student opportunities. This stance is one that managers need to understand and learn to work in if they are going to be successful managers in a private setting.

The next section of this chapter critically examines the literature on the next theme in the theoretical framework of professional identity.

2.4 Identity in private HE

Identity is defined as an individual's beliefs and values. It is said that the experiences and traits of the person create the professional role (McCune, 2019), and identity in HE is an essential factor. Professional recognition is fundamentally underpinned by one's network and intellect as much as one's management position within a higher educational setting (Becher & Trowler, 2001). Much research has been conducted on academic identity (Billot & King, 2017; Henkel, 2005; Kenny & Fluck, 2022; Winter, 2009). However, minimal literature is available on managers' identity in private HE in the UK and the impact of this on their professional identity in the sector. The study by Whitchurch (2010) discussed some of the implications of public and private space for professional identities in HE; however, the area is still limited in its development. Therefore, this section will review the literature on professional identity in HE, and it will discuss the role of teaching and research, and how identity is formed socially within the networks influencing identity. Finally, the literature will discuss the career aspirations of managers and how identity supports and drives these.

Identity means understanding who one is and who other people are, and reciprocally other people's understanding of oneself and others (Jenkins, 2014). The professional identity construct can take many forms, including socialisation in HE, the impact of networks on professional identity, research publications, and discipline identities (Clarke et al., 2013). Identity is not an individual form but is constructed socially, resulting in the persistent exchange of multi-faceted identities over a lifetime (Floyd, 2012b). As the HE sector evolves,

reforms in HE bring different expectations to the area and university management roles (McNaughton & Billot, 2016). Pre-92 universities have grown from traditional red-brick institutions to a broader group of universities including post-92 universities and private institutions, which has resulted in changing expectations of higher education staff. The change within academic roles has meant that academics construct their professional identities differently.

Managers working in private institutions often face varied challenges due to the differences in the expectations in their management roles and being in highly market-orientated institutions (Chandler et al., 2002). Private HE institutions are teaching institutions; it could be argued that a teaching environment has a knock-on effect on other areas of academic work, including research, which is claimed to impact one's professional identity (Huang et al., 2018). Other areas academic managers are expected to adopt within their position are institutional growth, admissions queries, income, and making commercial decisions. It has been argued that academic managers are moving away from their academic working environments, taking on more corporate and customer-focused roles (Henkel, 2005). Consequently, identity divisions are growing with the collision of academic values in traditional academic settings compared to modernised corporate cultures in HE (Winter, 2009). A person's identity matches to some degree the organisation they choose to join; Cheema et al. (2020) argued that the better the fit between the two, the more likely the individual is to feel a sense of belonging within the organisation, resulting in influences on their career trajectories. Identity also involves the subjective meanings surrounding who managers are and the implications of how managers should behave (Degn, 2018). It is these visions of oneself that affect how one is perceived within groups and as part of organisational identities. Although identity can be viewed as an individual notion of perception, there is also a need to stress the vibrant atmosphere of the social world where identity could be viewed as a fixed structure rather than an evolving creation, considering the setting one is working in (Ashforth, 1998; Gioia et al. 2000). Academic managers are caught between academic values and managerial requirements (Henkel, 2009), as new managerialism is moving roles away from traditional notions of academic professionalism, resulting in contradicting claims impinging on academic identities (Shams, 2019).

2.4.1 Social groups

The concept of identity also refers to social identity and self-identity. Alvesson (2012) defined social identity as a group or category that one associates oneself with. Henkel (Henkel, 2004, 2005, 2009) suggested that academic identities are constructed in three fundamental areas: the individual, the subject, and the institution. It is argued that organisational identity influences social identities—the groups within the organisation that one would associate with their social identity. This identity also sits with the perception one has of oneself, so managers can perceive themselves as teachers, professionals, or researchers. Within social groups, managers may refer to themselves as HE professionals, academics, or academic managers working in private HE institutions. Social identity theory refers to the facets of an individual's self-image that have developed from the groups that a manager perceives that they belong to emotionally and by adding value to them (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Social identity is how individuals perceive themselves and what is important to them; this differs for everyone. It is how managers situate themselves in the broader social context. There are three levels a manager might associate their identity with: the organisation, the group and the individual. Alvesson (2012) argued that an organisation's staff members form and are formed by the organisational identity. Although the organisation will attempt to drive this identity so that it is embraced at all levels, managers may not associate themselves so strongly with this. Instead, they may align their identity with self-established groups, which they believe reflect closer connections with their professional identity, some of which include faculty identities and subject group identities. This will be discussed in detail later in the chapter in section 2.4.3.

Social skills are fundamental within group identity; these differ among managers, and some managers will be inclined to use their social skills more than others. Group identity is defined as individuals' perception of themselves as group members, referring to value and emotional connection (Alvesson et al., 2008). Socialisation within a group is a way of learning acceptable societal behaviour (Marsh & Keating, 2006). Therefore, group identity focuses on organisational identification, explicitly referring to how individuals associate their ideas and philosophies with those of collective identities with the groups they mix within. Managers working in private HE institutions must consider their professional identity

and the role of symbolic interactions in defining their identity. Although equality is promoted in the HE sector, Teelken and Deem (2013) argued that there are subtle differences among equals. There are still differences among managers, even through the lens of new managerialism.

2.4.2 Management identity

Many authors have discussed the connections between academic and professional management identities and the values of these groups (Arvaja, 2018; Caldwell, 2022; McCune, 2019; Van Lankveld et al., 2017). Private sector universities have redesigned the characteristics of academic work around the role of corporate efficiency, robust managerial culture and profit-making, influencing the work of professionals and their identity. Deem (2001) defined academic capital as comprising of teaching, research, academic knowledge, and consultancy skills; Academic staff who deploy their academic capital operating in a competitive environment although still working in publicly funded universities are pursuing private sector funding using market-like behaviour, it is said, that this may result in these academics distancing themselves as being public employees. Slaughter and Leslie (1997) argue that *'they are academics who act as capitalists from within the public sector; they are state-subsidised entrepreneurs'* (p.9). These characteristics of academic capital support the construction of academic identities in higher education; therefore, managers recognise that their identity is embedded in these themes. This does not suggest that managers cannot be connected to more than one area, although, typically, individuals perceive themselves as belonging to one category more over another. As the priorities of HE institutions have broadened from a traditional research-only focus, this has led to changes in the managers employed and the roles they undertake. The significance of research over teaching priorities for some institutions has intensified. This has been driven by the relative outcomes of research effects, which have intensely influenced identities and career trajectories working in HE institutions (Sharp et al., 2015).

Professional identity is a concept that evolves through an individual's experiences, including family, schooling, and working life; identity is not stationary. For academic managers, their professional identity changes over time (Alvesson et al., 2008; Floyd & Dimmock, 2011).

Therefore, one might experience many shifting identities as one moves through their career (Locke, 2014). From an external perspective, managers' identities in private institutions can be overshadowed by the income generation within the global HE system. As a result, the identity of managers in the private sector is not aligned with those working within the public sector; therefore, it can be perceived negatively in academic domains. Managers from pre-92 universities who enter management roles do so as they perceive this as 'taking their turn'; they fully intend to return to their roles as academics in the end (Deem et al., 2007).

2.4.3 Teaching and research identity

Private HE institutions are teaching-focused institutions, as opposed to research. The identity of HE managers is diverse, having membership in multiple communities, including faculty, subjects, management, research, and teaching, as well as the wider private HE sector. Still, teaching and research are fundamental for academic and professional identities (Henkel, 2000). Although this is a multi-faceted identity, much of it is rooted in teaching. The tensions and synergies between teaching and research are apparent. Although teaching is prioritised in private institutions, this results in academics having to compromise other areas of their professional identity, creating a complex interplay between teaching and research. The demands on academics to concentrate on research within the academic sector over teaching are extensive (Henkel, 2005; Van Lankveld et al., 2017). Research undertaken by McCune (2019) in a post-92 institution found that academics might care deeply about the student; still more importantly, the value they place on the importance of teaching and student learning are at the centre of their identity; however, research can be seen to be just as significant.

Managers who believe that their identity is embedded within teaching can dramatically influence and shape the identity of others in the institution. The cultural understandings that academic managers use in shaping their stories about themselves as teachers are central to their identity. Managers might perceive themselves as academics who find profound value in teaching, even within research-focused institutions (McCune, 2019). Managers who identify intensely with their roles as teachers will consequently impact their

values, consistent with these identities impacting their professional identity as managers and influencing others within the institutional setting (Fitzmaurice, 2013).

The teaching identity is closely connected and shaped by one's subject knowledge, a community of practice, and professional autonomy. Managers identify strongly with their discipline, as it allows a closeness to subject currency and association with university practices in academic social responsibility (Bolden et al., 2012). By developing this subject currency, communities are formed in subjects, giving managers a sense of belonging to their expert areas.

2.4.4 Career aspirations of academic managers

A traditional route into an HE career is via a PhD, where doctoral students continue as teaching or research fellows. Although, historically, staff would join an institution and stay there for most of their career, they would, over time, move through the ranks, reaching positions such as senior lecturers, professors, head of departments, and associate deans, to name just a few. However, with the sector evolving and private providers increasing, traditional academic careers are no longer the only option. Career paths within academia have shifted to 'boundaryless' careers. Arthur and Rousseau (2001) defined careers that move across the boundaries of employers, not focusing on a role within one organisation. The shift in academic careers has meant that academics are more inclined to move across roles and organisations, developing their careers; some individuals enter HE later in their careers, while others move in and out (Whitchurch et al., 2021).

Research and the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) have traditionally dominated career development within academia. Court (1999) found that academics in pre-92 institutions spent around 30% of their time on research, whereas academics in post-92 institutions spent 10%. It is argued that teaching excellence is not given the same level of recognition and that research publications are a fundamental determining factor for promotion (Becher & Trowler, 2001). Although the sector has evolved, this has meant that more research-independent roles have developed, allowing academics more freedom of choice in the career routes they wish to pursue. Whether the roles are administration, research, teaching,

or a combination, the career routes undertaken by academics shape their career identity, influencing their future career trajectories.

A study from (Deem et al., 2007) surveyed academic staff who took on management responsibilities from a mixed sample of pre- and post-92 universities; it was found these managers were delayed in producing research outcomes due to their management responsibilities. Although their roles and duties as managers took priority, it was found that research played a crucial role in forming their academic identity (Deem et al., 2007). Research undertaken by Deem (2001) in a pre-92 institution found that managers who took up the role of head of department (HOD) were doing so out of 'good citizenship' or as 'reluctant managers'; however, they thoroughly planned to return to their roles as academics. Although this is the route some managers find is an opportunity to build their identity as managers, others want to continue to build a research identity via publications, even more so in cases where staff members are at the end of their careers. Although staff members who have taken the role of managers might still not see this as their primary identity, many want to retain their subject and academic identity (Van Lankveld et al., 2017). At the same time, a few managers seek management positions; Field Deem (2001) called them 'career track' managers. The decision to take up management positions impacts the career trajectories of managers, affecting their professional identity.

With the increased, time-consuming workload that comes with management positions, there is a natural hesitancy within traditional universities to take management positions as a route to career development. On the other hand, in private institutions, the management career progression route is driven by more opportunities than the research path. Therefore, universities may take a more structured approach to build staff development plans to support managers in the profession (Tony, 2018).

Henkel (2002) recognised the dilemma for academics in making decisions regarding career trajectories. She discussed how academics wanted to collaborate with others, although they had to take responsibility to drive their research careers forward to develop their research identity.

2.4.5 Summary of professional identity

The literature revealed some significant aspects of identity that shaped managers' professional identities and influenced their career trajectories, including:

- Identity evolves over a period; identity does not stand still; it is made up of an individual's job roles, experiences, networks, skills, behaviours, and environment.
- Social groups are a significant feature of professional identity in the HE sector, where managers positiion themselves within the social setting, group, individual, or organisation.
- The environment that managers work in shapes an individual's identity; exposure to commercial environments will impact managers in their work, shaping their professional identity. This is primarily made up of teaching and research, but it is also shaped by working in subject departments and faculties, which creates communities.
- Career aspirations are determined by the individual, their experience, and their focus on teaching, research, and management routes. Deem (2001) argued that there are three routes within the career trajectories of academic management.
    1. "Good citizenship" – these managers take up management positions later in their careers and often feel they should repay the institution that had given them the opportunity.
    2. Those who reject the role of managers are referred to as 'reluctant' managers.
    3. The managers who seek management roles as a route to progress are referred to as 'career track managers'.

This section of the literature review discussed research linked directly to the professional identity of managers, with a particular focus on professional management identity and the impact this has on managers' working practices. Thus, this section highlighted areas of professional identity and how this is created in social groups, the environments managers work in, and their future career trajectories. However, there is a gap in knowledge about the impact of this in the private HE sector, which leads to the third research question of this study, **'How do managers perceive that their professional identity has been impacted by being a manager in private HE?'**

Managers' identity is shaped by their surroundings, including the people and environments they have been exposed to in their experiences. (Van Lankveld et al., 2017) argued that identity is not static and continues to be developed. In academia, professional identity is valued and developed within the themes of teaching, research, and social groups. It is the professional identity that drives the career aspirations of managers.

The next section of this chapter critically examines the literature on the next theme in the theoretical framework, continuing professional development.

2.5 Continuing professional development

Continuing professional development (CPD) in this context refers to the development of managers in private HE. CPD is defined as 'all formal and informal learning that enables individuals to improve their working practice' (Bubb & Earley, 2007, p. 3). This definition of CPD in this context is associated with the development opportunities managers have engaged with, leading them to management positions. However, Preston and Price (2012) found that minimal research was available on exploring the change in HE. Furthermore, the concept of CPD and what counts towards conducting CPD in HE is blurred. Most academics engage in significant areas of scholarly activity that are often not conceptualised as CPD (Clegg, 2003). Therefore, this section will review the literature on the types of learning that are undertaken by managers, explicitly focusing on observational learning, exploring the concept of situational learning and learning via networks and communities of managers but also the importance of role models and mentors in supporting managers' development.

(Kempster, 2006) argued that leadership learning is highly influenced by the networks, settings, and procedures in practice. Professional learning for managers, in many cases, is viewed as happening through formal events, such as conferences, structured courses and workshops. However, embedding this into a business model does not always work. Professional development courses are often planned as generic 'for all managers' and are typically run by the human resources department of an institution. However, the value of these courses does not consider the individual, their experience, position, or the company's culture (Preston & Floyd, 2016). (Cox, 2018) argued that much of the learning on such

courses is not formally set and is more likely to happen through occurrences and happenings, focusing on an informal learning approach.

CPD for managers in HE needs improvement; more training needs to be available for managers to fully understand how to be effective in their management positions. Although generic training is often available to them, this is an 'all must attend' approach (Gerken et al., 2016) that does not explicitly focus on HE managers' challenges. Instead, CPD should incorporate more relational and social models of leadership learning. CPD must be built into the organisational strategy at the senior level. It must be given the importance required to support emerging, middle, and senior managers and recognised as an essential element of organisational success, as well as a fundamental method of equipping managers to do their job well. Floyd (2019) argued that senior managers in HE recognise the value of professional development and the importance of this for staff. Gmelch (2019) argued that the HOD role is the most critical one in the institution, with unique and varied responsibilities allocated to it. Middle managers are key decision-makers in the institution's day-to-day running, including teaching and administrative duties. Therefore, CPD plans for managers must be strategically built to fully consider their competencies mapped against the skills required to fulfil the role, allowing training courses to be developed to fill these gaps. McCaffery (2018) argued that traditional leadership styles, with one leader making key decisions that others must accept, are not necessarily a leadership style that works, so relational and social models can support the development of leaders here. There is a need for slight differences in leadership within institutions that identify an individual's autonomy and differences in their views and perspectives, which welcomes a healthy discussion amongst academics. HE managers first enter academia through their roles as researchers or teachers. Therefore, many staff members have had minimal management training (Gmelch, 2004; Knight, 1998).

When academics decide to move into management positions, they often want to make a difference in academic decision-making, usually via organisational strategy or resource planning, to impact teaching and learning (Inman, 2011). However, for academics who have moved into management positions with no training or support mechanisms, this can bring diverse challenges as they do not have the skills or knowledge to be effective managers. Preston and Floyd (2016) researched the training and development offered to associate

deans in public institutions, and found that very little training and development was given. (Hill, 2004) argued that the training provided to managers is focused on standardised frameworks and concepts that do not consider the roles of these academic managers.

The duties of an HE manager have evolved over the years. Responsibilities include the management of people, difficulties in managing situations of poor performance, and challenging behaviours (Bryman & Lilley, 2009). However, Morrish (2019) contended that the pressures associated with being a manager can often overshadow the benefits, which could make potential managers rethink before taking on management roles.

2.5.1 Learning

Management learning formally takes place through professional training, although much of the senior management training often happens informally, learning through associated communities, colleagues, and peers (Deem et al., 2007). Managers in HE might be more interested in networking with other managers in similar roles, rather than investing time in further qualifications (Deem, 2006). This type of informal learning can provide deep insights for managers themselves to learn from others in similar roles when preparing for new posts.

A learning organisation is 'capable of forming, obtaining, and transmitting knowledge then adapting its behaviour to display knowledge and understandings' (Garvin et al., 2008, p. 78). Knowledge is gathered over time within an organisation; as a manager builds their experience of working within a sector, they can call upon experiences in handling situations widely in the sector but more specifically in the institution itself. Knowledge is in the mind of the individual; it is a core competence and a capability. In any organisation, knowledge of the role is required to carry out duties successfully. For managers, operational knowledge is present at a tacit level, and institutional routines carry the knowledge (Gherardi & Strati, 2012). For an organisation to truly call itself a learning organisation, it would need to welcome new ideas and use them to generate improvements within the organisation, which Garvin et al. (2008) argued rules out organisations such as universities. For universities to call themselves learning organisations, they must develop their processes and seek improvement. Strong institutional leadership will create CPD opportunities while

considering staff development needs and how this will improve the individual and the institution (Muijs & Lindsay, 2008).

Learning will only occur in a receptive environment, where managers lead the organisational learning culture and must embrace new ideas to welcome improvements. (Garvin et al., 2008) claimed that learning organisations are open to listening to the opinions of others, as well as understanding that they can learn from others. However, several factors prevent HE institutions from becoming learning organisations, including strategy, structure, and culture (White & Weathersby, 2005).

2.5.2 Observational learning

Learning can occur through observations, situated and reflective learning, and often informal learning methods. For example, Becher (2018a) argued that managers learn six times as much during non-formal happenings as they do through formal training events. However, informal learning is invisible, and Eraut (2004) argued that the knowledge learnt is often viewed as part of a person's capability often defined as tacit knowledge.

Observational learning is a natural unconscious way of learning. It can bring positive or negative learning, and this ability is dependent on the person being observed together with their leadership practices. Although Kempster (2009b) argued that the power of leadership learning takes place through the examination of 'notable people', Yoon et al. (2021) claimed that the influence of leadership development and learning plays a substantial role through the mentoring of staff, whether this be official or unofficial. Observational leadership learning theory provides insights into the stages of observational learning over time, from pre-career, early career, mid-career to late career. These stages of observational learning over the duration of the career allow learning to shape an individual's leadership by having access to significant others (see Figure 2.2).

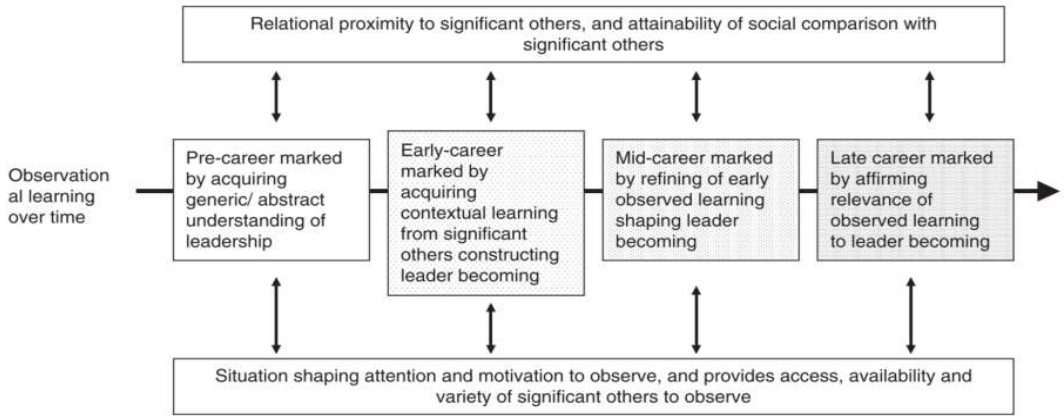

Figure 2.2 Observational leadership learning (Kempster, 2009)

It would be difficult to separate learning from a social environment. (Owen-Pugh, 2003) argued that learning occurs informally within a social context. Yet, the literature offers minimal research on observational learning and development in the private HE sector, which is a significant factor in management development and learning; the 'notable people' play a fundamental role in management learning.

2.5.3 Situated learning

Managers learn via formal learning routes, whereas situated learning focuses on learning contexts away from this approach. Situated learning was defined by Lave and Wenger (1991) as 'learning by doing'. Learning in practice is often argued to benefit the learner by learning during the process of doing. Learning is an inseparable feature of social practice; naturally, individuals will learn from the environment they are in. Situated leadership is grounded in the day-to-day interactions with others, which enables one to lead in a specific context. Gherardi et al. (1998) defined a situated curriculum as the activities that allow a learner to become a fully participating member while practising the role. Therefore, managers working in a private HE environment learn by being put into situations requiring them to 'learn by doing'.

When newcomers join the private organisational community, they need to fully participate in the sociocultural practices of the community and embed themselves within the learning to fully benefit. Legitimate peripheral participation is a concept in which learners participate

in communities as experts within their field (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It is viewed as a space where there are many engaged or disengaged ways one is located within communities to participate; the legitimacy of participation must consider attributes of belonging. This is a fundamental requirement of learning, which in turn impacts one's identity as well as connection and involvement (Lave et al., 1991). When one does not feel a sense of belonging, one's participation levels will be low, impacting one's identity.

The notion of legitimate peripherality is a concept that is influenced by social structures and power relations. More participation results in further power in one's position; alternatively, where one is held back from participation, this moves one to a less authoritative role (Lave et al., 1991). Participating is said to help obtain knowledge in practice, supporting the definition of situated learning (Gherardi, 2000). Practice itself is developed through managers participating and connecting. Lave and Wenger (1991) suggested that as the community within learning evolves, the manager moves from a beginner to a leader. An individual's role will have a significant impact on the knowledge and opportunities that are made available to them. Therefore, managers working in private HE should have varied learning opportunities because of their diverse duties. It is also essential to understand that working at a management level would give rise to observing notable others and managers through participation and engagement, which would support the development of one's management knowledge (Kempster & Stewart, 2010).

2.5.4 Communities of practice

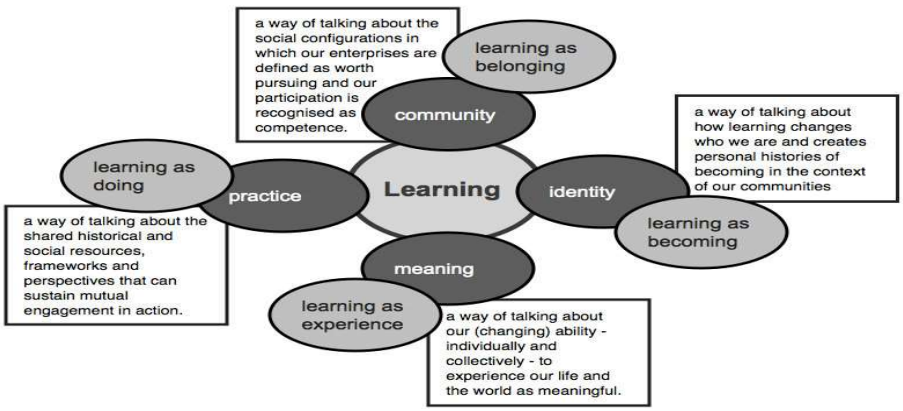

Figure 2.3 Components of a social theory of learning: An initial inventory (Lave & Wenger, 2000)

Learning is a multifaceted concept that involves gaining knowledge in many ways that suit managers. Figure 2.3 above by Wenger (2000) illustrates the various learning formats, highlighting learning that requires practice, community, identity, and meaning; it is argued that the organisation's success highly depends on the social learning systems and how these are structured.

Communities allow for learning to occur through the flow of information from one individual or group to another. The opening up of borders enables a flow of information that allows people to come together to form communities, share ideas through meetings, projects, and working relationships, and understand opposing perspectives to consider how the others work (Garvin et al., 2008). Learning can also take place successfully via the management community. When managers work with others, they can share their management knowledge and styles of handling situations, but at the same time, can observe situations that allow them to adopt skills and expertise from others, thus learning to manage in HE effectively.

'Communities of practice' are defined by Wenger et al. (2002, p. 7) as:

> *Groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis.*

Although the term has been used extensively within various contexts, it is mainly associated with theories of learning and social contributions (Wenger, 1999).

Various points bind together communities of practice; some of these include holding a collective understanding of their community. For managers to be able to contribute, this understanding must exist; if it does not exist, managers will be reluctant to contribute to the community, which will break the social learning system. The community is built through shared commitment. Community members interact with each other, forming collaborative relationships that mirror interactions. On the other hand, the downside of social learning is said to be that, for new managers joining the communities of practice where social learning

is taking place, it might not be so apparent to them that this informal learning is adding to their learning and knowledge (Yılmaz et al., 2019). Managers within the institution are responsible for bringing together learning opportunities, including tacit and distributed learning (Blackwell & Blackmore, 2003).

When learning takes place, it does not need to be in a formal context. Kempster (2006) claimed that learning could be embraced as a lived experience. Although there is no end to learning, it does not need to be separated from the manager's activities. For learning to take place socially, participants need to engage with communities actively; they need to have belonged to feel part of the community and learn and contribute.

2.5.5 Mentoring

Mentoring is a form of professional development that is often used to support effective leadership (Kent & Green, 2018). It is a form of learning for managers, with the support of more experienced professionals, to grow within their roles. Mentoring can support transferring knowledge, skills, and experiences for newer managers coming into the system from more experienced managers. However, limited academic support and mentoring are offered for managers working in the private HE sector. Mentoring is a way of enhancing managers' learning and development, primarily for academic members (Knippelmeyer & Torraco, 2007).

Mentoring is only sometimes a formal process; much of the mentoring is informal, and often mentoring is initiated by the mentee. For mentoring to be effective, Mullen and Klimaitis (2021) argued that enough time should be allowed over a period where the mentee can bond with the mentor through regular interactions, but fundamentally allowing sufficient time for reflection. However, the effectiveness of mentoring will be dependent on the relationship, the mentoring plan and how this plan is executed (Muslim et al., 2021).

Reflection is one significant learning area; Schön (2017) claimed that a fundamental factor that distinguishes an expert from a novice is attained through regular acting and reflecting, mainly focusing on what we are doing and why we have open conversations with others. "Leadership preparedness" was explored by Kempster and Cope (2010); they argued that

leaders are to engage in profound discussions and critical reflection with their colleagues through constructing leadership “learning networks”. This supports the build-up of a setting that allows time for reflection.

2.5.6 Summary of continuing professional development

The literature found that some significant aspects of learning impact the role of managers, including:

- Learning can happen differently and should not be confined to formal learning opportunities. The training offered to managers working in academia is very limited, hindering them from fulfilling their roles. Most start as researchers or lecturers, so they must be taught how to manage.
- Communities of practice allow learning to take place where staff come together. This opens opportunities to share thinking and ideas and to consider each other’s work. It is also a solid relationship-building practice within the HE sector, where staff members might often only work with their direct colleagues.
- Observational learning and situated learning are both forms of learning that can support the development of managers in their roles; they can provide them with the knowledge and skills required to be successful, which cannot necessarily be learnt in formal training courses.
- Mentors support learning in many ways, primarily by having a more experienced manager to rely on both for practical and emotional support. This can develop newer managers in their roles.

This section of the literature review discussed research linked directly to the types of learning (CPD) that take place by managers in the context of HE. It considered the impact that learning has on CPD, allowing managers to carry out their roles successfully. Thus, this section highlighted the areas of CPD needed to enable managers to fulfil their roles successfully. However, there is a gap in what CPD opportunities are available in the private HE sector, which underpins the fourth research question of this study: **‘What are managers’ experiences of continuing professional development in private HE and future development needs?’**

Learning requires time, and organisations that are learning institutions are supportive environments for managers in their learning journeys. Traditionally, L&T faculties were designed to offer structured development for organisational learning (Eib & Miller, 2020). Professional development for managers requires more than just one method, and there should be varied development options for learning to take a more tailored approach. Inman (2011) argued that learning for managers in HE should be 'bespoke and contextualised', allowing for a carefully constructed method emphasising personalisation.

The next chapter presents the methods utilised in undertaking this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The methodology chapter will discuss the research framework explicitly applied to this study. The chapter will focus on the research paradigm, the research methods applied in the data collection for the private HE provider, the applied sampling frame, ethical issues, and finally, the approaches to data analysis.

3.2 Outline of the chapter

The methodology chapter will discuss the research framework explicitly applied to this study. The chapter will focus on the research paradigm and the research methods applied for the data collection in this study. The methodology will justify the selected paradigm and how adopting this approach will help address the research questions. It will then explain the sampling frame and identify how the sample for the study was selected. Finally, the study will discuss the data collection techniques and how the data was analysed, justifying choices. Throughout the study, the researcher will be mindful of the ethical implications, which will also be addressed in the chapter.

3.3 Aims

This study aims to explore the career trajectories of managers working in private HE to gain an understanding of the academic managers working in private HE and what led them to work in private HE. It will also focus on the CPD they have undertaken to become HE managers and how this has shaped their professional identities. It will consider the organisational culture within the private HE institution and its role in influencing managers' working practices.

The main research question for this study is as follows:

RQ: What are the perceptions and experiences of managers working in the private HE sector?

For this research question to be answered, the following sub-questions will be explored:

RQ1. What are the personal and professional circumstances that lead academics to become managers in the private HE sector?

RQ2. How do managers perceive and experience the organisational culture when working in the private HE institution?

RQ3. How do managers perceive their professional identity has been impacted by being a manager in private HE?

RQ4. What are managers' experiences of continuing professional development in private HE and future development needs?

An interpretive perspective was selected to answer this study's main research question and sub-questions, and applied a social constructivist approach, which will be further explored throughout this chapter.

3.4 Paradigm rationale

The philosophical debate of whether research should be scientifically undertaken in social sciences is a discussion that dates back many years.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Field Lichtman (2012) discussed the research paradigms available, acknowledging the more significant variances of the scientific and interpretive paradigms. For each paradigm, they diverged into separate ontological and epistemological conventions. Vogl et al. (2019) stated that ontology is the involvement with the 'what is' the nature of being, whereas epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge comprehending 'how we know what we know'; it offers a philosophical way of knowing and understanding how we know what we know. Epistemology provides a philosophical foundation for forms of knowledge and their legitimacy.

There are philosophical debates on whether social science should be regarded as a science or whether other techniques that meet social science's needs more closely are more applicable. The scientific approach focuses on positivist perspectives, suggesting that the world is viewed as a single reality, and is widely used in quantitative research (Cohen et al., 2017). Traditionally, the positivist approach to research was the leading paradigm

employed. Positivism, associated with quantitative research, adopts a numbers-based approach to data collection, which is undertaken by hypothesis testing (Burrell & Morgan, 2017). This practical paradigm is applied to scientific approaches. Researchers adopting this paradigm are likely to view reality as objective, and they are expected to adopt a calculated method in undertaking their research (Lichtman, 2010). It is argued that a scientific approach to research can always be applied (Bairagi & Munot, 2019), and this is supported by the argument that the world can be viewed objectively.

This study's qualitative approach is best suited to answer the research questions. Bryman (2015) argued that interpretive methods allow interpretations of people, which could be missed if a scientific approach was applied. This research paradigm acknowledges the significance of the relationships between the social world, the research, and the researcher (Crotty, 1998). An interpretive approach, which is used to understand people's thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and opinions, delves deeper into the individuals to understand their perspectives and how the social context impacts this. An interpretive perspective is associated with not having one reality but instead getting the knowledge and interpreting the reality; this approach is often used in qualitative research. This characterises an ontological framework for how the world is viewed and an epistemological philosophical foundation of the forms of knowledge and their legitimacy (Blaikie, 2000). These concepts signify the researcher's perspective and views on acquiring knowledge, which offers a framework for this research.

3.4.1 Ontology and epistemology

To answer the research question, the paradigm applied to this study will focus on ontological and constructivist paradigms. Ontology within research refers to how one views truth. Ontological perspectives allow researchers to uncover how the perceptions of human nature that they adopt within their research affect their findings of social truths (Blaikie, 2000). There are different beliefs and ontological perspectives on what reality is. Ontological viewpoints could adopt two principles. The first principle is that social interaction exists independently of one's opinions and is a scientific approach reinforced by a positivist mode of enquiry. The second principle is that social reality is viewed as interactions among people

with the experiences they have encountered. To explore the truth within these experiences, the researcher must make interpretations (Xu & Zammit, 2020). For the study to answer the research questions, this research has adopted the paradigm discussed in the latter, the constructivist paradigm. The researcher will gather the research, then explore the truth and make interpretations of the data.

This study specifically focused on applying the constructivist approach. The constructivist approach supports an interpretive paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Subjective epistemology develops a solid understanding of the natural world via methodological procedures. Therefore, this allows for the development of understanding the individuals (instead of testing and validating), which is the purpose of this study.

Interpretivism /Constructivism	Connections to the research aims	
Ontology	Realism, for a constructivist position, maintains the meaning that comes from the individual or the group; it is this experience in the social context; it must also consider the influence of the researcher and how this can affect the study (Lincoln & Egon, 2000).	This study explores the career trajectories of managers in private HE by interpreting their subjective experiences linked to organisational culture, professional identity, and CPD.
Epistemology	Epistemology is related to the subjective findings that are created within a social	The interview schedule was devised based on the study's theoretical

	context by individuals interacting (Lincoln & Egon, 2000).	framework, which focused on areas of the managers' experiences and perceptions of themselves (subjective).

Table 3.1 Paradigm justification

Table 3.1 demonstrates how the interpretive phenomena will be applied to this study and how this aligns with the research aims.

Epistemology refers to the researcher's position. The researcher needs to gather and analyse the data to add meaning to what has been found, taking a subjective approach and applying an interpretive epistemological paradigm through a qualitative study. In this study, a qualitative approach was used to explore the life histories of managers working in HE to understand how this influenced how they became managers within this private HE institution.

The epistemological notions inspiring this study concentrated on managers working in private HE, their experiences, the organisational culture of managers, CPD, and how these themes came together to build the professional identity of managers working in the institution. The study applied life history interviews to gain specific insights into the managers' lives and to explore this relationship with their management roles and career trajectories. The epistemological aim was to gain insights into the individuals, and how the organisational culture and CPD have shaped managers. Interpretations were made from the interviews, highlighting their own and others' perceptions of their professional identity (see Table 3.1).

The interpretive paradigm refers to viewing the world from the subjective experiences of individuals; understandings within this phenomenon are created between the participant and the researcher and the subjectivity of the subject (Creswell, 2013).

For this study, the following definitions were implemented:

> ***Interpretive definition:*** *The goal of the researcher is to understand how participants make meaning of a situation or a phenomenon* (Merriam, 2002).
>
> ***Constructivist definition:*** *The constructivist view suggests that realities are socially constructed* (Lincoln et al., 2011).

Constructivism recognises that reality is socially constructed, a relativist view that believes there is no external reality independent of human consciousness (Robson, 2002).

Within the interpretive paradigm, the study applied a narrative approach by adopting life history interviews to understand the family backgrounds and career histories of the managers working in private HE.

3.4.2 Paradigm positions

The constructivist paradigm would need to consider some of the more significant points raised by Guba and Lincoln (1994). For example, within a constructivist research approach, the researcher would need to consider the voice coming through the research; in this case, it should be of the managers working in the private HE institution. The constructivist research paradigm here would significantly influence how the study is positioned, highly dependent on the managers' experiences working in a private institution. Therefore, constructivist research is highly suited to this study, as it develops on the knowledge and experiences of the learner, in this case, the managers, and the experience they have gained (see Figure 3.1).

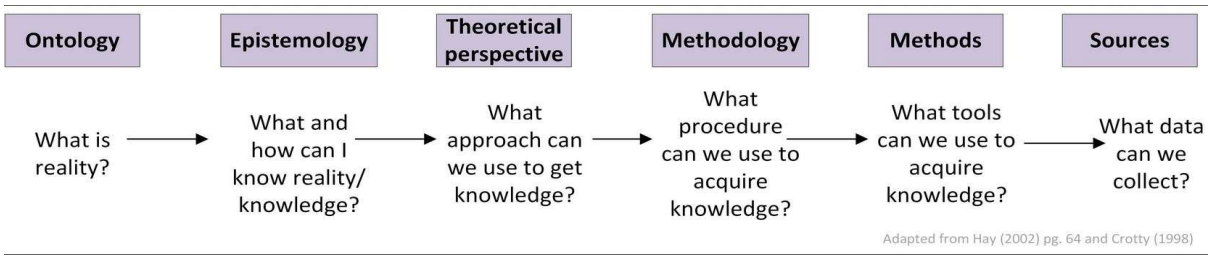

Figure 3.1 Research paradigm relationships (Crotty, 1998)

3.5 Life history approach

The research paradigm determines the methodological approach applied to the study. Defining and developing the methodological approach was challenging, as several research approaches are available for conducting qualitative research, such as narrative and phenomenological, ethnographic, case study and grounded theory methods (Creswell, 2013). A qualitative research study applying an interpretive approach to understanding who the managers working in the private HE institution are led to take a life history approach. The depth of understanding the natural progressive learning for managers from their past meant that this could be achieved through life-history interviews using a qualitative approach. Only by hearing about the lived experiences of managers can learning about academic careers, organisational culture, professional identity and CPD be uncovered (Kempster & Cope, 2010). Therefore, researchers use life history interviews to ask participants to recount their life experiences. Life history interviews were defined by Goodson and Sikes (2001, p. 23) as:

> ***Life history definition:*** *An autobiographical narrative which allows the researcher to answer questions including, Who are you? Why has your life taken the course it has?*

Life historians are interested in rich data, which focuses on individuals' experiences and attitudes and considers their personalities (Goodson, 2012). Life history interviews lend themselves to the research questions of this qualitative study. Exploring the life history of the managers working in private HE allowed the researcher to understand how their life journeys, including family background, academic choices, and career history, have influenced them in reaching their management positions. Their historical experiences make up their management style (Dimmock & O'Donoghue, 2005).

(Bryman, 2015) argued that life history interviews are not generalisable, and this highly subjective approach may not be as valid as other scientific approaches in conducting research. Nevertheless, interpretive studies allow researchers to gain in-depth insights into complicated social circumstances. Furthermore, the interactions between the interviewer

and the interviewee are fundamental aspects of the research process in life history interviews (Floyd, 2013). Wacquant (2019) argued that exploring the culture and social structure with the relationship between these factors is essential. Therefore, the use of life history interviews is a method that allows this to happen.

Goodson and Sikes (2016) defined the characteristics of the life history approach as a research method that:

- Is interested in life through the story told by the participant, and recognises the pressure and paradoxes in representing selective explanations of actual lived experiences.
- Recognises humanity and the importance of others from the organisation and analyses provisions that characterise the group's life.
- Emphasises the biography in its story, connecting the chain of social groups with the historical past and present.

The life history approach allowed the participants to freely use their voices to tell stories of their lives and understand how they reached their management roles. In addition, this method allows for the connection of life history with the early influences in their family background, guiding their thinking about their early education and understanding of values and beliefs connected to employability and future career choices. Goodson and Sikes (2001) promoted this belief as 'listening to the people offers power'. Finally, this research method addressed the main research question, embracing the significance of managers' academic careers in private HE.

Over the years, life history methods have faced a major 'renaissance' in educational research, specifically in exploring social studies related to themes of teachers (Ball & Goodson, 2002), women in education (Casey, 2017) and university academics (Floyd, 2012a). Although more post-modern approaches to research grow in popularity, storytelling is not a linear method, therefore it allows the exploration of the less foreseeable and multiple concepts of subjective experience. Subsequently, life history methods became a renowned sociological research approach (Goodson & Sikes, 2016). Life history is seen as a

method in a chain of social transmission, as described by Dollard (1949) cited (Goodson, 2001, p. 15):

> *There were links before him from which he acquired his present culture. Other links will follow him to which he will pass on the current tradition. Life history attempts to describe a unit in that process: It is a study of one of the strands of a complicated collective life which has historical continuity.*

Although these are personal lived accounts of managers, revealing these concealed trajectories could join the historical process of private HE managers with current practice, aligning with the opinon of Dollard (1949) cited in Goodson and Sikes (2016).

3.6 Selecting the participants

The private institution works with multiple public university partners, offering both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in a franchised capacity for the majority. The institution's campuses are in three key cities: London, Birmingham, and Manchester.

Before the participants for the study were selected, two selection criteria were defined: (1) participants were selected from three management groups: senior, middle, and emerging managers, and (2) the length of time at the institution was fundamental. Before managers could be selected to meet Criterion 1, a list of managers identifying their roles was obtained from the institution. In total, there was a sample size of approximately 40 managers. The researcher selected 18 managers from the list that fell within each category of emerging, middle, and senior managers. The categories for each of the management groups were defined as follows:

- Emerging manager – Programme leader level
- Middle manager – Associate dean level
- Senior manager – Dean level and above

In total, 18 managers across the three levels of management groups were selected to make up the sample for this study. Creswell (2013) recommended that for a research study to fully understand a phenomenon, 5 to 25 interviews should be conducted. Therefore, the 18

interviews with managers were a reasonable sample size for the investigation. (Inman, 2011) argued that managers are known as experienced staff within the faculty; therefore, they would be assumed to be indicative of good leadership.

To meet the needs of Criterion 2, the length of service was obtained from the institution. For managers to meaningfully reflect on their experiences of working in the private institution in relation to the theoretical framework and the research questions, they needed to have spent a reasonable amount of time experiencing the working practices within the institution and hold a deep understanding of its operational practices. Most managers had worked in the institution for at least two years (see Table 3.2).

The institution has seven university partnerships. It comprises approximately 12,000 students at four campuses across London, Birmingham, and Manchester. Academic staff numbers are in the region of 500, ranging from academic teaching staff, academic managers and support services.

In accessing participants for this study, interviews were all formally organised through Microsoft Outlook calendar invitations via the researcher's Reading University email address. All interviews were scheduled for one hour. However, the time for each interview varied in practice. Most interviews lasted from 45 minutes to 1 hour, in a small number of cases going a little over 1 hour 15 minutes. Goodson and Sikes (2001) argued that participants should be prepared in terms of time to enable them to talk for extended periods; where this was the case, it was necessary to let the respondents complete the narration of their story.

The research site was a quiet space in the large institution for the interview to be conducted. It was important for managers to not be disturbed or worried about the environment, so they would feel relaxed when being interviewed. Therefore, there was a need for appropriate time and space to think and reflect in sharing their stories.

The sampling approach was built on a purposive sampling strategy (Patton, 1990), managers were invited to participate voluntarily and selected from the sample, fitting with the selection criteria. Goodson and Sikes (2016) stressed that the purposeful sampling

technique is one of the most appropriate types of sampling for life history interviews, as it is concerned with specific characteristics, attributes, or experiences, and informants are selected because they meet the criteria.

> *Purposeful sampling definition: This is a procedure widely used in qualitative research for the identification and adoption of cases that are information-rich (Patton, 2002, p. 23).*

Managers at each level were able to share their perspectives from their roles. For example, the emerging managers could share what experiences and opportunities they were presented with as they were new to management roles. Middle managers, being more experienced, could share how their experiences had evolved throughout their time in the institution and share experiences of faculty leadership, knowledge, and learning, whereas senior managers could share deeper discussions on the vision of the private institution. More importantly, it was useful to compare the managers' thoughts and experiences at all levels to allow a deeper understanding of the study's themes.

Purposeful sampling was used to identify suitable participants working in the institution.

> *The sampling which has been applied to the study is strategic, so the researcher selected participants who are relevant to the study and managers working in the institution who are appropriate to the research questions (Bryman, 2015).*

Table 3.2 below presents all the participants in the study. Pseudonyms were used to keep the names of all respondents anonymous.

The study selected a gender balanced sample across the levels of managers, which is standard practice in research studies. There were a few more male managers than female managers, although this was the closest gender balance that could be accessed at the time. However, one of the fundamental reasons for this characteristic to be presented is that there is extensive reference to leadership and management in this study which is useful to understand from a gender perspective. Although gender has been added to present the sample of managers for the study, gender is not a characteristic being studied in this research.

	Pseudonyms	Gender	PhD holders	Master's level qualification holders	Years' experience at the PHEI	Total no. of managers
Senior Leaders	Simon	M	Yes	Yes	7 years	
	Hudson	M	No	Yes	4 years	
	Boris	M	Yes	Yes	2 years	
	Candice	F	No	Yes	5 years	
	Joshua	M	Yes	Yes	8 years	**5**
Middle Leaders	Gordon	M	No	Yes	8 years	
	Valerie	F	No	Yes	8 years	
	Harold	M	Yes	Yes	8 years	
	Maureen	F	No	Yes	6 years	
	Binal	M	No	Yes	5 years	
	Dennis	M	Yes	Yes	2 years	
	Mark	M	No	Yes	4 years	
	Denise	F	No	Yes	4 years	**8**
Emerging Leaders	Marsha	F	No	Yes	8 years	
	Olivia	F	No	Yes	6 years	

	Hasan	M	No	Yes	5 years	
	Peter	M	No	Yes	3 years	
	Stacey	F	Yes	Yes	5 years	**6**

Table 3.2 Emerging, middle, and senior manager's gender, qualifications, duration at PHEI

3.7 Data collection

Data collection entails making decisions about capturing the data required for the study to enable the research questions to be answered. For this life history study, semi-structured interviews were used. Seidman (2006) stated that the primary process of questioning is interviewing. The life history approach used an interview schedule to steer the interviews towards the study's themes, although it did not limit the interviewees in their responses (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001). Life history interviews support examining an individual's story, allowing the examination of the notion with a particular focus on the events of the individual (Goodson, 2012).

This section will outline in more detail how these methods were applied.

3.7.1 Interview approach

Within the life-history approach, a semi-structured interview format was devised, allowing the researcher to question the participants about the study's research questions. Traditionally, the life history approach would review the whole of the participant's life; however, using a semi-structured interview schedule allowed the researcher to focus specifically on areas of interest to the study. Semi-structured interviews also allowed additional flexibility in exploring specific areas in depth. In addition, they let the researcher extract details from the interview, which might not have been possible using a structured approach (Cohen et al., 2017). Finally, semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to tell their stories, allowing flexibility, which a predetermined interview schedule would not permit. Qualitative interviewing is *"a way of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds" (Roberts, 2020, p. 318).*

As with all data collection tools, there are strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of using semi-structured interviews as part of the life history approach helped to keep the participants focused on the specific study. It also meant having access to an extensive related dataset, which offered in-depth information compared to many related methods (Ranney et al., 2015). Furthermore, the method was valid in supporting the exposure of participants to complex notions, which was vital to enable an in-depth understanding of the study and research questions. In contrast, this method had weaknesses, including any form of replication of the data collected from the interviews. In addition, there was a risk that data obtained within the interview could be open to misinterpretation and cause complications with insider relationships (Drake, 2010); (more on insider relationships can be found in the quality of research section 3.10 below).

Unstructured interviews were avoided altogether, as they would not allow the researcher to explore the key themes in the theoretical framework that she wanted to study, as there is no direction or control mechanism (Newby, 2014).

The interview schedule created for this study consisted of four themes, all of which were core concepts about the theoretical framework (see Appendix 2, Interview schedule). Theme 1 is connected to an academic career, giving insights into the decisions taken to understand the career trajectory of managers. Theme 2 is about the organisational culture of the private institution and refers to what it is like to work at the institution as a manager. Theme 3 is connected with professional identity; it explores managers' perceptions of their own professional identity. Finally, Theme 4 is related to continued professional development, which explores the training managers have undertaken to take up management roles. The researcher devised questions about these themes, and the literature review was considered to ensure relevant questions were planned to focus on the interrelationships of the four concepts.

3.7.2 Interviewing

The interviews were conducted in a phased approach. They began by providing all interviewees with an information sheet and a consent form via the researcher's Reading University email address. At no time did the researcher use her work e-mail, as she did not

want to use the power of her position in the institution to recruit participants for the research. The information sheet consisted of relevant details of the study and life history interviews (see Appendix 3). If participants were happy to participate in the study, they signed a consent form before the interview (see Appendix 4). The consent form provided participants with information, enabling them to make informed decisions about participating in the study, the audio-recorded interview, and how to withdraw from the study at any time. Confidentiality was crucial throughout the study; nobody should be able to identify any participants who took part, so every necessary step was taken to anonymise everyone's identity (Tolich, 2004). However, all the managers at the institution were willing to be part of the study. The researcher made explicit to the interviewees that the data would only be used for the study and would be kept strictly confidential, following all ethical guidelines.

The next stage involved interviewing the participants to arrange a mutually convenient time and location. All the interviews were scheduled for one hour. Once each interview had been carried out, the interviewees were emailed transcripts. This process was followed to ensure that the data captured was accurate and that the transcripts were true reflections of the interviews. This process also allowed interviewees to request any alterations or state that they wished to withdraw from the transcript.

3.7.3 Interview practices

The standard interview practices were followed to allow the researcher to extract rich data from the interviews. The interviews began by asking questions relating to family background and career history. All the interviews were audio recorded to capture every detail of the interview and allow for accuracy in the validity and transcription of findings. The interviews started with open questions to support the participants in feeling relaxed and open in talking about their life history experiences; for example, 'Tell me about your family background, where you were born and your life.' These were straightforward questions that participants could answer easily, allowing a positive opening to the interviews and building rapport with the interviewer, which would enable them to be open.

Interview techniques are concerned with establishing positive relationships with the interviewee (Goodson, 2001)

For the participants to be open and share their experiences, it was essential to put them at ease and build a trusting relationship. The researcher would need to use emotional intelligence to read the faces, reactions, and body language to know how the participants were feeling, which questions to persevere with, as well as judging when the participant did not want to disclose the information for whatever reason (Brown & Danaher, 2019).

This method can 'potentially convey the power of life inherent in human contact' (Chirban, 1996, p. xi). In conducting the interviews, awareness of the reflexive researcher role required having an appropriate balance between a professional understanding and fostering and promoting genuine communication in each interview. These matters were addressed with Chirban (1996) interactive relational approach and incorporated as leading components in the research process, including the practice:

- Self-awareness
- Authenticity
- Engagement in relational dynamics
- Awareness of the integration of the researcher as a person in a reciprocal process (Chirban, 1996)

These internal components were fundamental for the researcher and guided the approach to the interviews accordingly. They helped achieve the interview goals aligned with the overall design in building participant trust, enabling rich data to be extracted and increasing depth.

There were three data sets from which information was extracted: emerging, middle, and senior managers. The main reason three sets of data were selected for this study was to allow a more comprehensive understanding of tomorrow's managers, how much CPD they have had, and how well each level of manager feels within their role from the CPD provided to them.

When collecting data, the researcher started with two middle managers as they would have insights into situations both above and below them. This allowed the researcher to reflect on the answers and how the questions might need to be adapted for the other levels of managers. As the interviews progressed, the researcher felt more confident with the reactions that could occur during the interviews, and developed effective strategies that could be used to help manage situations, for example, how to handle the interviewee if unclear of the question, or how to keep the interviews focused on the themes of the interview schedule. After the first few interviews, the researcher started gaining a sound understanding of all three levels of participants. Interview transcription began as soon as the first interview was conducted (see Appendix 5), allowing the researcher time to become familiar with the data and start coding the emerging themes (McGrath et al., 2019). Data gathering followed a 'non-linear' process, which allowed the researcher to reflect on the interviews as topics emerged and make adaptations to the interview schedule as needed. For example, when senior managers were asked about the teaching and learning strategies, some were unsure. Therefore, the researcher continued to ask other senior managers, to gain their understanding of whether it was available.

This interview technique was productive and powerful, embedded in life-history interviews to reveal the details of the managers' stories. Moreover, the method succeeded in focusing on the purpose of the study concerning the research questions. The connection between the reflexive and interactive relationships between the researcher and the participants was fundamental in offering immediate confirmation.

3.7.4 Impact of positionality on data collection

The researcher's role within an interpretive paradigm can be viewed at two opposite ends. From one perspective, as a direct participant observer, they connect themselves 'in all aspects of the lives of those being investigated', and on the other, as a non-participant and an observer (Warwick & Chaplain, 2017). The relationship between the researcher and the participants is crucial in conducting qualitative research with participants.

Positionality within research describes an individual's view and adopted position in a social and political context (Bryman, 2015). The researcher's position within a study will influence

the research. For example, this researcher's position in the study was impacted by being an insider, as well as her experiences of being a manager over the past 11 years and the observations and learnings she had gained from those familiarities. The experiences she gained from being a manager at all three levels supported her motivation to understand the needs and development requirements. Therefore, as a researcher, she was not able to separate herself from the social process of this study; as the researcher, she was part of the social world that she was researching (Holmes, 2020).

3.7.5 Reflexivity as a methodological challenge

The researcher is a senior manager at the institution who is well-known by academic staff and others in the business. The advantage of this is that as a trusted staff member, she can access managers in the institutional community. However, from a data collection perspective, the disadvantage of being an insider and senior manager is that the researcher is in a position of power and authority, with the risk of using this power to the interviewer's advantage (Anyan, 2013). To minimise this throughout the study, the researcher created trusting relationships with the managers. The impact of being an insider is further discussed in Section 3.10.6.

3.8 Data analysis

The data for this study was analysed using precise qualitative techniques in developing structure to categorise the findings. There are varied opinions on the views of the world; therefore, this study was not planned to be neutral, so data analysis was mostly coincident with the data collection.

The researcher analysed the data using qualitative techniques including narrative life stories, thematic analysis, and coding. The data was analysed using thematic analysis as summarised by Lichtman (2012) and Bryman (2015). Following this, the coding of data applied Lichtman (2012) three Cs of coding. He suggested that the purpose of this stage is to move from raw data to meaningful concepts and themes. Finally, several authors have discussed the importance of narrated life history research, which provides access to new

knowledge by listening to and validating the experiences of people (Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Wright, 2019). The following section outlines the details of the data analysis.

3.8.1 Coding and developing themes

The researcher conducted the interviews over five months, starting in September 2019, with the final interview conducted in January 2020. This allowed the study to flow better with the continuation of the interviews, avoiding significant gaps. The continuation of the interviews also helped the researcher to keep important themes fresh in her mind for the duration of the data collection stage (Cohen et al., 2017). After each interview, the researcher conducted some initial analysis immediately by keeping a diary of the researcher's reflections on how she felt the interview ran (see Appendix 6). The diary highlighted key thoughts related to the interview setting, the environment, and how the participant felt that needed to be noted, which could not be captured in the audio recording. The researcher believed this approach helped her record a complete picture of the interview, especially where words could not describe attitude and behaviour when discussing more sensitive points around family background or work challenges. Lichtman argued that this approach is essential:

> *Keep a journal. Write early and often. You need to write down your reflections. They can be about the process; they can be about what you are thinking. What is critical is that you write*. (Lichtman, 2012, p. 55).

Following each interview, the researcher converted the audio files to MP3s, which were then saved to Express Scribe software. Express Scribe allowed the researcher to manage the data sets throughout the research process.

The data was initially transcribed manually using an Infinity USB Foot Pedal, which helped control the audio playback speed while typing. The initial phases of the transcription were crucial for the researcher to manually allow an understanding of the thoughts and opinions of the interviewees, but, more importantly, get close to the data to gain an in-depth appreciation of the data. After manually transcribing four transcripts, three from middle managers and one from an emerging manager, the researcher transcribed the remaining

audio recordings using NVivo (qualitative data analysis software) transcription. The use of NVivo transcription allowed the data to be transcribed more quickly. However, the transcription accuracy was not 100%, as this was machine-operated transcription software. Therefore, the researcher also played back each transcription recording to manually check the accuracy of the transcription against the audio recording and rectify any mistakes. Some transcriptions took longer than others to amend as the audio recordings were primarily dependent on the elocution of all interviewees. Using the transcription software meant that the transcription was a little faster. However, quality checking allowed the researcher to stay close to the data, becoming familiar with all data sets ready for coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Once all 18 interviews had been transcribed, copies of the transcriptions were returned to the participants for them to check that these were accurate reflections of the interviews conducted with them; no participants requested any changes or adaptations to be made to the transcripts.

The following steps involved data analysis: After the data had been successfully transcribed, all transcripts were uploaded to NVivo 12. This software helped to manage the large data sets to allow the manual coding to begin. Each interview transcript was split into larger sections in Word using Styles (formatting of text). This technique helped the researcher to manage the data within the transcripts. The sub-headings used in the transcript included key categories taken from the research schedule: academic career, organisational culture, professional identity, and CPD. Once these three headings were added to all 18 interview transcripts, they were printed to start the initial coding by hand.

3.8.2 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was deemed the most suitable system for coding the data for this study. Riessman and Speedy (2007) suggested that thematic analysis is a well-devised technique for interpreting semi-structured interviews. The thematic analysis allowed the researcher to understand the data, constantly ask questions about it, and read and re-read the rich data before summarising it (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition, this technique allowed the researcher to make notes in the initial stages to reflect on some of the early assumptions and to assess the effect of insider knowledge.

3.9 Coding and developing themes

Coding of the data happens in stages, as initial themes are written out, and data is then coded. As the researcher reads the 'start list' of data, new themes emerge that need to be added to existing themes if relevant to the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To ensure that the coding and themes produced were robust, the researcher listened to the recordings twice; this allowed for any initial themes that were superficial or irrelevant to be collapsed or removed. Codes need to be selected carefully; they represent a group of data, so they do not need to be too specific, but at the same time they should not be so general that they would overlap with other codes.

Themes are the overarching topics, and codes are the smaller points within each theme. Central themes are typically like a dandelion, with all the little bits held together by the codes. Coding took place using the qualitative research software NVivo 12, which helped manage the data and coding of the transcripts. Finally, all the participants' transcripts were uploaded, and pseudonyms replaced participant names (see Figure 3.2 below).

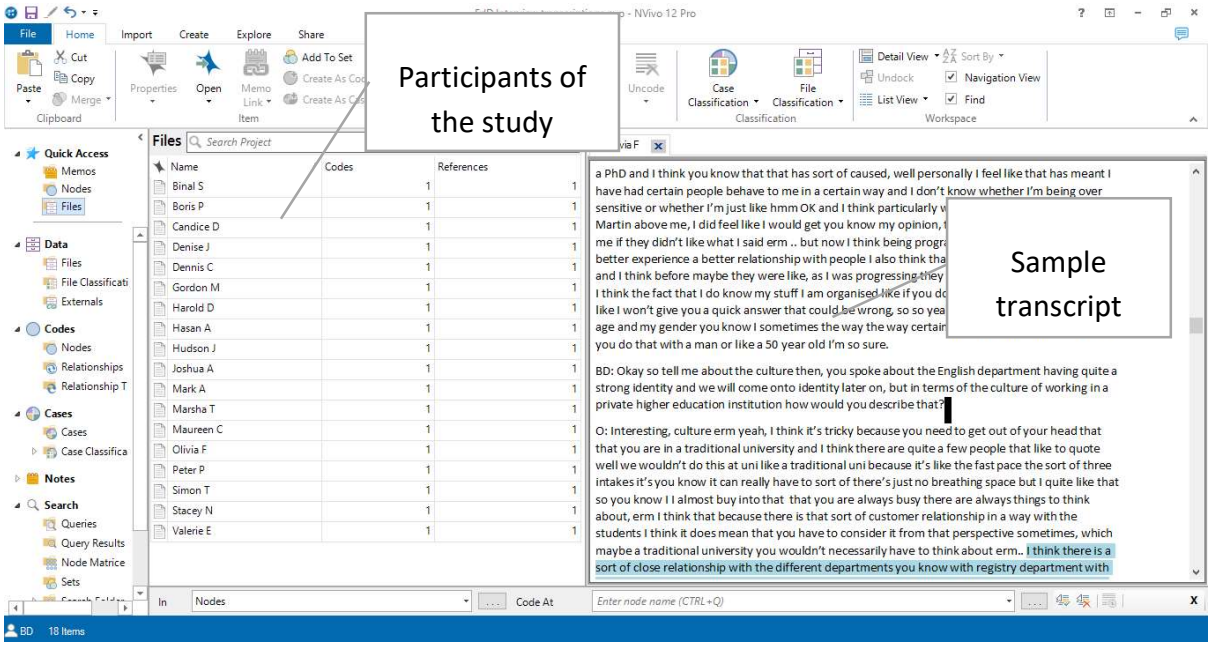

Figure 3.2 Example of NVivo 12 software with participant data

The researcher first read the transcripts to get a feel of the themes coming out of each of the interviews. Figure 3.3 shows some handwritten notes produced while reading.

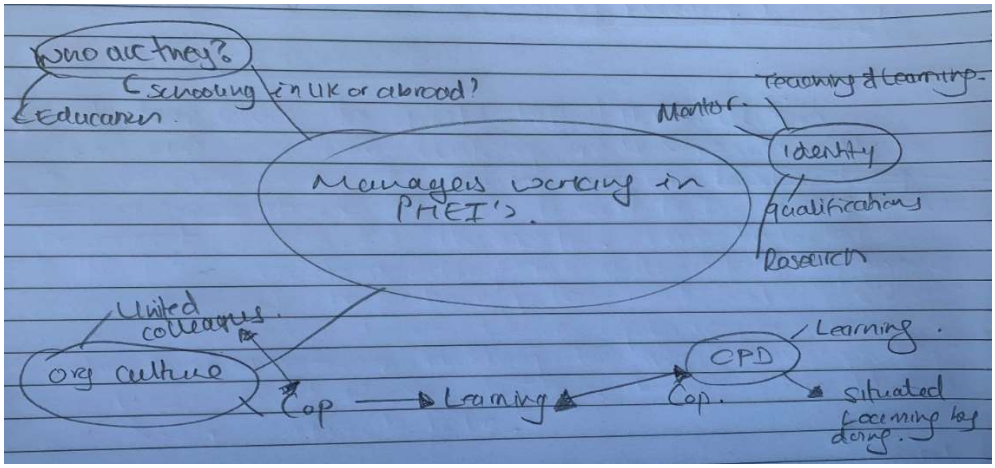

Figure 3.3 Notes of initial themes from reading interview transcripts

Coding of the transcripts was conducted manually on the hard copies; codes were recorded in the margins of each transcript. Lichtman (2012) discussed the initial coding to keep codes close to the statements made in each interview. Figure 3.4 illustrates the steps that were followed in the coding process.

3.9.1 Coding process

In coding the data for this study, the researcher used Lichtman (2012) three Cs of data analysis to identify codes, categories, and concepts. Below is an outline of the steps followed:

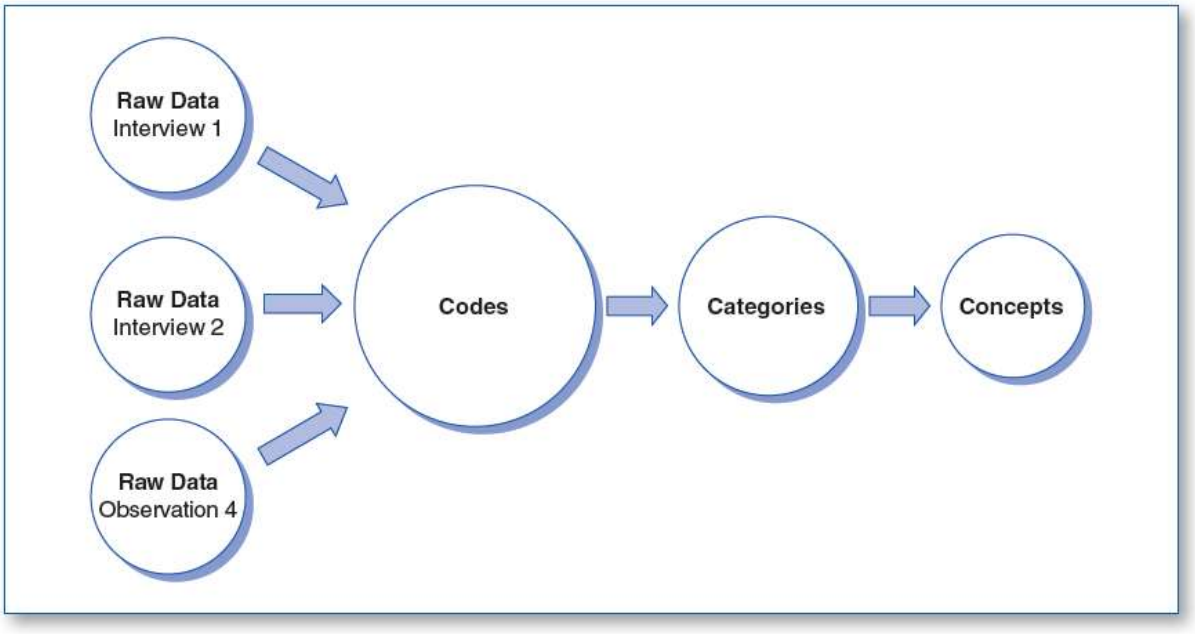

Figure 3.4 Three Cs of Data Analysis: Codes, Categories, Concepts (Lichtman, 2012)

This method used an inductive approach to complement this study's research questions and focused categories.

The researcher used NVivo 12 to create nodes and categories and record all hand-coded transcript data. To keep a record of all the collapsed codes, these were recorded into the 'node properties' listing all collapsed codes (see Figure 3.5 below).

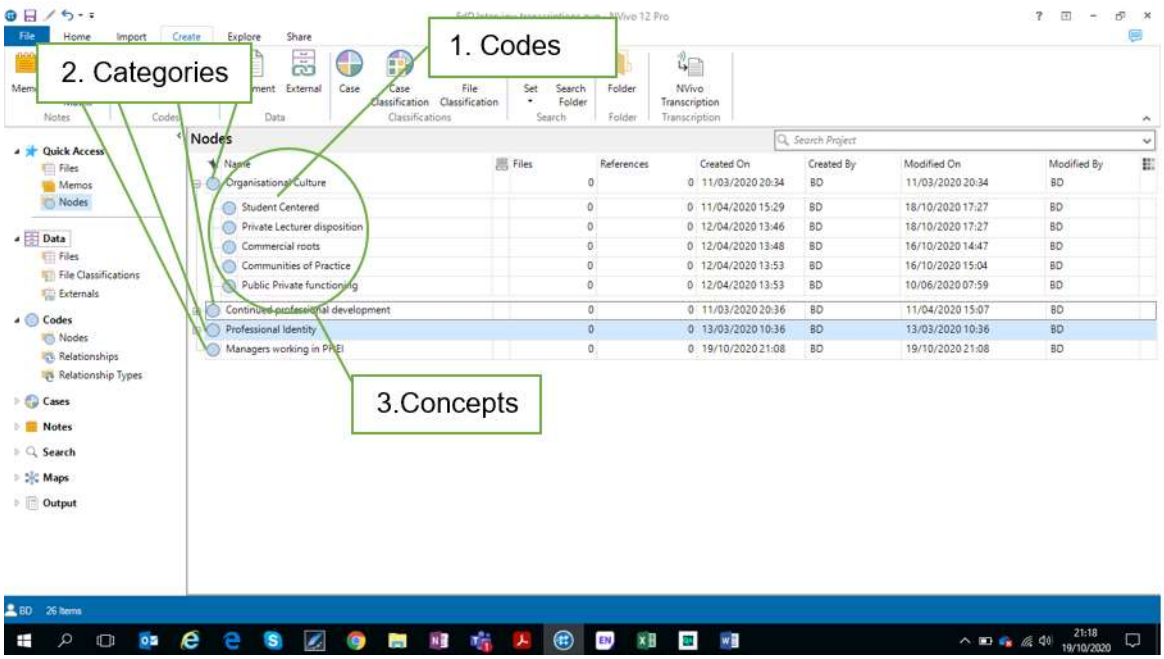

Figure 3.5 Samples of codes, categories, and concepts

The steps of coding following Lichtman (2012) coding system in the figure above have been highlighted to show a sample of step one codes, step two categories and step three concepts. Lichtman (2010) suggests that most qualitative research studies produce up to 100 codes that could be organised into 15-20 categories, eventually moving into five to seven concepts.

Once the data had been coded and the themes listed, the next step involved interpreting the qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews. When interpreting the data, reference was made to Silverman (2011), techniques, which suggest that the coding should

start with a transitional list of codes derived from the exploration of the transcripts from the study, which were then classified and recorded systematically.

3.9.2 Step 1 – Initial coding: Going from responses to summary ideas of the responses

The researcher coded all 18 transcripts within the four categories in Step 1. The coding was derived from reading the transcripts and connecting these thoughts with the theoretical framework. While reading each transcript, the researcher coded keywords and made notes on the transcript of any additional thoughts; this helped in creating initial codes of data before looking at these more thoroughly. When coding, Adu (2019) recommended that this is first conducted by hand on hard copies; he argued that this type of hand coding gives you more control to record thoughts and ideas linked to the research than a computerised system. This set of coding was all from the researcher's initial thoughts on relevant codes for each category. These codes were then recorded onto NVivo 12 to support data management. For example, a sample of all the initial coding for the category 'organisational culture' can be seen below in Figure 3.6. As the coding progressed, newer themes arrived, which the researcher placed into the broader categories where they fit.

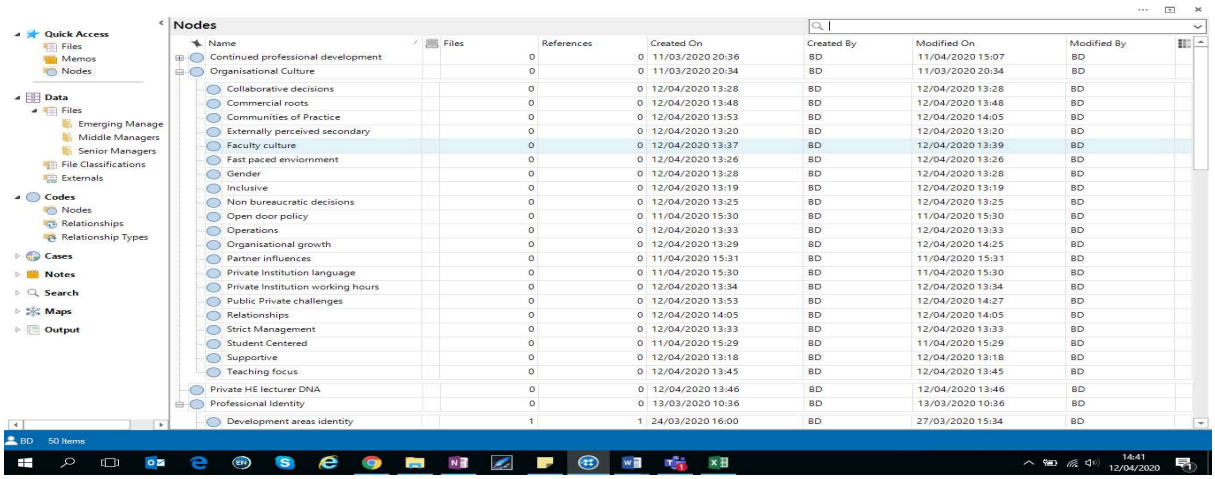

Figure 3.6 Example of Step 1 - Initial coding for 'organisational culture' category

3.9.3 Step 2 – Revisiting the initial coding

Once the researcher had recorded the codes for all 18 transcripts, she then re-examined the codes by re-reading all the transcripts for a second time. She made changes in a different

colour pen; this allowed transparency between codes, which also allowed her to identify any codes that were not relevant to the study. As the coding process developed, some codes did not fit as the researcher became more familiar with the data, making them redundant. Other codes were renamed using synonyms, which meant that the code fitted more clearly in line with the data provided in the script. Codes that were collapsed and renamed were more appropriate for a more accurate code. Below are some examples of collapsed codes that became redundant and were renamed.

The 'faculty culture' code was renamed 'faculty practice,' as the 'faculty culture' code was not representative enough, as there were other practices within the faculty that could fit into this code and not culture alone (see Figure 3.7 below).

The 'relationships' code, 'supportive' code, and 'open door policy' codes were all made redundant and collapsed into a code of 'communities of practice'. When re-reading the transcripts, the researcher found that much of the discussion around relationships was about closely working with other individuals, groups, and departments; therefore, she believed these codes would be better placed within the 'communities of practice' code, providing a well-defined interpretation.

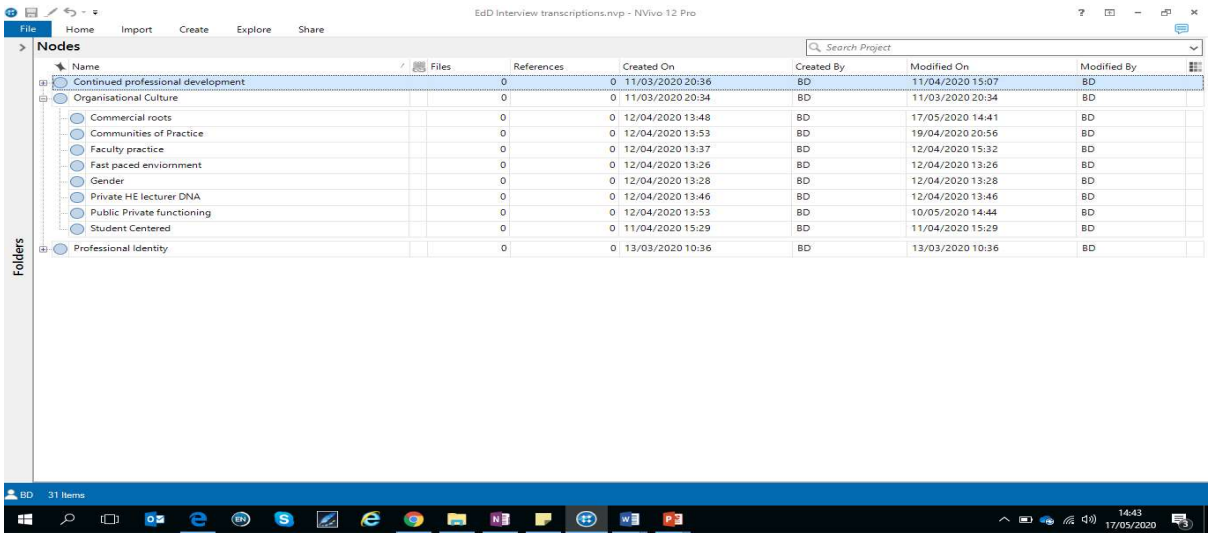

Figure 3.7 Example of Step 2 – Revisiting initial coding for 'organisational culture' category

The codes renamed or collapsed were recorded in the node properties within each code (see Figure 3.8 below) and the 'commercial roots' code. This step was necessary, as it helped to keep track of all sub-codes that were part of the initial coding.

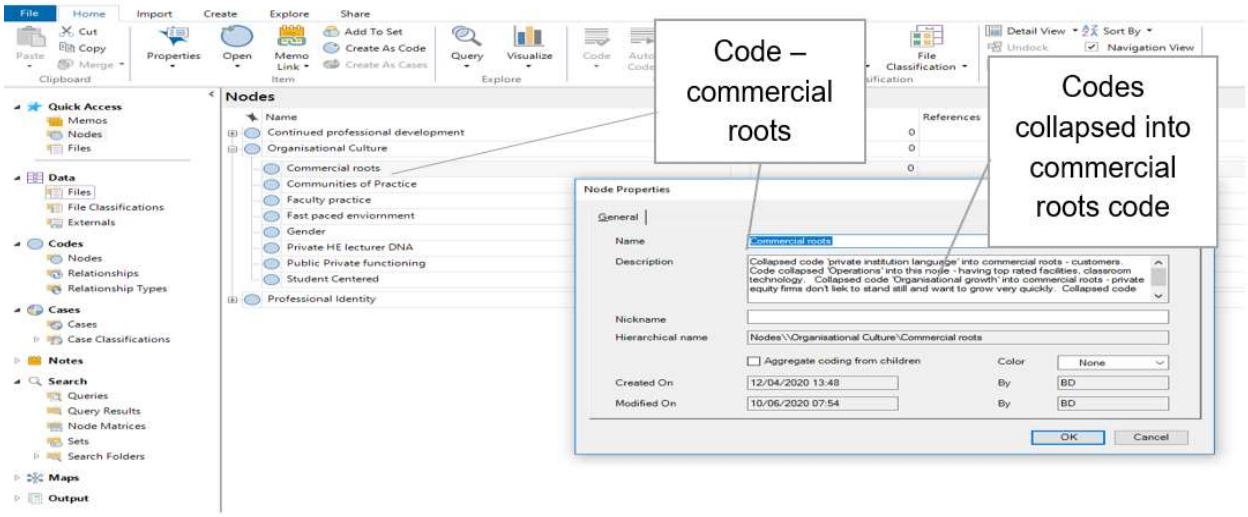

Figure 3.8 Example of codes collapsed into the code 'commercial roots'

3.9.4 Step 3 – Developing an initial list of categories

Once the codes had been modified for all transcript data, the researcher moved the codes into categories. Categories naturally arising through the coding were themes linked to the research questions and the theoretical framework: 'managers working in PHEI', 'organisational culture', 'professional identity', and 'continued professional development'. Although Lichtman (2006) suggested that categories should be identified at the third step of the coding process, the interview schedule questions aligned with the research questions' overarching themes for this study. However, once all the codes had been revisited (Step 2), the researcher went through the codes to check whether any codes would be significant themes and whether any new categories would need to be added to the existing categories. Once this process had been checked in all codes, it was evident that the four existing categories allowed all codes to fit within them, so no new categories were created.

Categories were also considered at each of the three levels of managers who took part in the study, emerging, middle, and senior managers, so the data and codes had to fit into the categories across levels.

Once all codes had been revisited and renamed or collapsed to represent a group of codes, this left the most significant list of codes (see Figure 3.9 below).

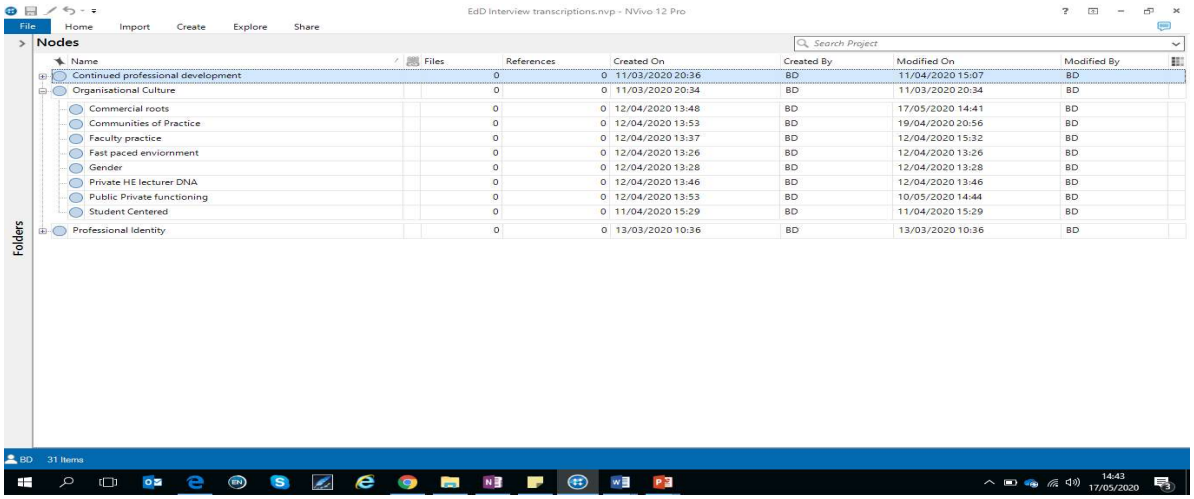

Figure 3.9 Example of revisited codes, Stage 2 final codes for 'organisational culture' category

3.9.5 Step 4 – Modifying initial list

Step 4 involved thoroughly reviewing the initial list of categories to ensure that these were the most important for the study. The process also allowed the checking of categories to ensure no doubling-up of meanings. Where there was a doubling-up, the categories were combined to give a clearer consideration within the coding. For example, the initial code 'individual learning styles' in the CPD category had only been mentioned in one transcript; there was not enough data here to justify a category of its own. However, other codes were also relevant to this code of learning, including 'situated learning' and 'observational learning,' so this code was renamed 'learning,' and the other codes were made part of this category (see Figure 3.10 below).

When revisiting the initial list of the categories, all four were critical areas of the study; it was evident that the data fell into all four categories and that no one area could be

combined with another. Each category was clearly defined in line with the research questions, and all four categories were recognised as essential concepts.

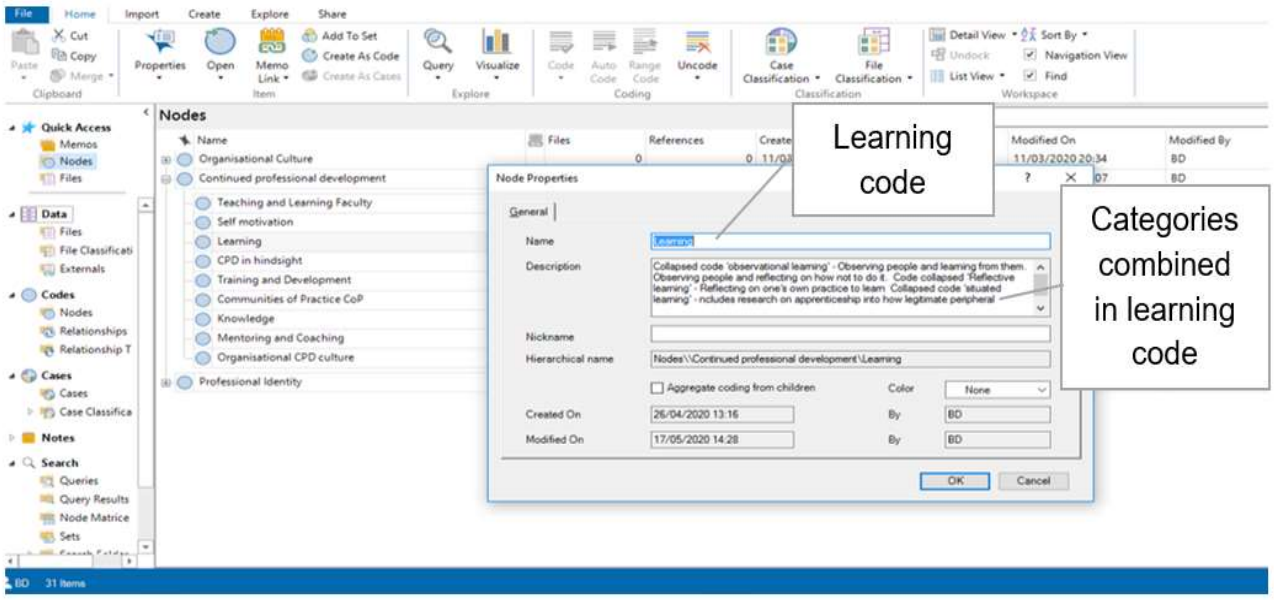

Figure 3.10 Example of revisiting categories for the 'learning code'

3.9.6 Step 5 - Revisiting your categories and subcategories

This step involved revisiting the categories to check whether they were irrelevant to the study and should be removed or made redundant. This step allowed the researcher to double-check all the categories and remove or identify more significant categories. At this step, the researcher could check all categories in line with the research questions and theoretical framework to check the relevance of categories and the importance of the study.

When revisiting all four categories, 'managers working in PHEI, 'organisational culture', 'continued professional development', and 'professional identity', it was evident that some categories were more significant and central to the study than others. For example, managers spoke much more about the 'organisational culture' and 'continued professional development' than about the 'professional identity' theme. However, this category was needed in its own right, as significant findings were related to the study. The discussion about professional identity was not as profound; the researcher believed this was due to

participants becoming tired later in the interview, but also it seemed to be a theme that did not come as naturally for the participants to talk about as the other themes.

3.9.7 Step 6 – Moving from categories to concepts

This final step involved the researcher identifying significant concepts that indicated meaning connected to the data. This step resulted in four concepts: 'managers working in PHEI', 'organisational culture', 'professional identity', and 'continued professional development'. These four significant concepts allowed the researcher to thoroughly code the data, resulting in fewer finely honed concepts and a richer analysis than many less-tuned concepts (Lichtman, 2012).

Data analysis was carried out within each category and triangulated across levels of managers in the study. This allowed for the concepts to be related to one another and to build a clearer picture of the managers working in the private institution.

3.10 Quality of the research

Ensuring that the study's findings demonstrate authenticity and credibility throughout is crucial. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge the processes and procedures followed from start to finish. Data analysis must be rigorous and precise before the results are presented. To interpret qualitative data, there is a need to consider the credibility of this process; the researcher would need to think about the credibility of the data (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). When conducting quantitative research, this refers to reliability and validity. However, for qualitative research studies, interpretive data refers to quality checks using criteria including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability; together, these criteria express the fundamental concept of 'trustworthiness' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Seidman, 2006).

This qualitative study needed to consider the data provided by the participants on their backgrounds. Therefore, the method applied was life history interviews, in which the interviewer asked questions on the background of the participants, including family, academic choices, and career, which supported the representation of the truth for this study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

3.10.1 Credibility

First, the life history interviews were audio recorded to ensure data accuracy. Next, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim line by line and then shared with the managers to validate the transcriptions; this step ensured that the researcher recorded the data correctly. In addition, this process allowed for any misconceptions to be eliminated and allowed the participants to have these put right (Bryman, 2015).

3.10.2 Transferability

Second, when conducting qualitative research, the term generalisation refers to the transferability of the research being transferred to other contexts (Bryman, 2015). However, for this research, the findings cannot be transferred. Having said that, the researcher argues that the results could be taken and applied to comparable contexts to help support their circumstances (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Such generalisations have been referred to as naturalistic generalisations, which suggests recognising the natural discussions within the setting. The researcher gives insights into individual situations using life history interviews, although the aim is not to make the findings generalisable. Making generalisations from this study's findings goes against the methodology's fundamental theories. Therefore, as stated earlier, the results are anticipated to be transferable to similar situations and contexts.

The exposure to participant characteristics will support transferability. Sharing this information will allow sufficient transferability decisions to be made (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

3.10.3 Dependability

Third, dependability has been provided within the study by confirming that the research followed a thorough process, demonstrating an inspection of the processes and procedures. This thesis followed steps throughout displaying the rigour of data collection and data analysis practices (Gall et al., 2014). This study included rigorous detail on the research process, data collection, and analysis techniques.

3.10.4 Confirmability

Finally, this study provided a comprehensive outline of the research process to allow a greater understanding of the interviewer. The research also provided the researcher's bibliography in Chapter 1. According to Goodson and Gill (2011), the researcher's background information can help assess the research more knowledgeably and allow aspects of personal and emotional areas to be recognised. This produced a transparent work ethic throughout the study and showed the researcher's impact at all stages of the research process.

These four notions of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were embedded at each stage of the study, allowing for a transparent approach to trustworthiness to be woven through every research step.

3.10.5 Ethical considerations

All research that potentially affects people would have ethical issues. Therefore, the ethical issues for this study will focus on the ethical issues of life history interviews and the methodology. Goodson and Sikes (2016) claimed that life history interviews can be emancipatory and empowering; they required participants to make huge commitments when sharing their life experiences through the time and intimacy of their involvement.

The researcher had to be sensitive to areas of cultural, political, and social contexts (Bryman, 2015). These areas, together with ethics, personal integrity, and social values, could impact research with HE managers (May & Perry, 2017). The researcher identified preconceptions that she could bring to the study by her own experiences as a manager at the institution. This was explored to identify how the researcher could influence what was being investigated, as well as the motivations of the research. Reflection on her position as the researcher ensured that the research was conducted ethically, appreciating the viewpoints and experiences of the participants. Positionality also supported offering an inclusive and appropriate study to diverse communities. Reflexivity is an essential component of the research in shaping, informing, and developing positionality (Holmes, 2020), providing many benefits.

3.10.6 Insider knowledge

The insider is part of the organisation where the research is conducted (Holian & Smyth, 2008). The implications of insider research for this study were that the researcher was a senior manager of the institution and the wider community. Floyd and Arthur (2012) argued that it is crucial to have an in-depth understanding of the 'insider' implications, as being an insider could impact the participants, thus having a knock-on effect on the data. Insider research brings both benefits and drawbacks to any study; it is fundamentally embedded within the phenomenon. The benefits include access to the institution, an understanding of the complexity of how the institution operates, and the trust of the participants. Being part of the institutional community authorises a degree of confidence that would not necessarily have been present if the research had been conducted by an outsider (Hewitt-Taylor, 2002). The drawbacks could be potential bias and conflicts of interest. For example, being from a specific faculty or belonging to a particular subject group could bring bias to the study and group. Similarly, there could be a conflict of interest in wanting to defend my community, thereby having an impact on the data collected and the analysis. However, it is important to recognise that outsider research will not eliminate this.

The researcher of this study had a better understanding and experience with which to examine the research context thanks to her position as an insider. Furthermore, the author has worked in this private institution for 11 years and understands institutional policy in private HE. Therefore, the researcher has insider status in related areas of organisational culture, continuing professional development, academic career, and professional identity. Consequently, the trust of the participants was high. Since the researcher has a credible and professional status in her management capacity within the institution, there was a high uptake from participants wanting to share their stories and be part of the study. Contrastingly, during the interview process, a couple of managers who were part of the study were cautious with the details they were sharing and did not fully open up, although they still shared their stories.

Insider anonymity can also be a challenge for insider researchers, as a reader can easily make links with where the researcher is working and guess the identities of the participants.

Therefore, every effort was made to anonymise the information and, in some cases, even to leave out valuable data that could potentially identify participants (Holian & Smyth, 2008).

Ethical considerations are fundamental in ensuring that moral issues in educational research have been considered (Cohen et al., 2017). Therefore, steps were followed to ensure that this study fully considered any ethical issues. Several authors have identified the importance of addressing ethical issues within research studies so that participants avoid mistreatment (Bryman, 2015; Cohen et al., 2017; Miles et al., 2013). For this research study, ethical considerations were even more significant when using life-history interviews to explore the life history of participants. Goodson and Sikes (2001, p. 99) discussed ethics when applying life history interviews: "Life history interviews can damage psychologically and emotionally, they are not to be embarked upon lightly."

Participants could feel empowered that their stories are of value to others. However, it is also vital that participants feel that they are treated ethically and that their accounts will be used to support legitimate research needs (Clandinin, 2006). The implications of using life history interviews as a data collection tool did, for some, result in an emotional, reflective journey. The biographical interview asked direct questions to the participants that they may not have thought about interconnectedly, such as their family, siblings, parents, and educators, and how each of these individuals and groups has influenced them as an individual, therefore shaping their life decisions in areas of education and career, as well as the implications of these as they moved into adulthood with the reflection on their current management positions. At the end of the interviews, some felt it was an emotional journey "similar to a therapy session". For the researcher, it is vital to be aware of the reflexive self while sympathetically fostering and promoting genuine communication with the participants (Chirban, 1996). In addition, the steps undertaken to fully consider ethics involved the following:

Approval was gained from the Research Ethics Committee at Reading University (see Appendix 7).

Participants were given pseudonyms to ensure their identity was protected. There are ethical and legal issues around protecting the identities of all participants and working with individuals.

The ethical considerations for this study included the following:

1. The researcher informed all participants about the research characteristics.
2. The researcher was open and honest about the research with all participants.
3. The researcher took responsibility for all ethical standards in the study.
4. The researcher protected all participants from any discomfort, both physical and mental.
5. All participants completed a consent form to agree to partake in the study.
6. The researcher allowed all participants to see the results.

The factors identified above could all have had an impact on the quality of the research, so the researcher ensured the above steps were followed to eliminate any negative quality impact.

Since the researcher was in a position of power within the organisation, the participants may have felt under pressure or may have wanted to create a positive impression, which could have impacted the study (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). Therefore, consent forms were completed to ensure that all the participants were participating in the study of their own free will and could withdraw from the study at any point. The consent forms provided detailed information on the ethical considerations of the study before the managers agreed to participate. Consent forms (see Appendix 4) were sent to all participants who met the sample characteristics. The information provided in the form included: (a) the project title, (b) what the study was about, (c) why the participant had been chosen, (d) how to participate and withdraw from the study, (e) the benefits and risks of the study, and (f) what would happen with the data. All the participants who agreed to participate in the study were asked to return a copy of the signed consent form emailed to them. The signed form was accepted as an agreement that the participants (a) understood all the information presented to them in the consent form and (b) decided to participate. Once the consent

forms were received, each participant was contacted via email to schedule a convenient time for data collection.

It is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that the writing up of the narrative life history is accurate; it is for the researcher to interpret the data and create a version of reality (Bathmaker & Harnett, 2010).

3.10.7 Limitations

There are limitations to applying life-history interviews in conducting the research. Creswell (2013) stated that first, it is the individual's story, so it is from their point of view. Second, the researcher being there could skew the response. Third, the participants may change what they say to please the researcher (Cohen et al., 2013). Finally, Goodson and Sikes (2001) claimed that the participant will share the story they believe is relevant or the information they want to share with the researcher, which could, in some cases, have less importance for the researcher. The researcher justified the 'Quality Criteria' to avoid limitations and show how every effort was taken to embed quality.

(Bryman, 2015) argued that life history interviews are too subjective, which could make them problematic for validity purposes.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the methodology that the researcher adopted for this thesis project. The following chapter presents the findings of the research and the data analysis.

Chapter 4: Presenting the Findings and Analysis of Academic Career

This chapter summarises the data collected from the 18 managers working within a private HE institution. In addition, the chapter will specifically address Research Question 1:

- (RQ1) What are the personal and professional circumstances that lead academics to become managers in the private HE sector?

4.1 Academic Career

As discussed in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3), the methods applied to collect the data for this study were life history interviews, and the data was coded using thematic analysis techniques outlined by Lichtman (2010) and Silverman (2011).

The key themes that emerged within the data about RQ1 were categorised into the following overarching themes:

- Family background and influences on managers
- Academic background and education
- Career history and career decisions

This chapter is structured according to the above subheadings. It summarises the study's findings within each overarching theme, as listed above. It intends to understand the contextual influences of the family on managers' decisions on education and career choices. The data has been selected and grouped precisely to represent the family backgrounds of managers' lives at all three levels of emerging, middle, and senior managers. Finally, it will analyse the related literature using the theoretical framework at the end of this chapter for the theoretical discussion.

4.1.2 The family background

Of all the respondents, there were no fundamental differences in family backgrounds for senior, middle, and emerging managers. Of the 18 respondents who were interviewed, seven respondents were of international origin, and 11 were of UK origin. Of the 11 British respondents, five had parents who were international (born outside the UK). The table below

illustrates the makeup of the number of senior, middle, and emerging managers falling into each of the groups. It also identifies the international parents in cases where the manager was UK-born.

Respondent	Level of manager	UK or International origin	Parents
Hudson	Senior	UK	
Boris	Senior	UK	International
Simon	Senior	UK	
Candice	Senior	UK	
Joshua	Senior	International	
Maureen	Middle	UK	International
Dennis	Middle	UK	International
Binal	Middle	UK	International
Mark	Middle	International	
Gordon	Middle	UK	
Harold	Middle	UK	International
Valerie	Middle	International	
Hasan	Middle	International	
Denise	Emerging	UK	
Marsha	Emerging	International	
Olivia	Emerging	UK	
Stacey	Emerging	International	
Peter	Emerging	International	

Table 4.1 Respondents and respondents' parents' origin

Of all the participants, three senior, eight middle, and four emerging managers discussed their parents' occupations, which included lorry drivers, shop workers, doctors, NHS workers, police officers, and teachers. Some came from families where both parents worked; for others, the mother was the stay-at-home parent, while the father was the breadwinner. Hudson and Dennis discussed the role of their parents:

> *In terms of my parents, my mother had only had sort of part-time jobs outside of being a housewife, so she saw her career as being a mother, and my dad was a shipping manager. (Hudson–Senior)*

> *My father had always been a driver, a lorry driver, a bus driver. All my life, he was an ambulance driver. My mother worked in a local authority, so she worked in shops and most of my relatives did, too. (Dennis–Middle)*

Olivia talked about her mother's role and how it impacted her learning of skills:

> *My mum, she's a Project Manager for a company. She's very good at managing people and organisation and making lists and that, so I definitely feel that I get my organisation skills from her. My dad was basically really high up in some company. (Olivia–Emerging)*

Five of the participants, two seniors, two middle, and one emerging, discussed their social class, the types of environments they lived in, the family background, and the financial situation of the family. They discussed how these factors influenced them as children and where the parents played a fundamental role in creating opportunities. Boris, Simon, Maureen, Dennis, and Olivia discussed how this influenced who they are today, as well as their working practices:

> *I lived in a very working-class neighbourhood with fairly high crime, very high levels of poverty, and for many people, the only way to escape that kind of life was through education. Because of the lack of educational opportunities for my parents, they worked in very low-paid jobs for the whole of their careers. (Boris–Senior)*

This experience meant Boris was brought up in an environment lacking education. However, his international parents drove his upbringing and pushed for his education, to offer him a better education than they had. Maureen, Dennis, and Olivia had similar upbringings as Boris in that there were financial challenges in their upbringing, so education was seen as a route to better opportunities:

> *My mum was from a very disadvantaged background, so we had some kind of scraping things together. (Maureen–Middle)*

> *I lived on a council estate in social housing. (Dennis–Middle)*

> *We didn't have that much money, so I think I was always sort of aware of having to work hard and wanting to have a good salary. (Olivia–Emerging)*

Simon's family background differed from that of other respondents; he came from a lower middle-class background, having different types of opportunities open to him:

> *I had a very traditional background, so Mum and Dad were married together for their whole life, a sort of lower-middle-class background, not a middle- or upper-class one. (Simon–Senior)*

The family background of the respondents impacted their education, their motivations for education, and the opportunities presented to them.

4.1.3 Academic background

The family background also influences the academic experience. Of the 18 managers interviewed, five senior, three middle, and three emerging managers believed their parents influenced and drove their education. Thus, the parents of respondents played a fundamental role in shaping their education, which influenced the career desires of respondents. Joshua, Harold, and Marsha, being international, were all influenced by their culture; they discussed the expectations of their families, who advocated the magnitude of education early in their upbringing:

Let's say in the subcontinent where I am from, we know that teachers are regarded very highly and respected. My mum was really pushing me to do a bit more, so I would say that yes, my dad supported, but it was more that my mum supported even more. (Joshua–Senior)

I come from a typical country and family where it's all about education and you go out there and at any gathering, 'This is my son, he's a doctor.' That's the sort of background I come from, it's all about what your son did and how best you are able to pigeonhole them into certain areas. (Harold–Middle)

Growing up back home, education was always the number one thing. My dad used to say we can leave you all the inheritance we can, but then someone can come and take it from you, but education, once you get it no one can ever take that from you. (Marsha–Emerging)

In contrast, in the case of Dennis, who was of UK origin, as were his parents, had been brought up in an environment where aspirations for education were high:

My parents were aspirational, but they did not have any means to support their aspirations, really that they were aspirational, and they are the cultural divide between them and their attitude towards themselves and responsibility and self-respect. (Dennis–Middle)

Those whose families influenced them about the importance of education were driven to continue with further and higher degrees. In the cases of Hudson and Dennis, it was evident that their attitudes towards schooling at a younger age had transpired into motivations to continue with higher-level degrees and doctorates in adulthood. Dennis had an initial dislike of school and studying:

I really hated school, really hated it with a passion… (Dennis–Middle)

I did three A-levels that didn't go very well… so then I worked… I was unemployed …. I have played the guitar since I was about seven years old; I played in bands and had a good old time. I worked in a factory unloading lorries full of boiler suits, and I put

barcodes on boiler suits using a special barcode machine. I worked in a wool house (laughs), I worked for the local authority for the council… and then I thought, you know, I can't take any more of this. I've got to get an education. (Dennis–Middle)

Dennis had some support from his then-partner, who is now his wife, to study in the evenings to gain a higher degree:

I got a doctorate, and I studied hard in adulthood. I went to night school, I got a couple of A-levels, I went to university and got a degree, I did an MPhil in London, and then I did a PhD in London. (Dennis–Middle)

Similarly, Hudson was not too interested in education when he was younger; his siblings finished school and started work straight away, so he followed the same path, although after a few years of working, he decided he wanted to pursue his education:

I left school at 16, got a job, and worked until I was 19 in a full-time job in HR. I then decided I wanted to return to do A-levels and further education. (Hudson–Senior)

After Hudson completed his undergraduate degree, once back in the workplace, he recognised that he held a vital skillset, so he went back into education to complete his PGCE.

I went off to university, I studied a degree in business. I had some, maybe some, natural presentation skills, so I then did a PGCE, which meant going back to university for a year.

After this, he taught at a Further Education (FE) college, which also offered some HE courses; after one year, he was able to enrol on a master's programme. On completion, he moved into a private HE institution, where he decided to start his doctorate:

I wanted to extend my education, then I enrolled for a part-time doctorate to do alongside my full-time job. (Hudson–Senior)

Of the 18 managers interviewed, six hold the highest-level qualifications, PhDs, and 12 have a master's level qualification.

	Pseudonyms	PhD holders	Master's level qualification holders
Senior Leaders	Simon	Yes	-
	Hudson	No	Yes
	Boris	Yes	-
	Candice	No	Yes
	Joshua	Yes	-
Middle Leaders	Gordon	No	Yes
	Valerie	No	Yes
	Harold	Yes	-
	Maureen	No	Yes
	Binal	No	Yes
	Dennis	Yes	-
	Mark	No	Yes
	Denise	No	Yes
Emerging Leaders	Marsha	No	Yes

	Olivia	No	Yes
	Hasan	No	Yes
	Peter	No	Yes
	Stacey	Yes	-

Table 4.2 Highest qualifications of managers working in the private HE institution

4.1.4 Career history and career decisions

The career decisions made by managers earlier in their lives have resulted in their taking the path into HE management. Although of the 18 managers who were interviewed, three managers, Simon, Joshua, and Hasan, recalled their first experiences of teaching via a tutoring route, they believed that it was while they were carrying out their full-time roles and tutoring students that they developed their passion for teaching:

> *I started teaching when I was doing my PhD research. I found that I really enjoyed it, so teaching has been a constant thread in one way or another all through my 20s. When I finished my PhD, I became a research fellow. After this, I decided to strike out on my own, so I went into my own business in IT, although I continued doing a bit of teaching on the side. Where I was teaching moved into HE, so I started to get more involved in that side of things and learning about academic quality and managing programmes with university partners. I worked for 10 to 12 universities over the years in partnerships, then slowly worked my way up from lecturer to programme leader, and upwards. (Simon–Senior)*

> *I had a role in the civil service, and in my own free time in the evening I carried on teaching. Then actually I switched my career, I joined the university, and became a lecturer. I had some other roles in education, and then I started here as a programme manager. (Joshua–Senior)*

> *It's funny because when I was even… I was in my early education, at college level, I was doing tuition as well at that point, which means I have been involved in one way or*

another, with a formal education as part of my… I was doing my own, I was at university. I used to teach, as we call it here, ZHC (Zero Hour Contract) contractors to bachelor's degrees. And then so, even with… even while in industry, I was still involved, one way or another, with academia. (Hasan–Emerging)

These early experiences opened opportunities in teaching, where now Simon, Joshua, and Hasan are managers working in HE.

This contrasts with the experiences of Hudson and Dennis, who did not tutor while working in other jobs, instead completed their studies and then entered the sector:

I started my teaching career; I started in the further education sector, and then after about eight years got employment in the HE sector and have worked there for another ten years, so my career so far has been split almost in half, with half being in the FE sector, which would have been public sector but in the further education sector type delivery. (Hudson–Senior)

After I gained an education, I saw an advert for a public institution. I went for it as I was encouraged by my wife, and it was for evening work originally, so I was sort of closer to leading the lecturer's life. I then moved to a private institution as a deputy head of department; this was almost entirely for financial reasons. (Dennis–Middle)

4.1.5 Reasons for entering private HE sector

The reasons respondents gave for choosing to work in the private HE sector fell into three key areas: (1) consciously deciding to work in the private sector, in other words, knowing the sector was private and choosing to pursue this career; (2) taking up a role that was recommended by their network or a colleague who had the experience of working for the private institution; and (3) taking the role simply because there was an opportunity available that they were attracted to, not necessarily deciding on either private or public sector work, but just seeing an attractive role and being successful in applying for the post.

Of the 18 respondents, six consciously entered the private HE arena, four entered through recommendations via their network, and eight entered the private sector as a job opportunity was available. Stacey, Simon, and Hudson shared their reasons for why they joined the private HE sector:

> *I worked for a Russell Group University; I wanted a positive challenge, private education, since it has a wider appeal and it's a lot more diverse with students of different backgrounds. I think it's a good opportunity to develop myself. (Stacey–Emerging)*

> *I get frustrated working at public sector organisations because although they talk about putting the student first, they don't really, often are the most important people in the organisation. That time to do research, that time off to go to conferences that I possibly can't do over the summer because I'm doing X, Y, Z used to frustrate me. I think one thing we do here is actually we do put the student first. (Simon–Senior)*

> *It was a conscious decision. I knew it was private and I felt that there were some benefits to being in a private organisation that I didn't have in the public sector. (Hudson–Senior)*

In the case of Dennis, although he joined the institution purely for financial reasons, he discussed in detail his motivation to support student cohorts whom he felt he could help and where he could make a difference:

> *One of the reasons why I've only ever worked in the post-92 sector before I worked in the private sector, a lot of students were, you know, these are B and C grade students who, you know, will look… You can transform them and make them A grade students, which is to secure B grades. I've always enjoyed working with those kinds of students. There are similar characteristics, and I like that; I think it relates very strongly to my upbringing. (Dennis–Middle)*

Respondents who chose to join the private institution via recommendation did so primarily for this reason; their decision to work in the private sector was due to their network recommending the institution, as Denise, Gordon, and Peter discussed:

So, to be perfectly honest, my choice wasn't whether it was public or private, it was an opportunity, and I knew two pre-sessional staff and another lecturer here; he told me about a job that had come up, and I said, 'Oh, what's it like?' He was very positive. (Denise–Emerging)

It was more about the people I knew. It wasn't a conscious decision to go into private HE as opposed to mainstream HE; it was the opportunities that came through the people that I knew. (Gordon–Middle)

It was actually recommended as a good place to work; that was the main reason. (Peter–Emerging)

Finally, eight of the respondents decided to join the private institution, as it was an opportunity that arose at the time. The reasons specifically for why they took the opportunity ranged from a better opportunity than what they were already doing at the time to the opportunities the institution itself would offer. For example, Candice stated that part of her decision to move into private HE was based on the opportunities that the private sector could open up to her.

If I'm honest, it's not something I actively sought out; it was almost through the connections. There were two reasons for this: one is because there was an opportunity here and they had different partnered universities, but two, I think once you get into private education, you know, with that as well; I was thinking would I get similar opportunities within a public university system? Because I'm not sure there are, because they are slower-paced. I think areas for development if I compare it with here, I'm not sure how quick the development opportunities would be in the public university, so yes, like I said, I didn't actually seek it out, I just almost kind of fell into it. (Candice–Senior)

This was almost entirely a financial decision: North London, family, mortgage, and home. I was one of the first to get concerned about the existing public institution and one of the first to jump ship. (Dennis–Middle)

To be honest, the way I see this is more or less similar, whether you work in a private university or you work in a public university. I worked in public universities, and they have two intakes during the year, similar types of students to what we are facing here. Now universities are starting three intakes. (Mark–Middle)

4.2 Discussion of family background

In addressing the first research question to understand the personal and professional circumstances that lead academics to become managers in the private HE sector, some key themes emerged. The first is that these managers are highly diverse. Although managers working in private HE environments are mainly international, in those cases where the managers were UK-born, the study suggests that there is still an international background influence from their parents' origin. For these managers influenced by international cultures, education was a way of creating opportunity that was culturally driven as a route to success. This resulted in these managers having an entrepreneurial approach to education, having experienced in themselves and through their family background that 'hard work pays off'. Such individuals were able to connect with the diverse international student cohorts who largely came from widening participation student groups. The study undertaken in the public sector confirmed Morley (2013) findings that diverse bodies of staff and students are needed within HE settings, as this encourages diversity across the HE sector as a whole; however, this is only one way of diversifying the HE environment. Although working in the private HE sector has been perceived as second-best by many, for others, this is deemed a pathway into the HE system of academic work. The present study extends our knowledge of how management roles change in the sector. New managerialism brings about changes in expectations of management roles and the duties of how these roles have evolved. While pre-92 public institutions have a less diverse academic community than the private sector, the globalisation of education is forcing a more diverse labour market (Deem, 2010). Therefore, this study has contributed to enhancing our understanding of new managerialism and the evolving role of managers working in a business environment; this is an area where pre-92 public institutions could learn from the private sector in creating a highly diverse workforce.

Traditionally, managers in pre-92 public institutions would stay in their positions for a number of years, creating barriers for other academic staff wanting to move up into management positions. Over the years, academic careers have moved from linear routes to being boundaryless (Arthur et al., 2005). For the managers in this study, the cultural background of the family is fundamental, as it highly influences their career choices and career trajectories. Although the socio-economic backgrounds of the managers were not all the same, they were not far apart either. The participants revealed a strong desire for education, which was seen to improve life chances and offer wider opportunities in individual careers. Dennis and Boris, who came from working-class backgrounds, were expected to take education as an opportunity to have better life opportunities than their parents. These findings are similar to those of Correll (2004) a study undertaken in the public sector, who suggested that family culture can restrict or open what individuals believe they are capable of, impacting their career choices. This study confirms that the family background and culture of these managers were fundamental in influencing their choices; the opportunities they were offered by their families shaped their values, which impacted their decisions and motivated hard work. This study confirms the findings of Marsh and Keating (2006) undertaken in the public sector, that social class, for many, is a highly influential factor in an individual's position within society, and the influence of the relationships within these groups will impact the family members.

In contrast, Maureen and Olivia, who came from less-advantaged backgrounds, have still managed to move into leadership positions. These results match those of an earlier study by Floyd (2012b) undertaken in the post-92 public sector, suggest that managers from less privileged backgrounds have managed to break the stigma and move beyond their traditional academic limits. However, although this is a contributing factor, it is not the only aspect, as several other considerations contribute to motivating individuals to move into management positions. The findings from this study do confirm that family values and cultural settings allowed these managers to move beyond traditional academic expectations; therefore, education is highly valued and drives their career choices.

This research adds to the literature in the field of the characteristics of managers working in HE, in contrast to the public sector, so moving away from the traditional pre-92 academic

routes of research and opening an environment for a more diverse community of academics entering this space. For several managers in this study, that meant they embraced the expectations and importance of education, which was heavily influenced by their family culture, at a young age; these findings are consistent with the research by Butler and Muir (2017), who highlighted that individuals' career aspirations and personal abilities, or what they believe they can achieve, are driven from a very early age in their lives. Giddens et al. (2006) argued that social learning takes place in early childhood; it is these values that influence individuals and highly impact the shaping of their career choices. The family culture was a fundamental factor influencing the academic background of the managers in this study and their career choices. Joshua and Harold both felt their experiences of being driven towards education by their parents were a critical cultural factor in their upbringing. This study confirms that the views expressed by adults in the family led to these managers prioritising education from a young age, demonstrating the importance of having a successful career, and status in their professional identity. These results are consistent with the research of Camarero-Figuerola et al. (2020), who suggested that the educational choices of individuals are closely connected to their family background, which will highly influence decision making and career routes, adding to the existing research on family culture shaping educational experiences and long-term career decisions. High academic expectations were set in early childhood for both Joshua and Harold to obtain doctorate qualifications, demonstrating a higher level of credibility in their roles as educators; this has developed and shaped their professional identity in the sector. These results match those observed in an earlier study by Evetts (2003), who suggested that family and close environment influence an individual's career aspirations and beliefs of what is achievable for them. This research confirms that the diverse workforce has been shaped by their families, adding to the existing literature on family backgrounds and careers. It also expands the literature on the diversity of managers working in private HE.

4.2.1 Reasons to move into private HE

Several managers in this study had consciously chosen to move into the private HE sector. Stacey, Simon, Hudson, and Dennis all intentionally found jobs in a private HE institution; they wanted to be challenged and have the opportunity to work with a diverse group of

students, which in contrast to the pre-92 public sector is not the usual vision for academic careers. These findings are consistent with the studies by Whitchurch et al. (2021) and Floyd and Preston (2019), suggesting that the notion of careers being linear, as they were historically in pre-92 universities, is not how they are now placed within the sector of HE. It is known that academics usually join pre-92 public HE institutions to conduct research or teach; the goal would not be to move into management positions, as this would be seen to be a distraction from their primary work (Floyd, 2012b). However, the managers in this study discussed the opportunities made available to them through management routes in the private HE institution; they were presented with progression within this fast-growing institution, which confirmed there was a general sense of career growth via management routes. These results agree with the study by Deem (2004) undertaken in the public sector, who argued that there are academics who enjoy management roles and want to move into these positions; she referred to them as 'career track managers'. The study by Floyd (2012b) undertaken in post-92 universities, supports this research, which suggests that in many cases, academics move into management positions when they reach a certain point in their careers, which he refers to as 'turning points'; this is when managers believe they are ready to take on management responsibilities. However, the findings from this study suggest that academics are motivated by management career opportunities not only as 'career track' managers or at 'turning points' but also earlier in their careers, which is inconsistent with both studies and adds to the existing literature on academic career theory. To be successful, the managers working in this private HE institution require not only academic experience but to be well-rounded, as working in a complex environment requires a multitude of skills; these results agree with Bolden et al. (2012) a study undertaken in pre and post-92 universities, who found that HE management positions are multi-faceted roles, bringing together a range of skillsets as well as a mindset shift.

This study found that many of the managers at this private institution were not of UK origin; in cases where managers were British, there were several whose parents were of non-UK origin, and the entrepreneurial approach to working was a value embedded in their family culture. The diversity of managers working in the private sector has shaped an entrepreneurial approach to management work in private institutions. This entrepreneurial

approach to work brings a strong culture, one which is very much synchronised with 'hard work gets rewarded'. These results match those observed in an earlier study by Slaughter and Leslie (1997), who suggested that new values transmitted into academics are usually found in for-profit organisations in the sector. The professional background of managers in this study is closely connected to their value system, which is developed within the family system. The diversity of managers is viewed as being agile, their families being entrepreneurial where they need to 'win at all costs'. These results are consistent with the study by Chakravarthy and Lorange (2008), who found that managers shape the organisation in the revitalisation and lead to implementation.

The background of participants is very closely aligned with the student body of the private institution; students are mature, from non-traditional backgrounds and mostly international. The diverse workforce resonates with the student body but also instils a strong work ethic, having experienced that 'hard work pays off', not only taking on components of teaching and, in some cases, research, but also recognising the value of taking risks and being commercially driven to be high achievers. This also accords with earlier research by Birds (2014), who found that entrepreneurial managers in HE involve elements of commercial activities within their roles. This study found that the managers in the private HE institution are required to manage many of the commercial aspects of the organisation, including utilisation of staff, operating costs and growth opportunities; these findings mirror those of a previous study by Deem (2001) undertaken in the public sector, who found that universities are pressured to change their work, resulting in conceptualising the ideologies of university work into global contexts of growth and knowledge. Gibb (2002) found that HE is a complex business environment, and many staff members are required to accept entrepreneurial behaviour.

The managers in this study discussed how private HE offered them career progression opportunities that may not yet be readily available in the public sector. In addition, this study found that career opportunities for these entrepreneurial managers were a fundamental reason and motivation for being part of this private community. These findings agree with the study by Klofsten et al. (2019), who suggested that opportunities are taken by academics who choose to move into management roles leading to progression within

their career. The findings from this study add to the existing literature on entrepreneurial managers working in HE.

This study found that the managers working in the private HE sector were offered many career opportunities. However, these managers felt there were challenges associated with the hard work in this fast-paced, busy, complex environment; this finding aligns with the study by Winter (2009) undertaken in the public sector, who found that the roles of managers in HE have been transformed, requiring them to take on several aspects of management roles that were not a focus in the traditional HE business model. Dennis and Gordon discussed the most significant challenge as managers managing academic staff; there was strong recognition that a specific management style was required to work in this private environment, which only appeals to some. Typically, it was recognised that a laissez-faire management style was not suited to this complex private HE institution; these findings agree with previous research by Connolly and Farrier (2021), who suggested that the reconceptualisation of academic leadership is in line with more social and relational leadership models. There was a feeling that strong managers were needed who could work in a setting where pace, complexity, and decision-making were some of the basic requirements to be successful. To work in this private environment and manage difficult and complex situations needed strong management skills. This study found that working in a private organisation was complicated because working with numerous partners, programmes, and processes, particularly as a line manager, made the role extremely challenging. Working in a matrix management structure where managers needed to influence decisions, although they did not have the authority to do so formally, created convolutions. These findings are consistent with previous research by Hill (2004) undertaken in the public sector, who found that being a manager was perceived as an attractive position offering freedom and authority, although once in the position, many felt restricted due to the demands of the role. These findings build on the existing literature on managers working in HE from the perspective of private institutions and the fundamental differences specifically related to the role.

Chapter 5: Presenting the Findings and Analysis of Organisational Culture

This chapter summarises the data collected from the 18 managers; it specifically addresses Research Question 2.

- (RQ2) How do managers perceive and experience the organisational culture when working in the private HE institution?

This chapter starts with a discussion of the organisational culture at an institutional level and managers' perceptions. The key themes that emerged from the data concerning RQ2 were categorised into the following overarching themes:

- Public/private functioning
- Commercial roots
- Student centredness
- Communities of practice
- Private HE lecturer disposition
- Challenges of a private HE manager

This chapter is structured into the above subheadings. It summarises the findings of the study under each of these overarching themes. It intends to understand the working practices within the institution's organisational culture in private HE. Finally, it will analyse the related literature using the theoretical framework at the end of this chapter.

5.1 Public/Private Functioning

As discussed in Chapter 2, the working practices of private and public HE institutions are very different from one another in some areas. The participants identified that the private HE culture lacks autonomy and that the institution's priorities fundamentally differ from those of the public sector.

Of the 18 respondents who were interviewed, eight in total, two of the senior managers, three of the middle managers and three of the emerging managers, discussed the differences in how the public and private HE institutions function. The culture that the participants experienced while working in the private HE institution was naturally compared to their work

in public institutions to benchmark their expectations. Dennis, Mark, and Peter believed that academic staff working in the private sector were limited in autonomy within their role:

> *I was in a public environment where people were and where the autonomy of the academic was paramount, where you would have administrative staff who were on the 9-5, the 9-7 it seemed, and the academic staff would swan in and out, you know, if they weren't teaching there was an office hour. And if you wanted them to do basically anything you had to beg, and sometimes, they just would not do anything. And so, you had all this tension between the, you know, the respect you were supposed to show the academic and the need to get things done. (Dennis–Middle)*

> *The culture here is quite dominant, whereas in traditional universities it's quite flexible. On certain days I only have to do marking or set up my Moodle pages and I could do that more effectively while sitting at home because I do not have to travel. (Mark–Middle)*

> *The difference in culture between traditional universities and private institutions here is that it almost feels like the control of the private institution is almost like a clock-in clock-out level, where at institution or traditional institutions. At public institutions it's… you have a laptop, you can work from the library, you can work from a hot desk anywhere you want, as long as your work is being done. Here, it's 'Why are you not here? You haven't been in for days.' So that's the difference, I think. (Peter–Emerging)*

Three other respondents, Harold, Boris, and Dennis, also felt that there was a lack of freedom in decision making when working in the private HE sector:

> *The decision making is very limited when it comes to private institutions. From what I have seen here, it's very much someone else telling them what to do, while in the government setup, there is a lot more independence and flexibility. A module leader has a huge responsibility and can even stop a programme leader from making a decision on his module. (Harold–Middle)*

> *I suppose the biggest difference is that we have to be a little stricter to make sure that things are done by chasing people up now and then. (Boris–Senior)*

Dennis discussed how there were differences between the private and public sectors:

> *You could view the lack of freedom that staff have in private as a much more authoritarian attitude towards them, and what they do. You can view this negatively, but at the same time it gets the job done. So, I'm kind of torn between these two things… there is a really flabby public sector and the almost, you might say, crawly efficient private sector. And of course it is interesting to me to have seen both and to compare and contrast, somewhere in the middle is just the right kind of balance. Obviously, it's obvious, anyone can see that things seem to be going the private sector way for parts of the HE sector. (Dennis–Middle)*

Finally, Stacey felt that the culture of working in this institution was different due to the student demographic; this shaped the opportunities that the private institution offered:

> *We are obviously very different from a standard university, or a standard HE provider, because we perceive an opportunity for all types of students to engage with HE. (Stacey–Emerging)*

5.1.2 Commercial roots

Participants identified commercial roots as a fundamental factor that made up the organisational culture. Of the 18 respondents, 13 in total, five senior managers, five middle managers and three emerging managers, discussed the commercial roots that prevailed when working as a manager within the institution. Simon and Binal specifically felt that this private HE organisational culture was a key driver in how the institution was run, which ultimately impacted the managers working within it:

> *It's a very fast and furious culture and that's… I think that reflects our commercial roots. It also reflects our ownership; as you know we are owned by a private equity group and private equity groups don't stand still, they look for very rapid growth and creation of value for their investors. Fast and furious, it is pressured, but it can be a little chaotic sometimes because things change quickly and then they change back again. (Simon–Senior)*

Private education has to perform, so to speak, and I don't mean that public sectors don't, but private education is scrutinised more heavily on performance. The disadvantages of being in the private sector are that profits are important; therefore, management of cost probably has more pressure on private education than it does on public. And budgetary constraints can often be a challenge because there may be periods of time when you have to work with limited resources, because cost becomes a problem. (Binal–Middle)

Other examples of working in a culture with commercial roots include Maureen, Joshua, and Olivia. Although there was a strong feeling that the commercial roots of the institution came to the surface in areas such as language, specific commercial language was commonly used in the private environment. Maureen felt that this is what impacted the working environment of the managers in it:

So, I think the culture is kind of focused towards, there's some kind of understanding of customer service, I suppose there's some kind of focus on profit and profit making or high turnover. (Maureen–Middle)

Joshua and Olivia supported the discussion of commercial language; there was a feeling that this changed the expectations of the service offered to the students, but also set parameters on working for the management teams and academics:

Of course, now even private-sector universities are realising that students are not students any more… they are customers in the private sector. From day one we knew that they are customers, so they are more customer focused. (Joshua–Senior)

I think that because there is that sort of customer relationship in a way with the students, I think it does mean that you have to consider it from that perspective sometimes. (Olivia–Emerging)

Another feature that supported the commercial roots culture was the focus on rapid growth. Hudson, Binal, and Candice all believed that the commercial side of the institution was signified through its approach to growth in all areas of partner institutions, programmes, and

student numbers. Hudson thought that as it was a private institution, organisational growth was quick:

> *There's been a rapid expansion of the faculties over the last few years that has presented challenges for senior managers. (Hudson–Senior)*

Hudson believed that the challenges with resourcing, when the organisation scales up rapidly, impacted all areas of the institution, including all levels of the management teams.

Another example was Binal, who discussed the importance of not letting the lack of resources impact stakeholder needs:

> *We could always do with more resources, and the organisation I'm in has experienced quite a lot of growth, which is great. I don't think the organisational structure or the resources to support the growth have been timely, nor are they seen to be very soon to arrive, so there are times when particularly the academic managers have to dig in of that expression and ride out this difficult period while making sure none of our stakeholders are impacted. (Binal–Middle)*

The growth of the institution resulted in the growth of faculties. Candice discussed how this growth resulted in a change from having one faculty to multiple faculties:

> *I think it was just… There used to be one faculty, and that was a change in culture for them because it was one faculty that then got split into three. I think we have to be careful and faculties… as we move towards more and more faculties it is I think great, and you want them all to be able to create their own cultural identity, but you also want to make sure that they tie into the overall culture identity. You don't want to have such a shift because I think we have a lovely community here. (Candice–Senior)*

The process of making decisions in a commercial institution was discussed by four senior managers, one middle manager, and one emerging manager. Simon believed that decision making was collaborative and that staff were involved in decisions, and he felt that there was an opportunity to involve staff at all levels:

Overall, the decision making at the senior level is quite collaborative, and it's quite integrated, so I wouldn't unilaterally make the decision to change. I think we are gradually beginning to empower people to make more of the decisions to do things. (Simon–Senior)

However, this was not a shared belief across all middle and emerging managers, as some believed that decisions were taken at a top level and by university partners. Olivia felt that many of the decisions were controlled by the partner university; it was up to the university partner how they wanted their programmes to run, and much of the decision making also followed their processes and policies, which left little room for managers to make their own decisions:

I guess in terms of partnership we are very much subjected to what a partner wants. I have really enjoyed making decisions. (Olivia–Emerging)

Binal felt that there were advantages to being a private institution; there was a lack of bureaucracy, which meant that decisions were made at speed:

There are some elements in private education where decision making can be quicker because, particularly in our culture, one thing I do like is that we don't have a big power distance in terms of hierarchy. When you come to a cultural factor, if I prove the value it can add I can get that approved quite quickly. (Binal–Middle)

Finally, Hudson also felt that decision making would change as the institution grew and that, as a smaller institution, decisions would be made differently from larger institutions:

Expansion has presented challenges for senior managers working at the faculty level in terms of having a co-ordinated culture, so although people may have been hired previously with that particular culture being a priority, that may well reduce in its priority if the senior managers of the faculty do not continue to work with that as a priority, so they can make their own choices, they can choose to take the culture in a different direction, and that can easily happen as the expansion of the faculties continues, (Hudson–Senior)

5.1.3 Student-centred culture

Of the 18 respondents, eight in total, four senior managers and four middle managers, discussed the institution's student-centred organisational culture. Joshua and Gordon felt that the culture of the private institution was heavily student focused. Although they believed that the student experience was given much attention, some said that the culture in the private institution was heavily driven by student success:

> *So, for us again I think in the HE private sector I think it was more that our approach is a more student-centric approach. So, for example, I have implemented quite an open-door policy at the campus, where I said to my office helpdesk team that if any student wants to speak to me, they don't need to book a meeting in advance. Of course, if I'm in a meeting, they cannot disrupt it, but then they can check back and then I would see them. (Joshua-Senior)*

> *Everybody is so friendly, which obviously they are, but also in addition to that now everybody is focused on the student. The culture is that we are here for them and that's always been mine. The only reason I've got a job is because of the students, so everything is driven so that the culture is about the students and the student experience. The fact is that as a team you know we can deliver, and we should be able to. (Gordon-Middle)*

Denise believed that the support that was offered to students could even be seen as uncommon within the HE landscape; this student-centred approach was a fundamental factor that made up the organisational culture:

> *How much support we give to the students is a little bit unusual compared to other institutions. Given our student profile, we don't limit the support. (Denise-Middle)*

Valerie discussed how student feedback played a significant role in this offering; it was listening to the students that allowed the institution to meet the students' needs:

> *The culture is to perhaps put students first and what the students want, and how we can deliver the best way to make sure the students are happy and the quality… I think*

within the quality standards. Just I think so, again, the deadlines and putting the students first and making sure that we get feedback, we know we will work at the higher… the highest potential, the highest standards. (Valerie–Middle)

Another example was from a senior manager, Boris. It was evident that the students played a crucial role in how things were done. Boris discussed his dedication to the students and the significance of contact with the students, although he revealed that not all managers felt the same:

I met someone who was a dean the other day. He said he hadn't taught anyone for about seven or eight years. I can understand that might attract some people, but it wouldn't attract me, it would be horrifying because how can you make decisions about students if you don't know what they think or don't know anything about what's happening with them? So, one thing in common which is really good is the outlook of most of the people here. They are very much on the side of the student and want to deliver quality learning, so that's something I think is common and very important. (Boris–Senior)

Finally, having a student-centred culture is connected to the subsequent discussions of being a teaching-led institution. Hudson discussed the importance of staff efficiency and how there is a heavy reliance on staff to teach:

I do feel that the emphasis is placed on teaching and being in the classroom and working with students over being an independent academic researcher. The emphasis for private providers remains on teaching; there's a natural organisational culture that tends to prevail because, although the act of teaching tends to be quite solo in the classroom, there needs to be quite a lot of preparation and working together. I think there are challenges for staff in balancing out their desire to want to contribute to some research alongside their teaching, when the emphasis is more on just the teaching part of their role. There's an expectation amongst staff that teaching will be the priority due to the way that people are sort of inducted and their expectations managed by their line managers in terms of where the priorities are. So in a way, it's

kind of maybe some underlying frustrations as the role only really requires teaching, rather than the academic research aspect. (Hudson–Senior)

5.1.4 Communities of practice

Half of the 18 respondents, four senior managers, two middle managers, and three emerging managers, discussed communities of practice. Simon believed that it was fundamental to create a safe culture, which would create an environment for staff to work with each other and test out their ideas, thus providing support and encouragement to get the best from staff collaboration:

I think management encourages people to pursue opportunities to try ideas to develop, and I hope it's also a culture that's supportive of when things go wrong, you know. If we try something and it doesn't work… if a lecturer says they will cover something, and it doesn't go brilliantly, then, you know, that is accepted. (Simon–Senior)

Stacey and Mark both felt that the relationships of working with each other and how these positively impacted the organisational working culture made the institution an enjoyable place to work in:

I think it's a great working opportunity culture; I think we are very closely interacting. I don't really see barriers here that you would normally experience in a standard university between senior managers, middle managers, and the general or regular academic staff that includes sessional lecturers. I quite like that; that aspect of culture really suits my working style and I'm comfortable within these walls. (Stacey–Emerging)

It feels like you are just in your second home. If you cannot do something or you are busy, or something has happened with you, you just request someone. It feels like they are ready to help you. So, I personally feel the working culture is amazing here. I have never come across anyone in here who would ever have said no unless they had a serious commitment or something. (Mark–Middle)

The cross-faculty communities were believed to be strong. Olivia discussed how working with other departments and faculties created a positive working culture and a sense of community:

> *I think there are sort of close relationships with the different departments. You know, with the registry department, with you know admin, or student services, I think there is a… there is a closer bond, which means you know there are queries that probably get resolved quicker. I just feel closer in the sense that I just feel like you just… because there is a smaller team and you are all sort of together. (Olivia–Emerging)*

Three senior managers and three emerging managers discussed differing faculty cultures. It was evident that the culture in the business, computing, english, and learning and teaching faculties had fundamental differences. Stacey had experienced working in both the business and English faculties. Although in the same institution, the practices across the two faculties were vastly different:

> *I had experience working for the English language unit and now the business faculty. I never had experience working for the computing department, but I see how they work, which, again, is very different from the way we work with the English language. I think there are so many good examples we could draw on as the business unit from the English team. (Stacey–Emerging)*

Another example was from Mark, who believed there were fundamental differences in working in the business and the computing faculties:

> *I have seen that there is a slight difference between how computing runs and how business management runs. Business management is more focused on whatever is happening; is being told has been asked to do they just do it; I mean this is my personal opinion. Whereas in computing we have a very democratic kind of… you know, it is not authoritative, it is not a narrow gated style, it's a more democratic style. (Mark–Middle)*

Another example is from Boris, who worked in the computing Faculty. He discussed differences in how this faculty operated that impacted the management team:

It tends to be a lot more relaxed because I can trust that people will do what they are supposed to do. So, I don't have to order them about or chase them or whatever to make sure that they are actually doing things, because there is a sense of pride and accomplishment in what they do, so it's much more relaxed. I try to spend as much time as possible with the staff. (Boris–Senior)

Finally, Stacey believed that the organisational culture, particularly the working practices at the faculty level and the quality of delivery, were highly regulated in some faculties compared to others. Stacey felt that this good practice could have been shared by the other faculties:

There is something else we should draw on, observations. You don't want to be observed four or five times per year, that's very daunting and puts a lot of pressure on you. Often, I'm looking at transition into the business faculty. Very often, line managers are not even aware, for various reasons, valid reasons, of what's going on in the class, what the calibre of the lecturer is, and whether the lectures are delivered in the way they should be. (Stacy–Emerging)

5.1.5 Private HE lecturer disposition

The disposition of academic staff choosing to work in the private HE sector was identified as an organisational culture that fits a specific personality and character, rather than a working environment for all academics. Of the 18 respondents interviewed, four discussed private HE lecturer disposition, two senior managers and two middle managers. Although any emerging managers did not discuss this theme, it could be argued that it is with experience and through line management responsibility that middle and senior managers can see solid examples of how disposition matters in this environmental context:

Senior manager Simon discussed the different culture when working in a private HE institution; the environment was not necessarily one that suited every academic; therefore, it was vital for potential new staff entering the environment to be aware of what this arena was made up of:

I don't think it's an environment for every academic, some, and you will see this around in your reports and your own colleagues. Some people dive in and swim with it and

they absolutely adore it because of the fast pace and so on and the opportunity it brings. Others, I think, long for the more measured, more structured approach. (Simon–Senior)

Hudson felt that there was a strong culture around collaboration and students. Therefore, the staff working in the private sector would need to be aware that communities and students are the focus in the private setting, so they need to be able to fit into this existing culture:

The hiring of staff who will want to work collaboratively, who see themselves as part of a team and who understand the importance of being able to work with other people. That accompanies the expectations of them being good lecturers and looking after students so that culture has almost sort of been handed down. (Hudson–Senior)

Gordon discussed another example of the disposition that suits the private working environment. He supported the thinking and recognised that there were challenges for new starters joining a public HE institution:

When we recruit people from the mainstream university they operate in, yes they are there for students as well, but their mind-set is slightly different, in the way that they attend or what they get involved in, or their limitations on how much they get involved, whereas here most staff seem to get involved in most things at some point. I think there is that kind of divide almost, so people who have been with a private provider previously, or this one for a long period, fully understand the culture, whereas others coming in from a mainstream university… some actually struggle because they don't appreciate or believe in how we operate, because they've seen it in a different way and they believe that our way is wrong. Some adapt and overcome, some haven't, and they have ended up leaving because they can't adjust to the way that we do it as a private provider. (Gordon–Middle)

Dennis's story was one where he had experienced working in the public and now the private sector. He felt that there was a specific type of person and management style required to work in the private environment, which was not necessarily suited to him:

It's very… it's very difficult to be… to have my style in this context, because it is rather rigid. I think that it is so difficult. I think… I think I'm managing to have a relationship with my staff, which, you know, I'm quite explicit with them about. You know, that is, let us be as relaxed and liberal about things as we can be. But we will come across… we will come across constraints, and when we hit those constraints, I will tell you, I'm kind of really open about this. (Dennis–Middle)

Dennis also recognised that staff who came from public institutions brought their own understanding and working principles.

And I think that the head of computing has come from a public university. I think he's brought with him some public sector ways and he's pretty much laissez-faire. I mean, this is all pretty much a laissez-faire attitude towards some of his staff because of his public sector ways, which means that you've got people who are just next to each other geographically and in London, but as you say, thinking about culture, but operating in very different cultures. There's a lot of potential for a lack of transparency and a lack of fairness in the way that people are treated, yeah. (Dennis–Middle)

5.1.6 Challenges of working in private HE

Of the 18 managers interviewed, one senior, three middle, and three emerging managers discussed the greatest challenge of managing people in the private HE environment. Dennis felt that the management of academic staff was an area that required a specific type of management style:

The challenges have been massive, and my personal perspective obviously trivial in the grand scheme of things, but from my perspective we have big challenges. I think one of them is what I've learnt since I read a paragraph about what it says about laissez-faire style of management. Maybe this is where I am, and in the same paragraph it says it doesn't work in all contexts; it doesn't work because staff will take a mile, and the styles that always work are the authoritarian ones, the manager with OCD, the manager who thinks alphabetically, and who thinks in turn that

relationships with people are almost entirely transactional. And I don't want to be that manager. (Dennis – Middle)

Another example is Binal, who felt that managing people was challenging, although he would take his approach led by developing relationships.

People management will always be challenging in that there will be some people you can understand quite well, and you can work with and get along with, and there are some people who just have a very different perspective to you. (Binal–Middle)

Some respondents, including Gordon and Peter, believed that the challenges of working as an HE manager came from the organisation's busy environment and complexity. Gordon, Peter, and Stacey felt that the challenges of working in a matrix structure environment made it more difficult to complete the task.

I think about the challenges have been with people in the programmes. You're faced now with line managing different people with different priorities, different objectives, different views, different perceptions, and sometimes I get frustrated. (Gordon – Middle)

The biggest challenge is influencing people without having the managerial level, so asking someone to do something without the management level. (Peter–Emerging)

Working with people, managing multiple staff members, and trying to adjust and manage my own expectations from the staff I work with. I think that was one of the major personal challenges. (Stacey–Emerging)

Two other managers, Mark and Hasan, felt that the lack of resources was challenging for them in managing activities in their roles. Although they both discussed that having the resources in place was crucial to get things right, where there was a lack of resources, this had a detrimental impact on developing the existing programmes, as well as negatively impacting the few staff members who were trying to make a positive difference:

I was given a programme which was sinking badly. I was given support from my manager at the time, but that was not enough. I wanted to have resources like other programmes. I tried my best; in several instances, I spoke to my managers. I was given a signal, 'Yeah, we are working on it', but it didn't happen until recently. (Mark – Middle)

A big part of the dialogue is staff development. This is where I think most of the challenges are in terms of training, because in our organisation it is three semester ball is running all the time, so people tend to find very little time or training, and that's where at the moment the struggle is. Another issue I find here is motivating staff to do research. I think because of the time pressures it could be on the back burner for a lot of staff. (Hasan–Middle)

5.2 Discussion of organisational culture

5.2.1 Private/Public functioning

In addressing the second research question, some key themes emerged in understanding the private HE organisational culture and the impact of this on managers working in the institution. This study found that managers working in the private HE corporate culture were influenced by their management style, particularly in leadership and decision making. The managers interviewed compared their work to that of the public sector, which they saw as an expected benchmark. Similarities of these findings align with a study by Chong et al. (2018), who suggested that organisational culture is created and led by senior management teams; the happenings at this level are reproduced in other areas of the institution. Managers discussed the fast, busy environment as a complex one that brought considerable change with rapid growth. This study confirms the findings of Schein (2010), who found that organisational culture is based on the institution's history and staff personalities, so the manager's work in this private environment shapes the organisational culture.

The term 'academic' and what this role was known to be has changed in the private sector. From research in the public sector, Henkel (2005) argued that the fundamental makeup of an academic involves autonomy and independence. However, managers in this study felt that the private HE environment was dominant, as they wanted more autonomy. When

managers were asked about their experiences of the private organisational culture at work, they firmly believed that their private institutional working environment differed from the public HE organisational culture. This was an obvious comparison for staff members who had experienced the public sector. However, there were also comparisons to the public sector from managers who had yet to experience working there, so they still used it as a benchmark. Although Dennis, Mark, and Peter all had the experience of working in private and public institutions, they felt their experiences of organisational culture were vastly dissimilar. This study found that the mandatory 9–5 working hours for academic staff underpinned this private HE institution culture, which was not recognised in public institutions; managers felt this institutional culture was restrictive, and limited their development as academics. These findings align with a study undertaken in the public sector by Mavin and Cavaleri (2004), who suggested that HE institutions rarely practise the most straightforward tenets of learning institutions, and restricting managers results in negatively impacting their professional development, which hinders the development of the individual's growth as well as the culture of the organisation.

This study found strong instances of efficiency in private HE institutions. In contrast to the public sector, where efficiency was not necessarily a cultural drive, several participants mentioned that public institutions were working towards a similar business model, learning about efficiency from the private sector. These findings agree with the study undertaken in the public sector by Ramachandran et al. (2011a), who found that public institutions are similar to private institutions in several ways, including their focus on goals, attainment, and vision, an area which is fundamental for the success of the university and the students, regardless of whether public or private. These findings expand on the existing literature on how HE institution's function, building new insights on efficiency in HE from private institutions.

This study found that private organisational culture differed from what managers knew about being academics and experts in their field. Managers believed that a significant aspect of HE culture was autonomy and being able to make decisions; this was perceived as a fundamental element of their profession as academics. This finding agrees with a study undertaken in the public sector by White and Weathersby's (2005), which found that

academics value academic freedom and an attitude of 'live and let live'. However, both Boris and Harold felt that decision-making in the private sector was different from the public sector. Harold used the example of a module leader, discussing how different this role is in a private environment, particularly focusing on the comparison to the public sector and the level of responsibility in decision making and ownership. This accords with a study undertaken in the public sector by Haapakorpi (2011), in which HE decision-making responsibilities steer away from a top-down approach, which nurtures a quality culture in the institution. On the other hand, the findings found a sense of faster decision making when modules were not solely the responsibility of the module leader. In the private institution, due to the removal of bureaucratic, hierarchical management systems, managers believed that the institution could quickly obtain outcomes for proposed ideas and add value to programmes, partners, students, and the institution.

It was found that staff who had experience working in both public and private environments felt that both areas worked well, some more than others. Dennis discussed how there were differences between the two. He believed there were advantages to the efficient working practices of the private teaching institution but was dithering between the "flabby" public sector. It is encouraging to compare these findings to a study undertaken in the public sector by Barnett (2012), who found that the expectations around teaching and research are decided by the university and imposed in the employee contract; the private sector is making efficient use of their teaching staff, whereas the pre-92 public sector is predominantly focused on research outcomes, an area which is significant to them but arguably removes the efficiencies of a successful organisational structure, so this is a point where public universities could learn from the private ones.

5.2.2 Commercial roots

This study strongly emphasised two key areas when discussing working in a private HE institution: commercial business and growth. The theme of budgets and costs kept recurring, and both Simon and Binal discussed the importance placed on performance by the private equity firm. It could be argued that all HE institutions have commercial aspects, for example, marketing or accounting departments. It was recognised that the importance of performance

at all costs for this privately owned organisation was a key success factor. Consequently, decision making within the institution is strongly connected with profit and costs. These findings are consistent with those of Marginson (2018), who suggested that the commercialisation of universities is known for making profits from staff- and student-led activities, including teaching, research, and campus-related tasks.

This study found that private institutions were working with a rapid growth strategy, underlined by private equity firm ownership. For this institution, growth was a fundamental part of developing the business, which impacted all areas of the institution. These results concur with Natale and Doran (2012), who found that the increase in tuition fees has created the notion of students being perceived as consumers, resulting in academic institutions conveying the importance of income and maximising opportunities for revenue as a business. Both Hudson and Binal gave examples where the rapid growth of the organisation had negatively impacted the institution; there was a feeling that the expansion was too fast, which was directly related to the ownership of the organisation. These findings agree with a similar study by De Boer and Goedegebuure (2009) who suggested that post-92 public institutions are comparable to private ones, in that the role of the vice-chancellor resembles that of the chief executive officer.

The participants in this study believed that the rapid growth of this private institution had a knock-on effect on the people working within the organisation, as the growth of faculties requires growth in staff. However, they felt that the resources to support growth were only sometimes timely, placing academic managers in a difficult position when delivering to stakeholders. Therefore, the goal of a private equity firm should not necessarily be rapid growth. Other respondents, including Maureen, Joshua, and Olivia, also mentioned that there was an awareness of this environment being a commercial one, so there was a need to understand that profit, costs, and customers are all factors shaping the organisational culture of the private institution, and the work of managers has been re-imagined to what was traditionally known in HE focusing highly on academic work. These findings support previous research undertaken in the public sector by Klofsten et al. (2019), which found that HE management has moved away from the traditional management roles that most are familiar with. This study builds on the existing research on how the HE sector is changing, as what

might once have been a role that focused on educational needs, research and teaching has developed much beyond these functions.

The study found that the rapid expansion of the institution, expanding from one to three faculties, resulted in each faculty creating its own culture. This finding agrees with a study undertaken in the public sector by Becher (2018b), who found that there is a risk of creating sub-cultures that do not align with the organisational culture, as these departments build their own views on how they do things. This theme will be further discussed in communities of practice and faculty subcultures in section 5.2.4 and 5.2.5.

5.2.3 Student-centred culture

This study found a high expectation in the organisational culture of being student focused. Joshua, Gordon, Denise, and Valerie all believed that there was a high standard for meeting student expectations, exemplified by the support offered to the students by the institution and represented from the top down. Similarly, in public universities Bunce et al. (2017) and Woodall et al. (2014) found that in universities where students are perceived as consumers, their expectations are not only as students but as customers. Therefore, in this institution, there was a strong desire to ensure that students were satisfied, and high student satisfaction was evident by the emphasis that was given to student feedback. Valerie and Denise both described how student feedback played a crucial role in setting high standards and raising quality in the institution, and there was a strong sense that the amount of support offered to the mature student cohorts could be seen as uncommon compared to public institutions.

This study found that the managers' culture strongly emphasised teaching delivery and student contact time. Although participants discussed the importance of having contact with students, they recognised the importance of seeing students regularly to be in a stronger position to lead and make strategic decisions. Boris, a senior manager, discussed that even at the senior level, it was crucial to have contact with the students, for example, through teaching. This communication would give senior managers a deep understanding of student needs and help them to make effective decisions in the faculty. These findings support Bok (2009), who suggested that institutions that focus on commercial aspects risk losing sight of

their values as academic institutions. In contrast, in public institutions the commercial aspects are less of a focal point, although these are important, they are not the driver in all decision making.

This study found that the student-centred approach leaves little room for the traditional routes of research-focused academics. The priorities of staff in the organisational culture of this institution are driven by the view of the student as the customer to enhance student learning. Senior manager Hudson felt that where the institution was teaching-focused, this was emphasised early when new staff were recruited. Still, he highlighted the frustrations this could bring for teams who want to do research but are so busy with their teaching commitments that they do not have time for research. These findings are consistent with a study from the public sector of Floyd (2012b), who found that HODs have to take on several responsibilities as managers, which takes their focus away from research. In contrast, this teaching culture is unusual in the public HE sector, where staff are encouraged to research to publish their work contributing to the teaching excellence framework (TEF), which benefits the public institution as it raises its academic profile.

5.2.4 Communities of practice

The findings showed that working with others was a fundamental aspect of this private institution. This was emphasised particularly in creating a community culture where staff members could ask questions and approach managers in a very open working environment. Senior managers found that the culture within the institution allowed space to test and try ideas; it was acceptable if these ideas did not always work, thus fostering an inclusive culture in which staff were allowed to trial their ideas. Stacey and Mark perceived the institutional culture as a place where they worked very closely with others in different areas; the culture eliminated their management level, making managers feel included. These findings support previous research by Wenger (2000), who defined communities of practice as groups of people connected by collective activities. Stacey had experienced public institutional work; in comparison, she felt that this private culture was close working, a close-knit community that made her feel a strong sense of belonging to this institution. Although a community culture was present, the study found differences in working practices

amongst the smaller communities at the faculty and subject levels; these results match those of Trowler (2008), who found that there can be conflicts between faculty cultures, particularly among divergent subjects.

5.2.5 Sub-cultures

This study found from three senior and three emerging managers that each faculty culture, business, computing, English, and learning and teaching, differed. This meant that faculties were developing sub-cultures within the broader private institutional, organisational culture. These findings are consistent with those of Dill (2012), who argues that managers working within the same faculty are more likely to have a system of shared beliefs amongst their working group. This was not necessarily a negative factor, although it was apparent that managers recognised that staff working in different faculties were building their practices, resulting in pockets of sub-cultures being formed, which was positive for the faculty in creating cohesion within their subject communities, although not necessarily aligned to the institutional culture. A study undertaken in the public sector by Becher and Trowler (2001) found that staff in the same discipline have loyal understandings and therefore build strong relationships within their subject communities; this study found similar findings. Stacey, Mark, and Boris all recognised the differences between working in two different faculties in this private institution. Stacey's story was that the faculty she was working in had some excellent practices that could be shared with the other faculties. At the same time, she felt that her faculty was highly regulated, although she discovered that this was not the practice in other faculties. Mark perceived the culture of other faculties to be autocratic, whereas he believed the culture in his faculty was more democratic. Boris similarly felt that the culture in his faculty was "a lot more relaxed" because "there is a sense of pride and accomplishment", so this type of work was quite different from the other faculties in the organisation. These findings support previous research by Thornton (2020), who found that an academic community is made up of institutional traditions and sacrifices, as well as considering the academic freedom in this community. Therefore, it was evident that for several managers, a democratic environment did not fit their perceptions of academic culture.

As this private HE institution continues to grow and more faculties are developed, not all staff members are working in one organisational culture, as it is evident from this study that organisational culture is dependent on faculty culture.

5.2.6 Private HE lecturer disposition

This study found that lecturer disposition was a fundamental factor in success while working in a private organisation. Having a disposition that matches the private organisational culture is essential for grasping the characteristics of the staff best suited to work in the environment (Bourdieu, 1988). The study found that managers working across middle and senior management roles believed that the private environment was not a fit for all academics, even where they felt they had previous HE experiences. If this was not in the private HE sector, then these staff members could potentially misjudge what it would be like working in a private institution. Simon and Gordon, more established managers in the institution, had seen from their experiences that it took a specific character to work in a private institution. These findings support Asimaki and Koustourakis (2014), whose research suggested that dispositions emphasise the non-conscious values that lead to an individual's behaviour, inclinations, and conduct, which all impact their way of working. The institution is made up of widening participation of student groups and multiple intakes. Multiple partners mean the skills and pace required to keep up with the organisation's growth could be unsettling for academics unfamiliar with this environment. Gordon gave examples of this where he believed that staff working in public institutions had a different outlook on what was expected of them. He felt that these staff members were limited in what they were involved with, and they struggled to understand the culture and often compared the private setting to pre-92 public work, but they could not always make connections between the practices as there were fundamental differences in the culture and priorities of the institution. These findings confirm the association between the diversity of academic management and the support academics offer diverse student populations (Sathorar & Geduld, 2019).

This private institution holds a diverse academic workforce. Dennis, who joined the institution from the public sector, was able to share the challenges he faced transitioning

from public to private institutions. Dennis saw the private environment as rigid; he wanted to be a more liberal manager, although he felt that his laissez-faire management style did not work in the private institution. These findings agree with an earlier study by Connolly and Farrier (2021), who suggested that academic leadership should align with social and relational leadership models.

The disposition of managers is developed over time through their behaviours and personalities; however, this is also heavily influenced by one's experiences. This study found that the managers who joined the private institution bringing public institution experience brought their 'public sector ways' with them. This way of working created challenges for the existing staff and faculties. Dennis discussed how a public sector manager joined the private institution and continued managing as he would have in a public institution, which meant very different cultures were being followed, resulting in a lack of transparency and fairness in how staff were treated. These findings agree with research by Bautista (2018), who found that dispositions are determined by learning and teaching and their understanding of education as a concept and experiences of education. This research expands the existing literature on management dispositions in the area of private HE.

Chapter 6: Presenting the Findings and Analysis of Professional Identity

This chapter presents a summary of the data collected from the 18 managers. The chapter will specifically address Research Question 3.

- (RQ3) How do managers perceive their professional identity has been impacted by being a manager in private HE?

The key themes that emerged from the data about RQ3 were categorised into the following overarching themes:

- Management identity
- Social groups
- Teaching identity
- Environmental HE identity
- Career aspirations

These sub-headings organise this section's summary of the study's findings. In addition, this chapter presents a summary of how managers perceive their professional identity when working in a private HE institution. Through exploring professional identity, the chapter is expected to offer theoretical insights into managers' perceptions of themselves working in a private institution. Furthermore, it will examine the future career aspirations of managers, together with their career trajectories. Finally, it will analyse the related literature, following the theoretical framework at the end of this chapter.

6.1 Management identity

The management identity of respondents working in a private institution could be impacted, because this differs from the more renowned public sector. Of the 18 respondents interviewed, a total of 11, five senior, four middle, and two emerging managers, discussed management identity and how being a manager affected their identity and personal lives. Dennis, Binal, and Harold felt that being a manager took time out of their home lives. Dennis reflected on the perception his wife had of him in his role:

I think my wife doesn't think I'm a manager, which is not very helpful, because in the home situation, I am not the organiser. I think she'd probably say my happiness level has dipped since I become a manager. (Dennis–Middle)

In contrast, Binal reflected on his challenges in the role, looking inwards at his identity of how he perceives he is carrying out the role, and areas he is himself working on developing:

I think it has been a challenge to manage time… to balance time between work and non-work, and that's what I'm still learning to develop… and at times I don't get the balance right. (Binal–Middle)

Similarly, Harold's perception of himself reflects how time impacts what he can achieve. His perception of his own identity is one of a manager who has taken on additional duties that do not allow him to do other things:

I think one thing that has changed is time management. I used to go home early, but now I don't, I get home very late, so I think on that front, yes, it's me having to sit late and get things done before I go home, so that has definitely slowed me down. (Harold–Middle)

Further discussions of identity included views from Boris; he believed that management identity was a fundamental factor for individuals working in the HE sector, something he was very aware of, so he took time to build his identity and publication portfolio:

I think professional identity is critical, because I think the people that you work with need to be reassured that you've got the management skills… that you treat people well. (Boris – Senior)

Joshua described how managers working in the private sector have different roles from those in the public sector; not being a university provider means that the work of managers cannot be recognised in the same way, which impacts one's identity when looking inward:

If we had degree-awarding powers, I should have been given a professorship by now, but I haven't been given that title, although we are doing a similar job as the dean would be doing at a university. (Joshua–Senior)

Both Marsha and Boris felt that although they worked in the same private HE sector, their identities had some fundamental differences. Although, in some instances, there were similarities, their identities were connected to their subject and research areas, although for other areas of their identities, this was not the case:

I identify first as a chartered management accountant. I know I should be saying I'm a lecturer, but my identity is really an accountant, a number cruncher. But at the heart of things I am an educator. (Marsha–Emerging)

I think there's your track record, that's certainly one thing, because a lot of people only go by the things you've done in the past, so that's part of it. Part of it is your professional status, so yes, I've been an academic, but one thing that I think is very important to have is that I'm chartered in my field, so you know, I've got the level of professional recognition of a member of the British Society, and over the years, virtually everything I've done, I've kind of got that professional recognition. I think the other part is to show or have some evidence that you know what you're talking about, which is part of the reason I started to write textbooks and things like that, because it gives people the confidence, when you say, 'Oh, this is how we should do things,' that you really know what you're talking about. I think those are probably the key aspects with those kinds of professional elements that add to the academic side of things. The publications also help, but only when you are dealing with other academics… they don't really count in the real world. (Boris–Senior)

Hudson and Dennis felt that their identity was multifaceted, a large part of this being made up of the day-to-day management identity, as this is what the staff in the institution needed:

The management of people… so I see myself as a manager of people. I see myself as a leader, so I try to lead staff towards doing their jobs in a way that will benefit multiple stakeholders. I also feel my identity is made up of taking on responsibility that matters

to other people, so people are relying on me and I feel… I feel a professional identity. I see myself as being relied upon, and that ends up being part of how I see myself. I motivate myself by not wanting to let those people down, feeling that you know that I will act well on their behalf. (Hudson–Senior)

I think credibility is a key thing. I think I'm kind of experienced and I think I've had quite a few experiences… I'm kind of quite old so personally and professionally I've had quite a few experiences. Credibility in terms of professional credibility, just having experience with and understanding of the responsibilities as a manager and how to execute my responsibilities. (Dennis–Middle)

Candice believed that her career identity, in addition to being a manager, was made up of coaching and mentoring; she had been mentored, so she felt strongly about returning that mentoring opportunity to help others:

I still get mentored now by different people, and I think part of me now… I've evolved now, and I'm trying to mentor others. I feel I am trying to do it to other people who are trying to come through. The thing is to try and go, well, this is how you can do it, this is how development opportunities come about. (Candice – Senior)

Finally, respondents Harold, Mark, and Boris discussed their management identity, including research and publications as essential. They discussed the importance of research and the role of publications and research within academia:

Yeah, I think as an academic you are only known by publications. One of the things my supervisor told me is that you are known by publications, not by what you do in the classroom. So yeah, it's pretty important how you balance what you do in the classroom with what sort of knowledge contribution you make. (Harold–Middle)

How we identify that this person has a professional identity is… You've got publications, you've got research, how many universities you've been working at, student satisfaction, all these things actually make your professional identity. (Mark–Middle)

I think the other part is to show or have some evidence that you know what you're talking about, which is part of the reason I started to write textbooks and things like that, because it gives people the confidence, when you say, 'Oh, this is how we should do things,' that you really know what you're talking about. I think those are probably the key aspects with those kinds of professional elements that add to the academic side of things. The publications also help, but only when you are dealing with other academics. (Boris–Senior)

6.1.2 Social groups

There was a strong feeling among respondents that social groups played a fundamental role in the concept of identity in academia. These managers working in the private HE sector had connections with several social groups inside and outside the institution. Multiple partner institutions allowed the social identity to develop more widely than the internal circles, compared to traditional identity formation in public institutions.

Of the 18 managers interviewed, five discussed the importance of social groups, one senior manager, two middle managers, and two emerging managers. Joshua felt that his social groups had been positively impacted by the university partner with whom he worked closely:

I am lucky that our partner institution is more integrated than the others, in the sense that we are more integrated and in tune with HE because we have full access to the university. I would say that there is a bit of identity that I borrow, you know, from the university, let's say in that sense that I am recognised on the campus. (Joshua–Senior)

Valerie, Harold, and Stacey all believed that, as managers, having clearly defined values was crucial for others to believe in them, so creating the makeup of their identity:

Honesty's important, so I find it difficult sometimes difficult to manipulate. (Valerie–Middle)

I think integrity plays a huge part in any professional life, when you do things and you do them wholeheartedly, although the duty to do the right thing… I think that's one of the main things. (Harold–Middle)

Integrity, honesty and transparency, passion, and I think competence... subject competence. (Stacey–Emerging)

Gordon and Candice felt that their identity as academic managers was often perceived negatively due to working in the private sector.

In recent conversations with people outside of this organisation and working for public organisations, they would view me, and I would probably view myself and this role, as being far more involved, intense, and pressured. I think in the public sector, it just seems to be a slower pace and more relaxed, slightly less committed, whereas in the private sector it feels more full-on, more 'OK, let's do it. let's get it done'. (Gordon–Middle)

I think the commercial aspect, all universities have this, and I think that's what I like, but I still think I go into defensive mode when I do go around other people. But I think now I am kind of… I challenge them and ask why they have those perceptions of private HE. (Candice-Senior)

Finally, Maureen and Olivia felt that although there was an opportunity to work with a diverse workforce, being a female manager sometimes meant there was a need for them to adapt their approach to fit in with the social settings, as there were often preconceived ideas of female managers:

Someone said to me, 'You never get upset; you never get angry.' OK, I take that as… that's great, because it means that I'm not… I guess I'm keeping that part of my professional identity. There are perceptions about women and emotions. Research shows that if we say something, people presume 'Oh, women and emotions', so I feel like I have to not display any emotions. (Maureen–Middle)

I would say I'm organised, attentive to detail, proactive, a planner. I would say approachable, don't mess with me, don't think I'm a pushover. I'm not always "Miss nice guy", I'm quite honest, possibly to the point of being blunt. (Olivia–Emerging)

6.1.3 Teaching identity

A teaching identity was identified as of the essence for several respondents; their values shape their character and their relationship with the private institution and the students. Of the 18 respondents, five, two senior managers, two middle managers, and one emerging manager, discussed the importance of teaching as a critical component of their identity. In addition, Binal, Boris, Mark, Marsha, and Simon identified themselves with teaching, this being the root of their identity.

> *I wouldn't want to be too far removed from the core elements that I enjoy, which are my interaction with the faculty, supporting teams and, most importantly, the classroom. (Binal–Middle)*

> *I met someone the other day. He said he hadn't taught for seven or eight years. I suppose some things are not important to some people but very important to me. So, there is a reduction in teaching and therefore student contact. For me it's much harder to find out how students think, feel, and so on, because I'm not seeing them that much, so I'd rather… I'd like to have more teaching or to have more opportunities to actually talk to students, maybe setting up staff–student consultation meetings regularly. (Boris–Senior)*

> *Identity is not just the publications; it comes with a different meaning: student satisfaction. (Mark–Middle)*

> *At the heart of things, I'm an educator. (Marsha–Emerging)*

Considering the core teaching activity, Simon felt that learning and teaching were central to his identity.

> *I suppose if you cut me open at any point you will see teaching and learning written there, because that's how I started and I've never lost that passion. I can still remember the first time I got somebody to understand something they couldn't understand before and that's still with me. The day that stops is the day I need to stop, I think, so I still have a passion for teaching and learning, I have a passion for empowering people*

to learn, and that's why I like working with learners with non-conventional backgrounds, even though they're challenging. Having worked at more established institutions, those students are actually quite boring in a sense, they're very bright but they don't need really need teachers, they teach themselves. (Simon–Senior)

Candice and Valerie both felt strongly about related aspects of teaching, including quality and inclusivity in education. For example, Candice felt that her identity was closely related to inclusivity and diversity. This belief fits with the private institution where Candice is working, which resonates with the values of giving all students opportunities to obtain an education:

It's challenging when things are not inclusive. My identity… I'm really passionate about inclusivity and diversity and giving people… everybody… a voice. I like to think that I am… I try and do that. (Candice–Senior)

Finally, Valerie felt that the quality of teaching was significant; having the experience of working with professional bodies meant that the quality of content creation was a focal point:

I think quality is probably what drives me, because at an early stage of my career, I had to work with professional bodies, and that sort of shaped me. (Valerie-Middle)

6.1.4 Environmental HE identity

The respondents discussed several factors related to working in a private HE institution and how their identity had been affected by this. The issues were connected to the environment and corporate culture of the institution, how the organisation was privately funded, required efficiency of staff utilisation and imposed restrictions in carrying out research.

Of the 18 respondents interviewed, seven in total, four senior, two middle, and one emerging manager, discussed working in the private sector and how this impacted their identity. Hudson and Mark felt that the private institution had impacted their identity:

Working in a private institution places more emphasis on ensuring that the organisation can finance itself, in a way that I had not felt in the public sector. So, within the public sector, there was a feeling that the organisation itself would survive no matter what the circumstances or external context. Working in the private sector

places more of an emphasis on making decisions that will have financial implications, that from a commercial side have more impact. So there's an element of financial awareness there within that role, within the private sector, that wasn't there before. There's also more of a priority on gaining efficiencies through resourcing in a way that I hadn't sort of noticed quite so much in the public sector. (Hudson–Senior)

I wanted to do research and publications. I couldn't do it working here because we've got a slightly different culture here, we do not have much time for writing. That has a bit of an impact on me, but I used my personal time, which is weekends and evenings. (Mark–Middle)

Candice discussed how she felt that private HE was perceived by public HE staff as an outsider.

I think initially I was very defensive about working for a private HE institution, and when I would have encounters it was almost like, oh yeah, you know, you kind of wouldn't want to in the very beginning because people didn't know about it, especially if you went to conferences and people would be like, 'I work for a university, you know, and do that.' But I think I'm actually quite proud of what we do here, and now I'm like, 'Oh well, have you not heard of us?' But because we have made such a difference, I think actually the culture and the people that we work with… everyone's really passionate about supporting these students and changing their lives. (Candice-Senior)

Simon felt that a large part of his leadership role was to influence the decisions of others, although he recognised that this was not always tangible. He felt that his experience working in the private sector allowed him to work with other areas of the private organisation:

The experience comes in useful for building bridges and relationships between HE and the rest of the organisation and being able to integrate what they do into what we do and vice versa, to support what they do and also use some of their programmes and courses to enhance our programmes. (Senior–Simon)

Maureen felt that her identity was dual; she had started her academic work in the skills department, which was the foundation of her identity. Although she then took a management position in the subject faculty, she felt that the working practices and culture differed from what she had learnt in the skills department. So, over time, her identity developed in areas of both skills and subject matter, gaining an understanding and way of working of both:

> *I always felt like an outsider or something, so when you've got the idea that with a skill and a subject you always feel like a both fee, so what are you? Are you a skills teacher, an English teacher, a social sciences or humanities teacher? I think my identity is quite mixed in that there's elements of different experiences and differences. (Maureen–Middle)*

Finally, Joshua and Stacey described other examples of professional identity. They both felt that the institution is a fast-paced environment with opportunities to progress into management positions across faculties.

> *I see that when working in a private sector institute, you have more learning than you would do in a public sector. I think that's… yes, it's more challenging and somehow you know you accept your challenges. Once our business is doing well, people will be equally supportive, as they know they will have opportunities. (Joshua–Senior)*

> *So, this institution has given me a lot of opportunities and a lot of positive challenges. I think I realised my own expectations were even higher. It gave me an opportunity to observe others doing it, and the fact that we have it on the surface. (Stacey–Emerging)*

6.1.5 Career aspirations

Working in the private HE sector, the career aspirations of the respondents were a fundamental theme. Of the 18 respondents who were interviewed, 15 in total discussed their career aspirations; four senior, seven middle and four emerging managers discussed areas of career, including promotion within management in the existing organisation,

development in research, and ambitions to progress by professional development, such as obtaining doctoral-level qualifications. Olivia, Peter, Stacey, Valerie, and Denise shared their career aspirations:

> *I want to become an associate dean and learn to be a people manager. (Olivia–Emerging)*

> *What I would like to do is probably become head of department, where I would have to be responsible and manage a certain number of employees. That would probably make a good difference. (Peter–Emerging)*

> *To continue growing in the management role… continue working with people. I can learn from those who can guide me and prepare me better for the transition to probably the next stage. (Stacey–Emerging)*

> *Dean would be the next step for me. (Valerie–Middle)*

> *I'm really interested in one day doing a PhD as well; I'd like to do the research and go through that side as well, and career-wise. Hopefully, one day, become associate dean. I want the best of both worlds. I enjoy the managerial side and I enjoy the contact with the students. (Denise–Emerging)*

Two senior managers, Boris, and Joshua, and one middle manager, Harold, expressed their passion for research, although they also had strong feelings about their status within academia. Both Boris and Joshua believed that the titles they would have been awarded if they had been working in a public institution would positively impact their professional identity, as well as being an aspiration within their career:

> *Publications, publications, and publications; it's all about aspiring to be someone who will be known by the quality of publications I've put out there. (Harold–Middle)*

> *As for future career aspirations, the only thing… there are two things that are left for me to do before I retire or before I finish. The first one is to get my PhD, I'm due to submit soon, so that should be out of the way. The second thing was I was once*

promised by a VC that he would make me the very first professional teaching fellow, so I'd like to be an associate professor. (Boris–Senior)

We can't have those titles, which really would mean a lot to me. You know, if I say this is my dream… to become a professor right from the first go until now, this is my dream… to become a professor. I'm really looking forward to becoming a professor because that's where your academic career ends, in the sense that you know you can hold that title no matter what. (Joshua–Senior)

Career aspirations for teaching were strong destinations for senior manager Simon and middle manager Dennis. They both felt the desire to teach in their future careers. Simon's story expressed a closeness to teaching and learning from an early point in his career, so a need to return to teaching at the end of his career was a natural step for him:

My aspiration, when I eventually retire, when I can afford to… then I'll probably retire and go back to being a lecturer, actually, because that was my first enjoyment and love, and I can easily see myself doing that for two or three days per week. (Simon–Senior)

Finally, like Simon, Dennis wanted to return to teaching. However, his story was a little different, as he also discussed moving away from his management role more immediately rather than in the future. He had recognised that the management position he was in was not for him; he desired to be a traditional academic, in other words, to teach but also spend time publishing alongside this:

If we can be honest, I'd like to become… I'd like to probably go back to being a lecturer, but both a lecturer and a researcher… I'd like to get publications out. I have a chapter out recently that was really enjoyable, but I must get into journal articles, so I'd like to get back into research and teaching, to move away from management. (Dennis–Middle)

6.2 Discussion of professional identity

In addressing RQ3 concerning how the professional identity of managers is impacted by working in a private HE institution, some key themes emerged. This study found that professional identity in HE was a fundamental factor in one's academic profession, professional growth, and career trajectories in the wider HE sector. Boris, Joshua, and Marsha all believed that their professional identity was the foundation of their professional status; they considered their professional identity to be the core of who they were and what they did. These findings agree with the research by Jenkins (2014), who defined identity as one's understanding of who one is and who other people are. Boris felt that the professional recognition within the industry and his track record were key elements of his professional status. He discussed how he is an academic, but the professional recognition through chartered institutions is what gives him the credit to do what he does in his field. Regarding his management role, Boris felt his professional identity was critical, so others were reassured that he had the skills to manage. However, he did not discuss his professional identity as a manager. These findings match those observed in an earlier study by Floyd (2012b), who suggested that identity is not an individual form; it is multifaceted and changes frequently over a lifetime. Another key finding from this study was that these managers felt that if they worked in the public sector, they would have had higher levels of recognition of their academic profile. Joshua believed that the work he had done at a senior level would have awarded him a professorship, but working in a private institution meant he was not offered the whole status and title that he had worked to achieve. These findings further support the research by Henkel (2009) undertaken in the public sector, who suggested that academics are caught between two conflicting systems focusing on who they are and what they do, to help find a sense of value in their roles.

In contrast, Hudson and Dennis believe that their professional identity is comprised of management. Hudson saw his professional identity as "a manager of people." His views were very much aligned with his professional role, leading others and their reliance on him as a manager, with the importance of this as a stakeholder. This senior leader did not feel that his professional identity consisted of teaching or research. These findings are consistent with the study by Clegg (2008), who found that institutions have differing views of research,

and academics who work in less research-focused institutions have the opportunity to develop differing identities. Dennis believed that professional credibility was needed to execute his responsibilities as a manager; these findings are consistent with the study by Mingers and Willmott (2013), who found that most of the managerial discourse is entrenched within the corporate world; academic managers see this to be their identity, which is arguably inconsistent with the academic professional values (Kallio et al., 2016).

Continuing the topic of professional identity, it was evident that taking up the management role had impacted managers personally. The study found that these managers were personally affected when taking up management roles; there was a general sense that the time needed to be a manager was eating into personal time, and they felt it was not always easy to get a balance between home and work. Peter felt that although there might be a financial benefit in pursuing a management position, there is also a personal loss due to the time taken away from the opportunity to do other things. This finding agrees with earlier studies by Deem et al. (2007) and Kenny and Fluck (2022) undertaken in the public sector, who suggested that management roles in HE are changing, and managers are often known to struggle to maintain a balance between academic tasks and their management duties. Dennis felt that being a manager was impacting him and his family personally; he talked about not being a natural organiser, and that being a manager has resulted in his happiness levels falling. Therefore, this study shows that, although academics take on management roles in a private environment, only a few identify as managers. Most of the managers in this study perceive their identity to be positioned around other professional roles within academia. This study found that where academics have taken on management responsibility, this has been for financial gains and for routes of progression where academics want to develop their careers. These findings are consistent with the study by Deem et al. (2007), who found that academics who took on management roles were ‘taking their turn’.

This study found that there are different priorities around teaching and research profiles. For Mark, Harold, and Boris, their identity was made up of research and publications; being academic managers and working within the education sector, they saw research to be a large part of their academic profile, so they wanted to be heavily associated with doing

research and getting out publications. These findings agree with Van Lankveld et al. (2017), who found that the demands on academics to concentrate on research over teaching are extensive in the academic sector. There was a strong feeling amongst the managers that one is recognised by the publications one produces, which shape one's identity. Harold stated that the advice he had been given by his seniors was to place a very high level of importance on knowledge generation. This research found that the research culture being passed down from the research supervisor highlighted the importance of research, publications, and contributions to knowledge. In cases where academics were not making research contributions, Harold was advised that this is how academics in the sector are recognised and that it was the research that built an academic profile and credibility in the environment. This finding is consistent with Henkel (2005), who found that "research reputation" is the most significant academic currency in HE institutions. Boris and Mark were also both closely aligned to similar thinking; they discussed the importance of credibility, about evidencing what you know and knowing to do what you do. They believed that professional experience was fundamental, although when working in academia, it was the publications that helped with academic conversations. These findings match earlier research by Deem (2001), who found that managers who take on the role at the HOD level were doing so out of 'good citizenship' or as 'reluctant managers'.

This study confirms the prevailing view that research publications and being an active researcher play a fundamental element in the makeup of professional identity for these managers in academia. The participants who discussed the importance of research believed that this is the foundation of their identity within the academic arena.

6.2.1 Social groups

Identity is the perception that others have of a person directly connected with social groups. The importance of having a social group to communicate with develops the individual in the social group. At the same time, it helps managers to be part of a group, creating a sense of belonging. This study found that when managers worked directly with a university partner and had direct access to them and their resources, the university partner helped to elevate their identity. Some worked with multiple partners, all contributing to their social identity;

they felt they belonged to a particular university partner and a group of staff. These findings support previous research by Tajfel and Turner (2004), who found that social identity comprises the individual's self-image, which has developed from the groups a manager perceives they belong to. Managers in this study were more inclined to take up positions to work with university partners where they felt their identity resonated with that of the university, offering a strong reflection on their self-image of where they believed they best fit. This finding is like that of Alvesson (2012), who suggested that a social identity is a group or category that one associates oneself with. This finding adds to the existing literature relating to professional identity and organisational culture in higher education.

The managers in this study discussed how social identity was made up of their values as managers; these were discussed in detail, which led to the development of their professional identity. Valerie, Harold, and Stacey all felt that the values around honesty and integrity were fundamental elements in their professional identity; the feelings they shared emphasised the importance of being in a position of power, thus ensuring they did the right thing but also demonstrating high levels of competence. Social identity in this context was highly related to the perception that others have of an individual; having these values with high levels of competence brought higher levels of credibility as a manager. This finding is supported by previous research by Marsh and Keating (2006), who found that social identity relates to the socialisation of a group and acceptable behaviour in society.

Social identity also brought challenges for Gordon, Maureen, and Olivia, who felt they had been challenged in social circles where presumptions about their social identity had been made. Gordon's story was that acquaintances in the public sector perceived his role as a middle manager as intense, very involved, and often requiring him to work under high pressure, whereas a similar role in the public sector was less intense, and Gordon was doing far more in the private institution. These findings are consistent with earlier research by Kenny and Fluck (2022), who argued that much of the governance in public universities has changed since the introduction of corporate management approaches; roles are changing due to the lack of government funding; therefore, universities require a more entrepreneurial approach and competitiveness from managers. This resulted in the participants being perceived as able to work under high levels of pressure at a fast pace,

which is seen to be different and less complex than public sector work. These findings are part of the categorisation of the professional identity of these managers working in the private sector.

6.2.2 Environmental HE identity

The findings from this study showed that working in a private institution financed by a private equity firm resulted in having responsibilities ruled by commercial considerations. It is the commercial environment that impacts the identity of managers working within it; it is the characteristics that make up the private environment that affect the staff who work there. Therefore, working in this environment shapes the professional identity of managers. The study found that management roles are multifaceted, requiring various skills and knowledge to succeed. Mark and Hudson felt that there were apparent differences in working in the private HE sector, which impacted the perception of how others regarded them; much of this was due to the variations of practice, both in terms of operation and academia. They believed that working in the private sector exposed them to different working practices, a greater variety of tasks in their roles, and the culture of working as a business. These factors created a private HE identity; in developing their professional identities, their working environment impacted their decisions, their priorities, and the private HE language utilised.

Hudson discussed the priority of the institution being largely led by the efficient use of resources. These findings align with an earlier study by Birnbaum and Snowdon (2003), who suggested that gaining efficiency in HE can improve the production and function of a business. This way of working was not how the pre-92 public sector worked; there were some similarities with the post-92 HE public sector, although not in all aspects of a privately owned HE institution. The way of working in the public setting was along the lines that the organisation would still survive under most circumstances. However, the private working culture had a business mindset in all aspects of its operation, which meant that efficiencies were a priority and had to be met. These findings are consistent with an earlier study by Balzer (2020), who found waste in academic processes and teaching curricula estimated at 50% or more, and that efficiency can be sought through the utilisation of processes to

deliver a high-quality service. The findings from this study build on the research in HE and gain efficiencies through academic work. Although the private sector has a significant focus on efficiencies and a business mindset, there is a strong feeling that working in the private sector results in an environment where there are many opportunities for the learning and development of managers. Joshua and Stacey both believed that working in a private institution exposed them to broader prospects for learning, which would only sometimes be the case in a public setting. They felt that, although many challenges came from learning in a busy environment, it was also an opportunity to meet the challenges and develop them as managers and their identities.

6.2.3 Career aspirations

Of the 18 managers, 8 had a clear direction for their career desires. Emerging managers Olivia, Peter, and Stacey all felt that the next steps in their career would naturally be the next role up for them, in other words, moving from their programme management roles to more middle management roles, for example, head of department or associate dean level roles. These findings support earlier studies by Arthur et al. (2005) and Cohen and Mallon (1999), who found that career success is perceived as the success of a person's organisational position. However, not all the managers who were interviewed saw their roles progressing only via management routes; some managers saw their careers moving beyond this in areas of research. Boris and Joshua discussed the importance of the titles they hoped would be awarded to them. Boris was about to submit his PhD thesis and he hoped that a doctorate would improve his career. He then went on to express the importance of being awarded a teaching fellowship so that he could hold the title of associate professor before he retired. He strongly believed that his experience in other parts of his roles, e.g. consultancy and professional memberships, supported his profile; however, he also wanted to achieve these professional titles during his career. These findings are consistent with Becher and Trowler's (2001) study, which found that research publications were fundamental in determining academic promotional opportunities. Similarly, Joshua felt passionate about the title he would have had if he were working in a public institution. His dream was to become a professor, something he had wanted since the start of his career. He felt strongly about this, as it was a title that would stay with him forever. So, regardless

of which institution he worked for, Joshua felt that this title was a strong recognition to possess before the end of his career, as it would reflect the hard work he had put into education over the years. This finding is consistent with research by Deem et al. (2007), who found that managers who take on leadership responsibilities are delayed in producing research as their management duties take priority, which impacts their research identity.

These participants were strong examples of managers who wanted to build their professional identity in the sector, to hold professional titles that would be recognised regardless of the institution and have value and credibility amongst other academics in the field. These findings add to the existing literature on academic professional identity for academics in HE, and add another dimension of private HE and building an academic profile. Therefore, developing a manager's professional identity was influenced by the research, and creating a solid research presence meant that the professional identity was developed within the sector, not only in the institution. Although some participants' career aspirations were not too different from where they already belonged, both Simon and Dennis discussed aspirations to do what they enjoyed most: teaching. Simon's story was that once he retired, he wanted to teach a few days a week. He felt strongly about his love for teaching, which was where he started his career, and he could see himself ending it with teaching too. Dennis had a similar story. He felt that he wanted to come out of his role as a manager and return to being a lecturer and a researcher, since his passion lay in publishing his research. He had already written a book chapter and discussed how much he enjoyed doing this. He had strong aspirations to publish his work in journals, so he felt strongly about moving out of his management role to focus on research and some teaching. This finding supports the research by Leibowitz et al. (2012), who found that there were academics who strongly identified with their roles as researchers and wanted to pursue high standards for teaching. These findings add to the existing literature on academics moving into management positions and how this role can hinder time for research.

Chapter 7: Presenting the Findings and Analysis of Continuing Professional Development

This chapter presents a summary of the data collected from the 18 managers to specifically address Research Question 4:

- (RQ4) What are managers' experiences of continuing professional development in private HE and future development needs?

This chapter presents how continuing professional development (CPD) impacts managers' working practices. By exploring CPD at the institutional and department levels, the chapter is expected to offer theoretical insights into what CPD managers working in private institutions have undertaken to take up management posts. In addition, it will explore the future developments of managers, the training and development needs required going forward, and managers' career aspirations.

The key themes that emerged from the data concerning RQ4 are categorised into the following overarching themes:

- Knowledge
- Learning
- Organisational CPD culture
- Learning and teaching faculty
- Training and development

This chapter summarises the study's findings within each overarching theme listed above. In addition, it intends to understand the CPD opportunities given to the staff working in private HE to support them in developing as managers. It will analyse the related literature using the theoretical framework at the end of this chapter.

7.1 Knowledge

Of the 18 managers interviewed, 11, three senior, four middle, and four emerging managers discussed the importance of knowledge as a manager, the significance of understanding what is required of them in the role, and the support needed to acquire this knowledge.

Respondents Gordon, Peter, and Stacey felt that management was familiar to them; they already had experience of managing in previous roles. However, Gordon believed that although he thought these skills were transferable, he had misjudged the difference between working in industry and transferring these skills to education:

> *I was a manager in industry. The role that I finished on was operations manager, and I kind of thought naively that this could be transitioned into academia. But it can't… there are big differences. (Gordon–Middle)*

> *I already had 20 years of management experience. (Peter–Emerging)*

> *I think I was ready; I was ready because I had bags of experience in terms of teaching and managing individual modules and units working in a wider team, including across campuses. (Stacey–Emerging)*

Dennis's story was somewhat different. Dennis had experience in managing in the public HE sector, and he worked closely with academic staff so he had experience of how to handle people and situations. However, when joining the private sector, he found that his management style was not working:

> *I learnt to manage purely through experience. It seems to me that I'm going to have to adopt a managerial style that just doesn't sit well with me, which is much more kind of "that's safe, there you go, that's that, that's what we are doing, that's the structure, live with it, suck it up". (Dennis–Middle)*

In taking up the management roles, there was a strong feeling amongst some respondents that, although they had successfully gained the position, there needed to be more knowledge shared with them in identifying precisely what was expected of them in their roles as managers. For example, Dennis felt that he had been put into a challenging position

that required a lot more support and context; he believed that if he had had this, it would have helped him be successful in the role:

> *I could have been given a clue as to how this institution actually works; I could have been given a clue as to what my responsibilities are for this middle manager role. I could have been given all of this. I could have been given some warning that what I would face with external stakeholders was a Rottweiler… I have never experienced working with anybody that bad before. (Dennis–Middle)*

Harold's story echoed that of Dennis; he felt that he was successful in obtaining the management role, although when starting the role, there was a real knowledge gap.

> *So, I think the job specification should have been cut and dried so there wouldn't be any grey areas, but that didn't take place, so I have to just work my way through it and get to know exactly what my responsibilities are and all that. So yeah, I thought that maybe with hindsight, it would have been better to have someone sit you down and say, 'Look, this is your remit, this rose this is how we want you to go about it.' I think that would have gone a long way to help. (Harold–Middle)*

In contrast to management knowledge is subject knowledge. This was discussed by Harold and Simon. Senior manager Simon addressed the importance of staff networking outside of the institution to grow their subject knowledge and keep up-to-date in their field:

> *I think other senior managers are better known outside of the organisation because of the CPD they engage in. I think they are a good model of what should happen. (Simon–Senior)*

Finally, another example of acquiring knowledge was from Harold, who felt that writing research papers and conducting research supported him in keeping up-to-date with subject knowledge, which he felt was crucial in his role:

> *I was working on a paper, and I think as an academic I found that extremely important, and it has also helped me. How do you manage your academic life while*

at the same time managing what you are doing? All that double tasking is something that doesn't come… it doesn't come naturally at all. (Harold–Middle)

7.1.2 Learning

Learning, as part of the broader continuing professional development concept, takes shape in many forms. This section will discuss the types of learning that managers believe support their development in the sphere of management. These areas include observational learning, reflective learning, situated learning, and mentoring.

Of the 18 managers interviewed, a total of 14, four senior, six middle, and four emerging managers, discussed observational learning as a significant development theme in their careers. Simon and Harold both shared examples of observational learning through notable people; they believed that observing these individuals allowed them to take aspects of their management skills and apply them to their learning:

The actual process of management has been very much emergent… 'get started, learn it', and I think the biggest source of training for me has been other managers around me. My first management role was at a college, where I was managed by a lady called Collette. She was a really experienced manager and very open to my being able to talk to her about decisions, being able to say safely, 'I don't know what to do here; this is what I'm thinking, is this the right approach?' and being able to tap into that experience. (Simon–Senior)

I think I have learnt from one manager in particular at this institution, from her tenacity. I remember working with her for a university partner, and I loved her attention to detail. I'm someone who doesn't pay attention to detail, that's my style of doing things, I love to see things at a glance and then just knock it off; but I admire her attention to detail, how she specifies in her emails what you need to do. (Harold–Middle)

Hudson and Stacey discussed other examples of observational learning; they both felt that having the opportunity to observe other managers in action meant that they could reflect on their management style to understand how they worked best:

There are other managers I have worked with, and I have spent time trying to understand why they make the decisions they make, and learning from that along the way. So you see the positive outcomes and the problems that occur with different decisions from other managers, you take your decisions as well, and see what the outcomes are, and then you match the two together. So I see it as I'm watching other managers. (Hudson–Senior)

I never received formal training and I never felt that I needed it; to be honest not because I'm overconfident, but because I use my intuition a lot. I learnt to observe the managers that I perceived to be very successful and effective. It's really through observation, I don't talk much but I can see many things, I think that's my strength. (Stacey–Emerging)

Of the 18 managers interviewed, 10 in total, three senior, three middle, and four emerging managers, felt they carried out much of their learning as a manager within their role, 'on the job'. Boris discussed how learning in the role sometimes meant that he got it wrong, although he managed to get there in the end. Peter and Gordon described how learning on the job worked for them. There were areas of their management role that they would not have grasped even if they had been offered formal training; they only really understood how to do this once they needed to apply themselves within a situation:

I think learning by doing it, I think that's probably the most daring, I mean that's probably the most effective way; for example with the scheduling, I sat down with a couple of other managers to go through it. Then the first time I did it I obviously made a few mistakes, but now we are pretty much getting it done quite far ahead of time and with very few errors. So, it's kind of a combination of learning by doing and being thrown in at the deep end where you have to learn how to do it. (Boris–Senior)

I think doing is the best way of learning, because as you learn, as you're doing it, it's easier to remember what you're doing and how. Then when you have to go back and do a similar task again, you've already done it, and that kind of makes it easier, easier to remember. (Peter–Emerging)

Other things such as how to recruit, what to do, how to do it, how to report things, how to produce reports… there aren't many courses that could teach you how to do that. So that's where sitting down with somebody who is more experienced can help develop that. (Gordon–Middle)

Boris, Hudson, Candice, and Dennis all believed that learning through mentoring strongly supported them; it was evident that the more senior the role, the more there was a need for mentoring:

One thing is that I've always had people who have mentored me and shown me these things. Sometimes it's been formal and sometimes it's been informal. And it's always been a great help because they tell you they did things, they tell you what things they thought about or took into account, and that helps you to make decisions and do things in your own way. (Boris–Senior)

Without it being formally arranged, I felt that I have been shadowing more senior members of staff who make more senior-level decisions through a natural kind of mentoring… a kind of mentoring scheme. I feel it operated in that way. So, I would say, informally I've had plenty of opportunities to be able to access mentoring and coaching opportunities and shadowing opportunities that might not have been formally arranged, or recorded in terms of formal training and development. (Hudson–Senior)

I still get mentored by different people, but I think that part of me has evolved, so now I am trying to mentor others. It was always very one-sided, whereas now I feel I am trying to do it to other people who are trying to come through. (Candice–Senior)

The head of department at my other institution was also a mentor, and that really helped; I didn't see her a lot of the time but just a couple of times really helped. (Dennis–Middle)

7.1.3 Organisational CPD culture

Simon discussed that, although there was sufficient good practice, there is nothing formal in place:

> *There isn't a formal CPD strategy that's been written down, although it's probably time for us to have one. As senior managers, we've been pushing to develop our staff more, so we've been pushing for higher degrees, HEA… we're going to put the academy together. I think the academy is an unwritten strategy. It's got some tangible outputs, but I don't think we've ever sat down and said this is exactly what we should be offering. It needs to be formalised; there's lots of good components and lots of good things happening, but it does need to be pulled together..*

Of the 18 managers interviewed, five in total, one senior, one middle, and three emerging managers, discussed the organisational CPD culture. In addition, respondents discussed the CPD opportunities they had in private institutions. Although senior managers strongly believed that CPD was encouraged, Hudson felt that the institutional culture supported staff development:

> *I think there are unlimited opportunities for staff development if there is a justification for that within the role; the organisation has not prevented me from being able to do that. Training has been organised and paid for with an external provider to give me an opportunity to spend time with other people at the same level that I operate, in an external environment away from work, and I've been very thankful for these opportunities. I've been able to develop… I haven't felt prevented from developing from any point during my time with this company. (Hudson–Senior)*

Similarly, middle manager Gordon felt that the presence of an L&T faculty supported the pursuit of staff development:

> *There's a budget there to be used to help encourage and support staff, and I think a lot of staff members… because the number of staff is getting bigger… not everybody is aware of what development is available. I think having this L&T faculty now will*

help people understand that there is an option for further development and there is a team that can deal with it. (Gordon–Middle)

Although there was support for CPD, the respondents discussed the challenges around this. For example, Harold and Peter felt that the support was not being echoed by the resources made available to them; they felt that they were carrying out multiple duties in their busy positions as managers, so taking time to develop themselves was difficult:

Unfortunately, we seem to have very, very little time when it comes to that sort of CPD where you could go out there maybe and undertake research, attend conferences, and other things. So, CPD is very limited here. (Harold–Middle)

I do identify the courses that I want to do, but I think given the amount of work that we have to do, sometimes it's just difficult to find that time for going on those courses. So, I think probably the timing is not easy, it isn't easy to find the time to go and do the courses. (Peter–Emerging)

Respondents believed that much of their learning occurred through the people, the staff, and the discussions. Of the 18 managers interviewed, a total of ten, two senior, four middle, and four emerging managers, felt that learning through communities. Dennis and Maureen believed that much of their learning took place in the communities they had been able to tap into for the resources to support their learning as managers:

There was recruitment for regions which was interesting; that was a group thing. It was nice because it connected me with other managers. Wherever I've worked, I've had good relationships, and I also feel that with the administrative team on the ground. (Dennis–Middle)

I collaborate with the head of learning resources, and we can talk about any of the learning issues. I think that I've learnt a lot. Learning can be gleaned from informal conversations with people when you pop around, in addition to meeting with people regularly. (Maureen–Middle)

Finally, Stacey's story was similar in that she was taking much of her learning from other people. She felt that, although several courses were running internally, she learnt most from the people attending them:

> *I think I tend to learn through the actual colleagues and peers who were attending the course. I think I tend to learn from peers more than from the person who is standing there and delivering it. So that gave me an opportunity to just speak out and listen to peers who work across different departments and industries. I think that was probably the best contribution that I had, to help me understand how challenging it can be, but I wouldn't say the content of the course, or the training, helped me a lot, I wouldn't say that. (Stacey –Emerging)*

7.1.4 Learning and teaching (L&T) faculty

Of the 18 managers interviewed, six in total, two senior managers, three middle managers, and one emerging manager discussed the importance of the L&T faculty. Senior managers Simon and Candice felt that the L&T faculty was essential in supporting staff growth and development. Simon thought that this was an area that was being recognised as adding value to staff development in an institution where teaching was the focus:

> *So, I think the positive bit is that as an organisation, we're increasingly recognising the value of staff development. (Simon–Senior)*

Candice felt that the growth of the L&T faculty provided opportunities for academics to develop and grow their skills.

> *In terms of staff development, we run two training days a year, which are just internal for our staff, and that's a full day. We reach out to staff to say, one, 'Do you want to deliver a session?' and two, 'You can all attend.' The third is a conference; we have run this for the last two years. We are working on the development of an academy, so we've got for example an 'Empowering Learning' module, a teacher training module that's going to go live in January, a Postgraduate Certificate Academic Practice that is going to be available for staff to develop their teaching skills. And there's about 80 or 90 courses that we're starting to develop, that will just*

be a mix of blended learning. Once we have the Virtual Learning Environment, they will start to be populated, and we're going to have a dedicated staff development area because we do lots of stuff. There's also HEA: we run workshops to support staff with their HEA applications for fellowships and senior fellowships, and run mentoring workshops. (Candice–Senior)

Finally, emerging manager Olivia discussed some initial training run by the L&T faculty that she was offered when becoming a manager, including discussions around her role and responsibilities. However, she did not feel that she had been given any other training to support her in her first management position:

For heads of years there was initial training on roles and responsibilities, and how you might go about supporting module convenors, and things like that… For me, that was a really good crash course, but other than that, I really haven't had any training. (Olivia–Emerging).

7.1.5 Training and development

Of the 18 managers interviewed, 12 in total, three seniors, six middle and three emerging managers discussed the training and development opportunities made available to them. Binal and Dennis felt that there were professional training courses that supported their development needs as managers, and the courses allowed them to take essentials from the course to support their roles. Dennis felt that the experiences of managers that were built into the course were the most beneficial for him, and hearing the experiences of another manager added exceptional value to his management role:

When I first became a middle manager, I went on a recruitment course. Going on this course was interesting, but like any course, some things require thought. They may be nice in theory, but not always in practice. (Binal–Middle)

At another institution where I worked, we had some training, and really, the most valuable aspect of it was a presentation that was given by a head of philosophy, funnily enough, who had been a head of department for ten years and talked about

the rough times and just the day-to-day stuff, and that was really massively valuable, even though she didn't think it was it was. (Dennis–Middle)

Similarly, Hudson, Simon, and Stacey spoke of professional training courses they had the opportunity to attend while working at the private institution. All three respondents stated that opportunities for training and development were offered to them:

I have a training programme coming up in two months' time, which is a three-day training programme for staff at the senior level that has been organised and paid for with an external provider. (Hudson - Senior).

I've gone on various courses to do with specific aspects of management, such as conflict management, or various HR courses to learn the ropes of HR. (Simon–Senior)

Managing virtual teams enabled me to learn how to work across campuses and manage teams remotely. There were a couple of basic leadership courses and module management courses, but they were at other institutions, not here. (Stacey–Emerging)

Harold, Candice, and Denise felt that formal training events also equipped them with the knowledge and skills to handle situations within their management roles:

CPD is important. Just about three days ago, I completed training on GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), how much data has been managed, and all those things… and one on conflict management. (Harold–Middle)

We did HR management days, I think that helped. (Candice–Senior)

I ask HR for advice on how to handle different situations. (Denise–Middle)

Similarly, Gordon believed that there was a commitment to continuing professional development. He discussed how the institution had supported him with training and development opportunities, and in addition to this, they also supported him with his PhD studies:

> *Last year I started a PhD, which the company is helping me with. Two years previously, I did a master's, the year before that I used my training days for a change management course. (Gordon–Middle)*

Respondents were asked to reflect on their training and development needs using hindsight, knowing what they know now about their roles, and what specific training and development would have supported them when taking on their management roles. Three senior, five middle, and two emerging managers felt that, in hindsight, there was training that would have helped them get off to a better start in their management roles. Although the respondents focused on their management skills, there was a sense that having the right skills would have equipped them to manage situations in their roles. In the case of Hudson, he felt that being made aware of how much change would be taking place and how to best manage the situation would have been helpful:

> *If I had been able to forecast accurately what was going to take place within the organisation that I'm currently working for, I would have asked for some development in understanding change management. I think change management is something I have had some experience of; however, the rapid changes that I have needed to manage in the role that I'm in have meant that on some occasions I haven't been equipped with that knowledge and understanding, or the ability to act quite as quickly as I would have liked to have done, and had I had some support from the start, I could have been better. (Hudson–Senior)*

Denise, Binal, and Olivia felt they needed more support with learning how to manage. Binal believed that a management course to support their management knowledge, specifically, the ILM management course, would have been beneficial to learn from in the early days of his role:

> *I think ILM now seems a bit late in terms of things that were done at Level 5 or 3 ILM. I think pursuing something like that at an early stage would have been better. (Binal–Middle)*

Similarly, Denise felt that a management course to understand the HR side of the job would have been useful:

> *I think something to look into doing is a managerial course, just to understand a little bit more about the HR side of things, because that's a big part of line managing. (Denise–Middle)*

Finally, Olivia discussed the challenges she had in her role; she recognised that although she could have been better equipped to carry out the role, external staff joining the institution are in an even more complex situation, not knowing how things work, with greater knowledge gaps that need addressing:

> *If I'm honest I feel there probably needs to be more training for people that come into these roles externally, because I think the way this institution works and the speed at which things happen, you know, I think yeah, it's tricky for someone to come into a programme leader without the knowledge of the stuff below that, I think. (Olivia–Emerging)*

In summary, private HE institutions support their managers and encourage them to grow and develop. The internal L&T faculty are leading this. In addition, managers are supported through other means of learning, including observational learning, networking, and sometimes mentoring.

The learning that is taking place through formal training courses is seen as useful. However, the most valuable learning in these courses comes from the people attending the courses who share their own experiences of being managers, allowing newer managers to learn from the experiences of others.

There is a lack of structure for existing and new managers stepping into these roles. What training is offered is very much dependent on the line manager at the time. There is also a strong emphasis on the managers themselves leading their learning; if respondents request the training, they are, in most cases, offered the support to sign up for a PhD or management course; if not, then they might not end up engaging with any formal training and development.

7.2 Discussion of continuing professional development

In addressing RQ4 concerning the continuing professional development of managers working in private HE institutions, some key themes have emerged. First, this study found that several managers in private HE moved into management positions to progress their career prospects. However, the professional development opportunities made available to managers are outdated; they did not offer these managers a robust training and development opportunity to succeed in HE management positions, and the courses were compulsory and had an 'all must attend approach' (Preston & Floyd, 2016). Furthermore, the training and development that these managers undertook were generic, making it difficult for them to grasp the requirements of their management positions fully. There is minimal research available on the changes within the sector (Preston & Price, 2012).

In this study, the institutional CPD culture revealed that staff felt supported by the organisation when they showed an interest in CPD. Hudson and Gordon believed that the organisation helps staff develop themselves; both felt strongly that there were minimal barriers to professional development. The L&T faculty who led staff development had a budget to support staff development, and the institution encouraged them to utilise it. Although financial assistance was available from the institution, the main challenge for the participants was finding the time to do the CPD. For example, Harold and Peter strongly believed that the time allocated for the CPD was limited. The feeling was that there was little time available for CPD, and this would consequently impact the development. This teaching institution also needed more time for events, such as conferences and research. This finding supports earlier research undertaken in the public sector by Clegg (2003), who suggested that the concept of CPD, a significant area academics engage with, is usually not conceptualised as CPD. Although there was a generally positive CPD culture, staff believed they also needed to be provided with the time for CPD; not having the time often meant that managers felt restricted in what they could achieve.

The study found strong pockets of learning within the institutions where communities existed. Stacey felt that when there was the opportunity to attend training, it was the other participants who added value to the experience of learning, as it was the opportunity to

share experiences amongst others in similar positions across different departments and even industries that added to the learning experience and gave her the chance to apply this to her situation. This finding is consistent with Eraut (2004), who found that informal learning allows individuals to learn from other people and the experience and sometimes both, although the importance of this type of learning was seen to be even more significant in this private institution, where the complexity of the work in the institution was not something that could be learnt solely from a course. Other participants who felt strongly about learning within communities were Dennis and Maureen; they both felt that communities of practice allowed learning to take place, adding high value. Dennis felt that there was a strong presence amongst the academic and non-academic communities; he felt that the relationships with the administrative staff were meaningful and progressed his development as a manager. Maureen thought that informal conversations supported the learning: *"a lot can be gleaned from informal conversations with people."* Therefore, they believed that informal learning within the organisational culture is a precious opportunity to learn. This finding matches that of Wenger (2000), who found that the success of learning in an organisation depends on its capacity to design itself as a social learning system. In this institution, the research demonstrated a strong culture of social learning systems that enabled the development of managers and learning across the institution.

For organisations to be committed to learning, there is a need for commitment from senior management, and for there to be an organisational strategy directly concentrating on staff development (Gmelch, 2019). Senior manager Simon believed there was no formal CPD strategy for the private HE institution. However, he did support the idea of having a CPD strategy, although he felt there was a strong drive for staff development from senior managers. It was evident that he felt strongly about staff development, and this was an area he wanted to develop. He was able to share examples of what the institution was doing at the time of the interview, but the CPD strategy had not been formalised. This finding agrees with a study undertaken in the public sector by Floyd (2019), who argued that senior university managers see the value of professional development programmes for their staff.

7.2.1 The L&T faculty

This study found that several managers recognised the importance of the L&T faculty within the institution. Simon and Candice believed that the development opportunities that the L&T faculty created for academic staff across the institution were good, considering that the faculty was new. However, there was no discussion of any specific management training to support the development of institutional managers. Olivia confided that she had some initial conversations with the L&T faculty about the roles and responsibilities of her role, although she was disappointed that she was not offered any other training to support her very first management position; this finding is supported by earlier research by Preston and Floyd (2016), who found that the training and development offered to associate deans in HE is very little, and what is provided is more generic training which does not equip managers in HE to successfully carry out their duties.

7.2.2 Training and development

Several managers discussed professional training in this study; they mentioned the professional courses they had undertaken to carry out their roles, but felt that the people on the course had a more significant influence on them than the course itself. This finding supports previous research by Kempster (2006), who found that one's networks highly influence leadership learning. Binal and Dennis discussed how the professional training courses they attended allowed them to share their thoughts and feelings, which allowed them to grow as managers. It is evident from the findings that professional courses introduce a great deal of theory, although this does not always help in practice. Dennis's story added how valuable the training course he attended was, although not necessarily because of the content itself, but rather, the experiences of the presenters who had previously held the positions, he resonated with them so this added value. These findings are consistent with Kempster (2009b), who found that learning about leadership takes place through the examination of notable people. He felt that the presentation given by the head of philosophy was invaluable, especially her sharing of her own experiences of what went well and what did not, which Dennis felt he could take away to support him in his role.

Other respondents also felt that they had been offered opportunities while working at the institution to access training courses. There was a general sense that the institution provided support for training and development, and many participants had attended three-day professional courses run by the learning division. These findings support research by Preston and Floyd (2016), who found that many institutions have professional courses available for managers, although these courses do not consider individual needs as they are generic. Denise discussed how, as a new manager, she felt supported by the HR department, and she was able to take advice from them for situations she needed help with. There was also an offering of a suite of ongoing training modules by the HR department, mostly the courses ranging from management and leadership, conflict management, managing virtual teams, GDPR, and other management-related skills-based training, which were said to be very helpful. These generic courses are useful for general management but do not equip middle managers in the crucial roles that they play in decision making in the various responsibilities they hold (Gmelch, 2019).

7.2.3 Learning

In the overarching theme of continuing professional development, there was strong agreement among the respondents that learning takes place both internally and externally, and formally and informally; this finding aligns with the study by Deem (2006). Hudson, Simon, Harold, and Stacey all felt that there was a strong sense of observational learning that took place in their learning as managers; this aligns with the study by Kempster (2009a), who argued that managers do this by 'observing and engaging with significant others' to whom they give credit for their roles as leaders; they observe them and make use of the observations in their roles, which provides them with the skills and confidence for handling similar situations. Simon and Harold discussed how access to more experienced managers helped them develop their practice; they were able to learn from the decision-making, the reasoning, the attention to detail, and through reflection, were then able to improve their management style. These findings support earlier research by Kempster (2009a), who suggested that although managers use observational learning to develop their leadership, as they develop, what they observe also changes, depending on where they are in their careers. Similarly, Stacey observed other managers *"that I perceive to be very*

successful and effective". She felt that by observing the successful managers, she learnt more than she would do from any formal training course. In this case, observational leadership applies as Stacey is still at the 'early career stage', acquiring contextual learning from significant others. This finding supports earlier research by Yoon et al. (2021), who found that observational learning can support developing attitudes and skills in modelling behaviour.

Dennis, Maureen, and Stacey all believed that the community allowed learning and development in their roles. The study found there was also a feeling that it was not only other managers and academics who supported their learning, but also communities outside of this immediate group, including administrative staff and library teams; this aligns with earlier research by Wenger (2000), who found that learning takes place in diverse formats, including the community. The opening of borders allows a flow of information from one group to another, but for managers to contribute to the community, a shared commitment and understanding must exist, which is when they will be able to build these interactions.

Other respondents discussed learning from their previous management positions, and how this experience helped them advance their management understanding to have a broader ability in their roles as managers. Gordon, Peter, Dennis, and Stacey all felt they had experience from previous management positions. Dennis discussed that he would need to change his management style if he were to succeed in his role. He found the management role to be very task-focused and outcomes-led, which was not entirely what he was used to from the public sector. This supports earlier research undertaken in the public sector by Floyd (2022) who found that traditional leadership styles, where one leader makes all the decisions and others follow, does not necessarily work. This finding is consistent with Hill (2004), who found that the training offered to managers is focused on standardised frameworks and concepts, which do not consider the roles of individual academic managers. Therefore, for managers who are new to private HE, who have not worked in this sector, and who do not understand the requirements of the role, there are gaps in their knowledge that must be addressed.

7.2.4 Situated learning

This study found that several managers felt that most of their learning was done on the job, referred to as situated learning. These findings are supported by Lave et al. (1991), who defined this as 'learning by doing'. Boris, Gordon, and Peter all discussed how they were often given tasks that they did not have the experience to carry out; there was no training in how to complete the tasks, but instead, they learnt the lessons 'on the job.' Boris felt that the tasks he was given were often new; he discussed that there was an attitude of 'just get on with it,'. The more you carry out the task, the better you become; this finding agrees with Gherardi et al. (1998), who suggested that the situated curriculum is the activities that allow the learner to become a fully participating member practising in the role. They also felt that it was easier to learn from other managers how they did it and to be walked through it rather than referring to training courses and guides. Although there was the belief that sometimes being thrown into the task meant that managers had to learn it, it was also felt that having to learn on the job helped them remember how to do it for next time; this aligns with the study by Wenger (1999), who found that 'learning as doing' is a method of learning that requires learning to take place while in the situation, thus learning by practice. These findings build on the existing research on situated learning, although they expand on the expectations and use of this type of learning for private HE institutions.

Managers reported that much of their management learning happened by spending time with other managers and connecting closely with the support offered through mentoring. Three senior managers, Hudson, Candice, and Boris, and one middle manager, Dennis, were very positive about their own learning experiences through mentoring. They all received a combination of formal or informal mentoring support at some point in their management careers, and they believed that this type of learning was more personal, which allowed them to ask and learn more deeply about their own situations. This finding supports earlier research by Truter (2008), who found that mentoring is often used to develop effective leaders. Study participants generally felt that the support they received from their mentors, both formally and informally, was invaluable for lifelong learning. Although mentoring was a development route that was not a formal route for the institution, it was very useful. The participants discussed how this mentoring relationship provided insights into the unknown

about management; it built their confidence in how to carry out the role, talking through tough challenges but also having the opportunity to discuss these with experienced mentors who were able to support them in building self-assurance; this finding aligns with an earlier study by Muslim et al. (2021), who suggests that the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship is mainly dependent on the mentoring relationship. Mullen and Klimaitis (2021) recognised that while mentoring was a fundamental development method for managers, it was related to reflective learning. For mentoring to be effective, the participants found it particularly useful at the time to reflect on their practice and mentoring conversations, for them to develop in their roles. Binal and Dennis felt they were very aware of reflecting and did so often; although this was not an easy process of learning, there was the space they needed to take the time to reflect regularly. This finding is consistent with Schön (2017), who suggested that novice and expert managers attained this skill. These findings expand on the existing literature on the usefulness of mentoring in management learning, although specifically add views from working in a private institution.

7.2.5 Knowledge

There was a strong feeling among the participants that knowledge was critical to success within the private HE institution. They discussed various areas of expertise that they believed were required for them to be successful managers, including subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, management knowledge, networking knowledge, and research knowledge. Dennis and Harold felt that management knowledge was fundamental for them to successfully carry out their roles; however, they both discussed how they took up their management positions, although knowledge about the role was not provided, so they felt that the institution had not been explicit about what the role and duties involved, resulting in them being hindered in their management positions. This aligns with the study by Garvin et al. (2008), who found that a learning organisation is able to transmit knowledge and then adapt its behaviour to display knowledge and understanding, allowing senior managers to be explicit about the duties involved in the role and take the time to communicate this to newer managers who will not necessarily hold the tacit knowledge of the institution. This finding is supported by earlier research by Gherardi and Strati (2012), who found that institutional routines carry tacit knowledge. It was evident that there was a clear difference

in the knowledge required for each university partnership, so where managers had a greater awareness of the university partnership before taking up management positions, this equipped them to better carry out their duties successfully; therefore, the learning and the role of knowledge were essential to support management success.

Participants felt strongly about subject knowledge; several respondents stated that subject knowledge was another mechanism of development within their field. This subject knowledge was gained through research, teaching, and networking groups. Harold and Simon discussed the importance of research and networking to build an academic presence within the research community to develop their continuing professional development profile further; this finding supports the previous research of Deem et al. (2007), who found that much of the training and development for managers happens informally. Harold echoed this, as he believed that subject knowledge was fundamental to keeping up to date with developments in the subject area through research.

7.3 Continuing professional development in hindsight

There was considerable discussion of the training that, in hindsight, could have supported the participants if they had known more about their management roles before taking them on. Several participants discussed 'training in hindsight'. Hudson believed that a course in change management would have better prepared him for his senior management role; with the constant and rapid change around the organisation, he felt that this training would have better equipped him to handle situations. Other hindsight ideas for types of training came from line managers Denise, Binal, and Olivia, who felt that they were not fully equipped with the right training to manage staff before taking up their management roles. Denise thought it would have been helpful to undertake a management course to gain a deeper understanding of the HR aspects of people management, as this is where she felt much of her management role sat. Binal and Olivia felt that, in hindsight, training courses before starting their line manager positions would have better prepared them to conduct their duties. Binal felt that going back now to complete a management course would not add the same value; he thought that much of the management development had been learnt on the job, although this would have been more beneficial before taking on the role. Olivia felt that

management roles were even more challenging for external staff joining the institution: *"The speed at which things happen, I think it's tricky for someone to come into a role."* So, although internal managers moving up the ranks might find their way around with the knowledge they hold from previous positions, this is even more of a challenge for staff who are new to the institution. With no formal management courses to prepare staff before starting their roles, it can be a real challenge for them to succeed.

7.4 Summary of discussion

In summary, the outcomes of this study highlight that managers working in the private HE sector require a somewhat different set of skills, behaviours, and capabilities from the public sector. Previous life history events are underlying factors that build the foundations of future career aspects and decisions. The data confirmed that family and cultural influences during childhood are fundamental in supporting and influencing one's career. For some participants (Joshua, Harold, and Marsha), there was a strong drive for education at an early age, which impacted career decisions and career aspirations. Family agency meant that prompts on the fundamental importance of education were embedded during childhood and ingrained into professional identities. For others, education was not pushed in childhood, although at a later stage, some participants (Dennis and Hudson) recognised that there was a need to pursue education to develop and support themselves. These choices built self-confidence through education, allowing participants to drive themselves forward and become entrepreneurial in commercial private HE. This approach to education and management allowed them to understand the diversity of student cohorts and better support their learning. Learning was perceived by participants in various formats, some more structured than others. However, the opportunities that were made available for managers required robust development strategies and commitment from senior managers to make a difference.

7.5 Contribution to knowledge

Figure 7.1 below illustrates the key themes that emerged from the data analysis that are fundamental to understanding the career trajectories of these managers working in the

private HE sector. The contribution to knowledge is further developed in Chapter 8, section 8.2.2.

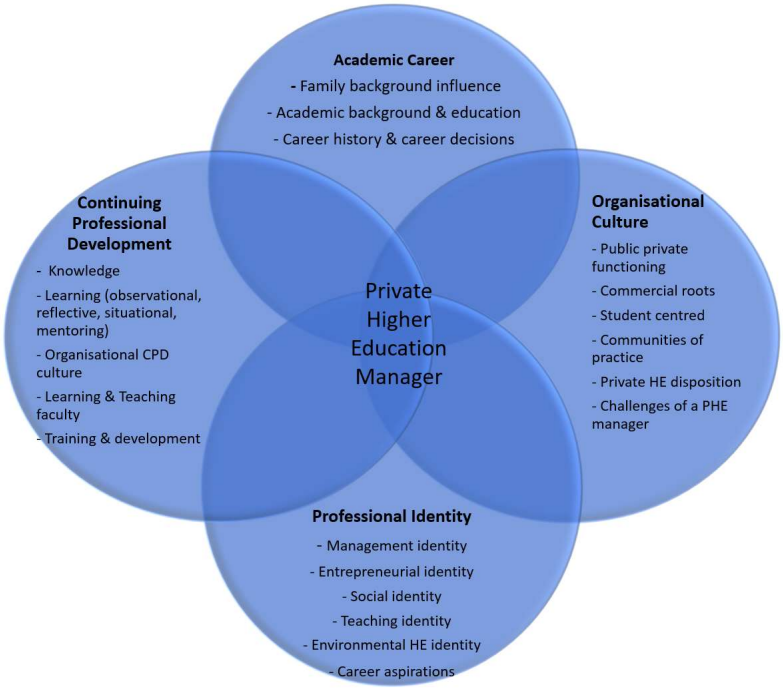

Figure 7.1 Conceptual framework for understanding career trajectories of managers working in private HE

The final chapter goes on to summarise the whole thesis, drawing a conclusion, considering the implications of the outcomes of managers working in a private HE institution, followed by recommendations for future research.

Chapter 8: Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter consists of three key sections. The first section offers a summary of the study's research questions, the methodology applied to answer them, and the limitations of the research. The second section outlines the original contribution to knowledge of the study and highlights the interrelationships among the critical themes of academic career, organisational culture, professional identity and continuing professional development of these managers working in the private HE sector in the UK. Finally, this section will address the implications of this study to provide recommendations for future research.

8.2 Summary of this study

This study explored the career trajectories of 18 managers working in the private HE sector in the UK. It aimed to gain an understanding of the motivations of these managers, to understand and interpret who they are, what it is like for them to work in the private HE environment as managers, how working in a private institution impacted their professional identities, and what continuing professional development they have undertaken to take up the management roles and future career aspirations. This study was developed with a theoretical framework identifying the interrelationships between the concepts of academic career, organisational culture, professional identity, and continuing professional development.

Following a review of the literature, the main research question was formulated as follows:

- **What are the perceptions and experiences of managers working in the private HE sector?**

To address the main research question, the following sub-questions were posed:

- **RQ1. What are the personal and professional circumstances that lead academics to become managers in the private HE sector?**

- **RQ2. How do managers perceive and experience the organisational culture when working in the private HE institution?**
- **RQ3. How do managers perceive their professional identity has been impacted by being a manager in private HE?**
- **RQ4. What are managers' experiences of continuing professional development in private HE and future development needs?**

The researcher adopted an interpretive paradigm aligned with social constructivist views to address the above research question and sub-questions. In addition, a qualitative research design was implemented using life history interviews (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Both were justified in line with the study's research questions, specifically to understand these managers' perceptions of who took up the roles in the private sector.

The private HE sector in the UK is growing, so there needs to be a greater understanding of the managers working in the private sector. An explanation of the distinctiveness of the private and public sectors is essential to understand the growing private sector, where management roles might be assumed to be like for like. Therefore, this study forms a new area of future research in the private HE sector in the UK.

To enable the research to gain a deep understanding of the individual experiences concerning the themes outlined in the theoretical framework, life history interviews were conducted with 18 managers from a private HE institution across faculties and three levels of managers. The researcher has worked at this institution as a manager for the last 11 years; therefore, this data is accompanied by the researcher's insider observations, knowledge, and experiences (Floyd & Arthur, 2012).

8.2.1 Methodology and limitations

There is very little published research related explicitly to managers working in the private HE sector in the UK. The private HE sector is a relatively new sector, and more needs to be known about its environment and how it differs from the public university sector for managers working within it. Therefore, this study was considered exploratory from the start, as little was already known. Data was obtained by interviewing and analysed to present the

career trajectories of management teams working in the private sector and obtain an interim understanding of this field. Therefore, a qualitative design was appropriate for this study.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face on campus. The data was collected, analysed, and transcribed following thematic analysis (Bryman, 2015; Lichtman, 2012; Miles et al., 2013). All participants interviewed as part of this study were forthcoming and were interested in being part of the study. A minority were a little reserved due to the researcher's insider knowledge and experiences, so they did not always share complete details of locations, institutions, or people. The implications of insider research were discussed in detail in Chapter 3 on methodology.

A further limitation of the study is that it focused on only one private institution; details that have been studied are primarily limited to this study. Although the study provides insights into similar institutions and management positions across HE to a degree, the findings are not fully generalisable.

Despite these limitations, the researcher believes the life history interview data from the managers in this study provides valuable focal points for future research. A fundamental reason for adopting the life history approach for this study is that the researcher wanted to delve deeper into the roles of managers to gain a greater depth of knowledge of their life experiences and the influence of these on their career choices.

8.2.2 Original contribution to knowledge

This study claims to make a methodological and theoretical contribution to existing research in the private HE field.

Before this private HE research, there was very little published research on the career trajectories of managers working in private HE. Several studies have been conducted regarding the training and development opportunities for managers working in the public HE setting (Clegg, 2003; Deem, 2003; Floyd, 2012b, 2016, 2022; Floyd & Preston, 2019), although limited research is available concerning managers working in the private HE sector in the UK. As a result, this investigation claims to make an original contribution to

knowledge in the UK private HE sector by encompassing an understanding of managers' career trajectories. This thesis claims to make an original contribution to knowledge through an in-depth examination of the interrelated concepts of academic career, organisational culture, professional identity and continuing professional development within the sector.

What was already known within publicly funded universities was that much of the change in leadership roles took place during the government changes when post-92 universities were given university status (Trowler, 1998). Some of these changes included structural, cultural and role changes. The post-92 universities took on titles from managers to Vice Chancellors, organisational cultural changes from former polytechnics to university status, and role changes focusing on newer managerial responsibilities. The staff working in the public university sector were traditionally known to have entered academia directly from school, the large majority came from families with an above average income where parents themselves were commonly well educated (Kember et al., 2021); although higher education today looks very different and the perceived elite education system has long since changed (Altbach, 1999; Olssen & Peters, 2005). However, with the increase of private higher education institutions within the UK, what was not known was who the managers were working in the sector and what their experiences of leadership and management were. The findings from this study found that student cohorts in the private institution were highly diverse. Private higher education attracted entrepreneurial managers, they took a guiding and supportive role as academic managers, having had similar experiences themselves in their own education (Sathorar & Geduld, 2019). It was found that the private working culture and environment was not suited to everyone, there was a particular disposition that suited the characteristics of this type of institution that was highly determined by the approaches to learning, teaching, students and the experiences through community and agency (Bautista, 2018).

From previous research, it was known that academic managers working in public universities, especially pre-1992 universities, carried high workloads that took them away from their research commitments. They were often seen to take on management positions as 'taking their turn', but they fully intended to return to their roles as academics (Deem et al., 2007). Although a minority of managers from post-92 universities took on management

positions later in their careers, it was once they reached certain points in their careers, these individuals were referred to as 'career track' managers (Deem, 1998). This study found that in private higher education academics wanted to take on management positions much earlier in their careers. Academic management positions were seen to be attractive; these were not viewed as being less than research or teaching roles, nor were they seen to be a hinderance to academic careers, but instead, a route to accelerating academic careers in the private higher education sector.

It was known that in the post-92 public sector, academic managers took on management positions with little or no training. The courses which were offered had appeared to be generic development models that did not consider the deeper needs of the management positions by level or function (Floyd, 2016; Hill, 2004) there was little support offered for managers working in public universities although the management roles were riddled with complexity (Floyd & Preston, 2014). What was not known was if similar challenges existed in private institutions. This study filled that gap and found that similar to public universities, the training offered to academic managers in the private sector was limited. Although there was an opportunity to undertake general training courses hosted by the Human Resources team, there was no formal role specific training offered to managers, which focused on the needs of the management role, the duties and level of role, which managers recognised as a need.

The organisational culture in the pre-92 public university sector was known to be research led, although post-92 universities, the former polytechnics were more aligned to vocational courses. Academics working in the public sector belong to a broader network across universities and countries (Mishra, 2020). Public universities held a learning culture with academic roles including lecturers, professors and researchers positioned in an academic setting (Cardoso et al., 2019), but what was not known was how the culture of the private higher education institution worked. This study filled that gap and found that the organisational culture of the private institution was dominated by its commercial business ownership. Although there were aspects of organisational culture that resembled the public sector, e.g. faculties, heads of departments and teaching being a few there were also fundamental differences including efficiencies across academic resources particularly

teaching utilisations; the allocation of teaching hours sat at the heart of the operational workings of the institution and other areas of academic work being secondary to this, including CPD and research.

Figure 7.1 in Chapter 7 presents the conceptual framework which provides an understanding of the career trajectories of managers working in private HE and illustrates how the four concepts of academic career, organisational culture, professional identity and continuing professional development interconnect together with the sub-themes that emerged from the analysis for each concept.

The findings from this study add to the literature on the private HE sector in the UK and introduce recommendations which will hopefully assist the sector in reassessing policies, particularly the challenges HE managers face in their roles and staff development opportunities in supporting management positions in HE. It will inform potential new managers looking to join the private HE environment to have a deeper understanding of what is it like to work as a manager in the private sector, and how working in this environment could potentially impact their professional identities, as well as the training opportunities made available to managers in private HE. In addition, this study will be useful for public institutions, who will be in a stronger position to grasp how the commercial private HE sector operates. This is a business approach that they could potentially learn from, gaining efficiencies through a commercial lens. It also opens up discussion for public institutions for growing the diversity of their workforce and reflecting on the changes in management posts leaning towards new managerialism.

8.3 Findings of this study

8.3.1 Academic career of managers working in private HE

As discussed in Chapter 4, the academic managers who participated in this study are categorised into two groups: British managers (Hudson, Boris, Simon, Candice, Maureen, Dennis, Binal, Gordon, Harold, Denise, and Olivia) and managers who are of international origin (Joshua, Mark, Valerie, Hasan, Marsha, Stacey, and Peter). However, a third group that overlaps both groups is the managers who were born in the UK, although their parents are of international origin (Boris, Maureen, Dennis, Binal, and Harold). This makeup of staff

cultures demonstrates the highly diverse management population in the private institution, evidencing a strong synergy among the diversity of managers working there. The cultural status of these three groups evidence that the family and, more specifically, the parents of international managers were instrumental in driving high-quality education for their children; there was a strong belief that education would provide opportunities and a better life, so children were driven early on to commit to gaining a high level of education. Eleven of the managers in this study felt their parents influenced their education. Academic choices included decisions about education routes. Of the 18 managers, six managers held PhD qualifactions.

In relation to why choices were made to work in the private HE sector, there were three main categories which managers fell into: those who consciously decided to work in a private institution (Simon, Boris, Hudson, Maureen, Binal, and Stacey); those taking the role but not consciously choosing a public or private institution, instead being recommended by their network (Candice, Olivia, Peter, and Hasan); lastly, those who took the role as they were attracted to the opportunity (Joshua, Denise, Harold, Valerie, Gordon, Dennis, Mark, Marsha), not necessarily a decision which was based on the institution being public or. Thus, for the majority of these respondents, it was their vision to see the roles as an opportunity; this was not necessarily a decision about public or private, but career choices and decisions about what the role could offer them in academic management to further develop their careers.

8.3.2 Working in the private HE organisational culture

As discussed in Chapter 5, the findings from this study suggest that academic managers working in the private HE institution felt the commercial roots of the private institution were a fundamental factor influencing the organisation's culture. In addition, there was a strong feeling that the importance of performance in privately owned organisations was a critical success factor. Although significant for public institutions as well, it was not always that obvious.

The participants felt a clear difference in working in the private compared to the public HE sector. Although differences in working practices were expected, there was a strong feeling

among the academic managers that the private HE culture lacked autonomy, which is a central consideration in making up academic culture and allowing managers to develop their academic identity. The participants who joined the private HE institution and had previously worked in the public sector felt that there was a clear difference between public and private cultures. Harold, Boris, and Dennis all thought that private HE institutions lacked freedom in decision making. Interestingly, there was a feeling that a culture somewhere between private and public would be the perfect environment for HE work. Simon, Hudson, Gordon, and Dennis believe that private institutions are not a suitable environment for all academic managers. The disposition of managers working in the institution mattered; these managers had experienced working with a range of academic managers joining the institution, and they were confident from their experiences that this was not an environment for everyone; it was best suited to staff who could work in an environment with high levels of change and the business focus that came through the commercialisation. Several participants described the institution as a fast-paced, complex, opportunistic, and rigid environment. Dennis, Binal, Gordon, Peter, Stacey, Mark, and Hasan felt that the greatest challenge was the management of people; they felt they could not always control working situations due to a matrix management structure, but also working in a complex environment, with multiple intakes, partners, programmes, and rapid growth, were all factors that made the requirement of a strong character pivotal, together with high levels of resilience.

8.3.3 The professional identity of managers

As explained in Chapter 6, the findings from this study suggest that the professional identities of academic managers are multifaceted. The professional identity comprises personal and professional experiences, which were developed over time throughout the career trajectory and socialisation opportunities throughout their career. Being an academic manager meant that the role required the individual to work between the identities of a private HE manager, lecturer, and researcher. The ability to switch between the identities of teaching, research, and management was highly likely in a manager; many participants perceived their identity in at least two categories of professional identity. Some identified strongly as teachers (Binal, Boris, Mark, Marsha, and Simon); they had a strong student-centred approach and believed being close to the student was a fundamental aspect of their

identity. The management identities from this study were two-sided: an internal reflection on the role of a manager and external perceptions from others looking at the role. Some participants who worked in the private institution believed they were viewed negatively by those looking in externally, often with a preconceived idea of the private commercial environment. The management identity was one that some participants (Dennis, Binal, Harold, Boris, Joshua, Marsha) thought their roles in the institution were strongly associated with. There was a strong feeling that the management identity was impacting their work–life balance; the management identity was also viewed as a concept that held some participants back as they took on additional duties, although at the same time, these managers valued their positions and believed they were there to support others in their role, which was quite unusual compared to the public sector. Having a research identity was crucial, and Boris, Mark, and Harold believed this shaped them as professionals in the sector. These managers thought that being a researcher built credibility in the HE sector, therefore, the research identity was crucial for them in developing their professional status. In contrast to the public sector, it was unusual that the number of managers associating their professional identity with research was not higher.

Seven participants (Hudson, Mark, Candice, Simon, Maureen, Joshua, and Stacey) believed that working in a private HE environment impacted their professional identity; while working in the private setting, these managers conformed to the private organisational culture, which shaped their roles as managers but also influenced their ways of working. These included expectations around efficiencies of resources, the complexity of working with multiple partners, and commercial acumen. There was a strong feeling that the private HE environment had accelerated their careers, therefore, accelerating their professional identity with the opportunities that were made available to them. Working in a rapidly growing organisation brought opportunities for promotion; this resulted in the development of these managers, as they were often exposed to new areas of working quite quickly, supporting the growth of their identities, which was not usual in a public setting.

8.3.4 Professional development of managers

As discussed in Chapter 7, 11 of the managers from this study recognised the importance of knowledge in the role. For the more experienced individuals (Gordon, Peter, and Stacey), the transition into the management position was sometimes easier due to having knowledge of management positions from previous roles. However, the study found that, for the new managers joining the private institution (Dennis and Boris), there was not sufficient training provided for understanding the requirements of the role or being trained to carry out the duties in their role, whether moving from one level to the next or being new to the organisation at any management level. It was apparent that the culture of each university partner differed; for newer managers joining the institution or for existing managers moving across partners, there was not enough information on how the management role fits, creating a knowledge gap for managers. This gap resulted in second-guessing how to proceed with the role, and not always being clear about expectations. There was a strong feeling among the participants that much of the learning took place within the context of social learning theory; the opportunity to meet, discuss, and observe others meant that this was valuable knowledge that could not be learnt on a training course. Ten participants (Boris, Candice, Simon, Peter, Gordon, Binal, Harold, Stacey, Olivia, and Marsha) stated that 'on the job' learning was how they learnt to do the job; gaining experience on the job meant that managers quickly learnt tasks assigned to them. The findings suggested that the organisational CPD culture was positive; support was offered to staff to develop themselves through CPD days, a supportive Learning and Teaching Faculty culture where formal CPD events took place, and the opportunity to attend formal courses offered by the institution. However, it was recognised that no specific management training was provided to these managers, and no training focused on specific academic management needs. The findings also showed that the individual's skills and management knowledge were not considered for specific role-level training and development. The participants believed, in hindsight, that if they had known more about the role's requirements before taking the role on, they would have requested explicitly related training to equip them with the capabilities to carry out the job.

8.3.5 Career aspirations

Of the 18 participants, 15 shared their future career aspirations, which fell into three broad categories: management roles, teaching roles, and future research. A significant finding from this study was that these managers' career aspirations were inspired by future promotion within management at this private institution. In contrast, this route was not perceived as a preferred step in career progression for the public sector, where staff would be focused instead on research activities and ambitions to develop professionally within the sector through publications. The research was central for a few managers to demonstrate knowledge within their subject and validate credibility for their professional identity within the sector. Finally, there were managers with a career desire to 'just teach'; they saw this as an area that they felt comfortable within, so they enjoyed being in the classroom and wanted to move back into teaching in the longer term.

This study claims to have made a distinctive and original contribution to the existing literature in this new UK private HE field. Very little published research is available in this area of managers working in private HE in the UK. The study has analysed the data about the theoretical framework, identifying the interrelationships amongst the themes of the academic career, organisational culture, professional identity and continued professional development. The following section presents this study's implications and recommendations for practice and future research.

8.4 Implications and recommendations

8.4.1 Recommendations for practice

This study did not aim to make any generalisations from the findings centred on one institution and a small sample of managers. Making generalisations as an outcome of this study would contradict the epistemological interpretive methodological design of the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). However, the results can provide insightful findings for the HE sector in all areas of academic career, organisational culture, professional identity and continuing professional development for academic managers in both public and private institutions (Goodson et al., 2016). Academic managers will be able to take these learnings and apply them to their own contexts.

The following sections present how this study's findings contribute to knowledge for private HE managers and explain how the research process has impacted the respondents and the researcher. This will be followed by future recommendations.

The results of this small study can still provide valuable insights into the experiences of those working in management roles in the private HE sector in the UK and possibly beyond. Outside of this private HE institution, readers can apply the findings from this study to their contexts to reflect on their academic career experiences, organisational culture, professional identity, and continued professional development. In addition, managers could use these findings to relate to their positions and institutions to support their thinking when carving out their future career trajectories with the impact of the conceptual framework. Beyond this institution, it is hoped that this study will enable developments in the HE sector for policymakers, particularly in connection with continued professional development and what development programmes need to be in place for HE managers, as discussed in Chapter 1.

It will support newer managers in being informed of the expectations of the role and the potential journey these roles could develop into throughout their careers. The implications of these findings for practice are important because the study will be used to inform future continuing professional development for this institution and the managers in it.

The key implications of this study are connected to the opportunities created for managers working in private institutions related directly to training and career development. Of the 18 participants, 16 had not received any formal training connected with the duties of their managerial roles. This suggests that the institution needs to execute a training programme for academics who progress into management roles, providing them with the knowledge and skills to understand the role with a clear view of building their management capabilities. To make the training effective, it is imperative that the training takes into consideration the individual's existing skills, experience, and knowledge. Another fundamental factor is to ensure that existing managers deliver the training, as they have experience with direct examples in both situational and observational learning in the private setting. The findings suggest that training and development plans should discuss key stakeholders that managers

will be working with, particularly university partners, as these are significant relationships in measuring success at an organisational level. Development plans should support management training in helping managers understand the culture of private institutions and how there might be fundamental differences to the public university partner.

Another crucial development component is providing role expectations. Supplying managers with an understanding of what success is for their management role allows them to grasp how this success will be measured, highlighting key performance indicators to support this over time. Managers require preparation to equip them with strategies for effectively managing challenging academic staff situations. There is a need to develop a training programme to support the management of people; this should focus on specific situational examples at each level of the management role.

A management training programme should develop managers by providing opportunities to learn about the specific types of management approaches that are effective when working in a private institution. In addition, the training programme should develop content supporting managers in understanding the fundamental differences between the public and private sectors. In particular, this training would support new managers joining a private institution, coming from the public HE sector.

The implications that arise from this study are connected to the opportunities managers are provided to enable them to carry out their roles to their full potential. It was clear from this study that several participants joined the private institution due to the opportunities that came from working in the private institution with its rapid growth. This suggests that private institutions should continue to offer career opportunities for managers to progress and grow within the organisation to maintain the interest that attracted them to these positions in the first place. In contrast, public universities need to explore how they can offer advancement within careers to academics who wish to take on management positions, as well as general progression opportunities to develop their careers in the public setting.

The participants taking up roles in this private HE institution were not equipped with training and development prospects. This suggests that senior managers need to build strategic plans for continued professional development, both in terms of funding and time

allocation, for managers to develop themselves. Time and resources must be allocated to supporting managers in the institution; this will allow them to be efficient, effective, and strong managers in their roles and in supporting their direct line reports. Such time allocation would also mean that more managers are inclined to take up development opportunities, knowing they do not have to absorb this into their already existing high workloads. The implications are for faculty staff to know that new managers have been provided with strong onboarding training and that existing teams can support them. Most participants felt unsure about the requirements of the role and what was expected of them; therefore, they were not prepared for their management roles. This suggests that a support model should be embedded to allow new managers taking up their posts to be provided with a transparent understanding of the role from the offset.

Another main finding of this study is that the managers taking on management positions in this private institution are entrepreneurial. Although the managers working in the private institution came from diverse backgrounds, a culture where 'hard work gets rewarded', the background of these managers meant that the ones who flourished in this private institution were the ones who fit with the culture, an organisational culture where career opportunities were entrepreneurial. Although this suggests that the institution should continue to offer opportunities, many are derived from the commercial culture and growth, which, for some managers, are highly appealing.

Participants were identified that one of the most valuable ways of learning was by having the support of a mentor. Mentoring was a system in which there was space to ask questions, consult, understand, and learn. This suggests that the learning and teaching faculty should offer a mentoring system for managers who want to engage with this type of learning. The institution must consider options for formal and informal mentoring opportunities for managers. The implications would include training a pool of existing managers to take on the role of mentors to develop managers new to their role. Another benefit of this opportunity could have positive implications for managers working towards professional certifications, demonstrating that they have supported the development of others, for example, Advance HE.

For external managers joining the private institution, there were differences in the organisational culture and role. This suggests that more needs to be offered to support managers who are new to private HE as well as new to working in partnership with public universities. Managers should complete a self-assessment competency analysis, which they could use to assess their own capabilities, skills, knowledge, and understanding of the role. They can identify individual training needs; this is a tool that could also be implemented for all managers at the three levels, emerging, middle, and senior, so tailored training plans can be offered. Managers taking up positions via an external route should be given a clear and transparent path into the role, including in-depth knowledge of working with external partners. The training recommendation is that they shadow an existing manager as close as possible to their role to gain an understanding of the working cultural relationships amongst internal and external stakeholders.

There is a huge development opportunity sitting in observational and situational learning, which has offered several learning opportunities, enabling the observer to apply what they see to their context; therefore, it is clear that a blanket approach to management learning and development is not a "one size fits all" approach.

8.4.2 Impact on the participants

The findings from this study show that, for some participants, the expectations of the management role did not align with their own expectations. There was an apparent mismatch in what the role involved, which meant that managers did not feel fully prepared to successfully carry out the duties of the role. This indicates that before staff move into management positions, there is a need to clearly outline the expectations of the role, where possible, to demonstrate these through strong examples that offer insights into what it would look like.

For several respondents in this study, conducting research was important to them; working in a teaching institution as a manager where research was not perceived as a priority meant that this was damaging to developing research activities. Baker and Manning (2020) argued that there are not enough learning and development opportunities at mid-career for academic staff, an area that requires developing to support managers developing in

management careers. It is argued that universities need to offer development opportunities that are considered the individual's career (Gordon, 2005). Instead, they need to consider the experiences and knowledge they already retain so that strategically built development plans can focus on areas where there are gaps for individual managers, therefore moving away from generalised training and development plans to more bespoke training to meet the needs of individuals. To retain entrepreneurial and research-focused managers, the institution should consider capitalising on their subject expertise, at the same time opening research opportunities. Although private HE is a teaching-focused area, it would benefit from configuring newer, more innovative contracts that capitalise on both research and teaching expertise.

8.4.3 Impact on the researcher

Conducting this study of managers working in the private HE institution in line with the theoretical framework has strengthened my understanding of the reasons why managers want to work in private HE. In addition, my assumptions of managers not receiving adequate development opportunities to carry out their roles have been confirmed, and at the same time heightened by the insights of the three levels of managers within the institution. Now, seeing roles being taken up by managers at all three levels enables me to grasp their perspective on the support required and how best to deliver the development opportunities in my role as dean of the learning and teaching faculty. In addition, as part of the senior management team, I can influence and guide other senior managers in understanding the type of training that would be beneficial for managers.

In my professional context, early conversations have started in relation to how this research could benefit the institution and the managers working in it. I have taken the lead on this conversation, specifically related to continuing professional development, both as the researcher and in my capacity as dean of the learning and teaching faculty. The insights from this research will not only directly impact management training, but will also influence related training for other academic staff considering management roles in the future. There have recently been further developments of centralised HR training mandatory for managers. As a professional, I have been asked to provide my insights as to whether this

research would be beneficial and in what capacity. I have already been able to use insights from this study to highlight general development areas that would not benefit respondents specifically.

Consequently, this research has enhanced and developed my own professional knowledge within an institution that I have belonged to for the last 11 years, thus further developing my own perspectives of the experiences of the academic careers of managers in generating an effective management workforce for a complex private sector.

8.4.4 Recommendations for future research

This study has identified three fundamental areas for future research. First, to explore management roles across a more significant number of private HE institutions in the UK, to confirm whether the findings from this study are indicative across other private HE sectors in the UK. There is also scope to compare the management positions to further understand differences in the career trajectories of managers working in public and private institutions.

Second, there is a need for research to explore the experiences of a broader sample of managers in the private HE sector, stimulating a deeper understanding of the entrepreneurial characteristics of private HE managers. For example, data could include the career trajectories of the participants in this study, then reflect on their career journeys in the private institution, expanding the focus of entrepreneurship with a direct relationship to the commercial aspects of the institution.

Finally, with the growth of the private HE sector, there is a need to think about the ongoing commercial aspects of the private HE institution. As private equity firms own other private institutions, there is a need to examine the impact this could potentially have on the future career trajectories of academic managers when ownership changes occur. This study has explored commercial aspects and their effects directly on management roles. However, consideration should be given to how future financial ownership changes would impact academic career trajectories in private institutions.

8.5 Conclusion

This thesis has inspected the career trajectories of 18 managers working in a private HE institution in the UK. The findings offer insights into the personal and professional reasons why academics take up academic management roles in the private HE sector, gaining insights into who they are, what their work is like, how they build their professional identity, and what continuing professional development they have undertaken to support them in their roles.

Although there are limitations to this study, it is hoped that it will help both institutions and academics. The study will support potential managers who may be considering taking on management positions in private HE to understand the role of a manager and what it is like to work in a private HE environment. Academic managers within the HE sector play a crucial role in the overall performance of institutions; therefore, private institutions need to acknowledge the importance of developing quality managers who are supported with continuing professional development, which allows managers to establish themselves and their professional identity.

The researcher spent six years investigating this institution to understand academic careers, organisational culture, professional identity, and continued professional development. She would like to continue to expand this research in the areas of career trajectories of managers working in the private HE sector, with a particular focus on the commercialisation of HE and the impact of this on professional identity in the HE setting.

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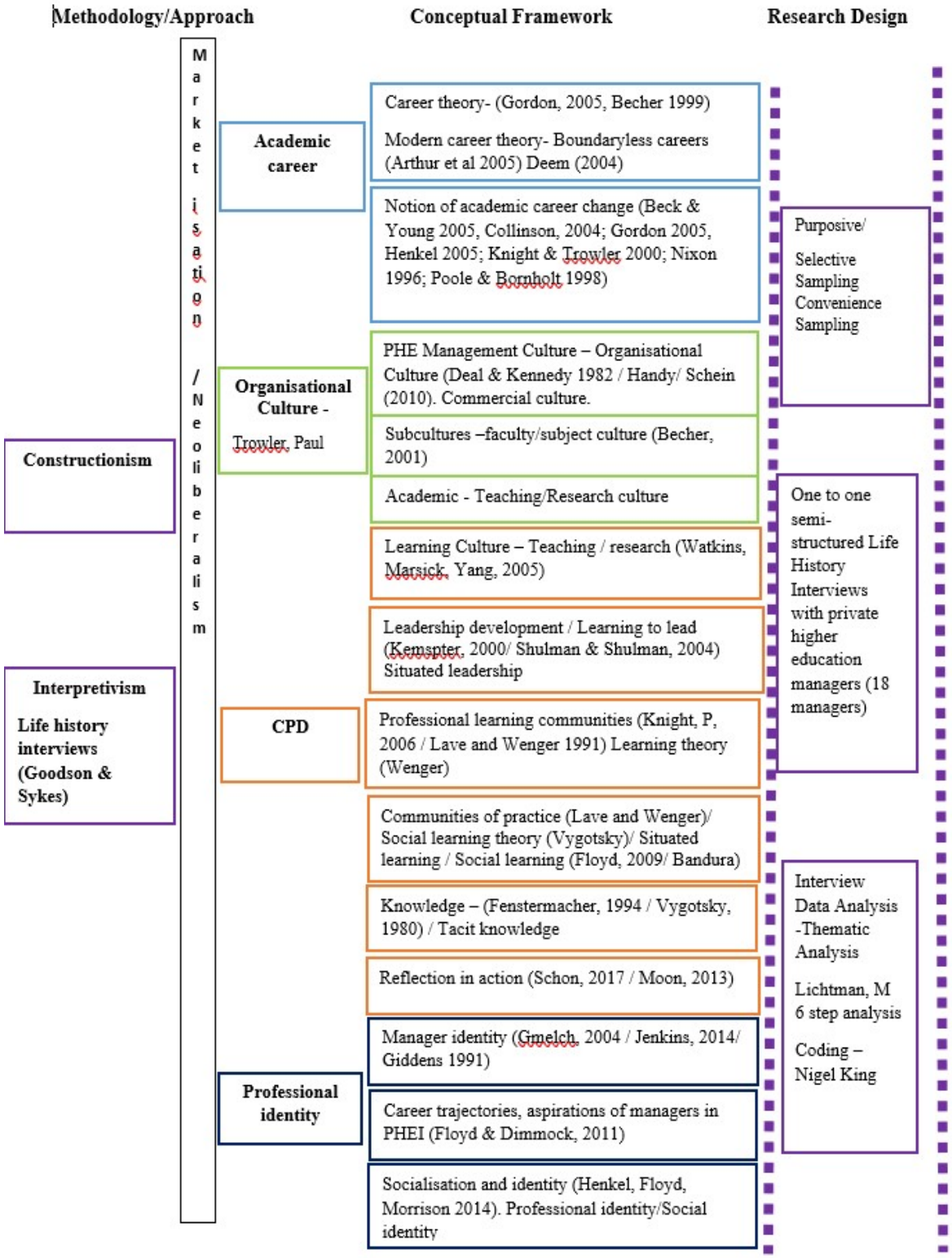
Appendix 1: Managers in Private Higher Education


Methodology/Approach
Conceptual Framework
Research Design
Marketisation / Neoliberalism
Constructionism
Interpretivism
Life history interviews (Goodson & Sykes)
Academic career
Organisational Culture - Trowler, Paul
CPD
Professional identity
Career theory- (Gordon, 2005, Becher 1999)
Modern career theory- Boundaryless careers (Arthur et al 2005) Deem (2004)
Notion of academic career change (Beck & Young 2005, Collinson, 2004; Gordon 2005, Henkel 2005; Knight & Trowler 2000; Nixon 1996; Poole & Bornholt 1998)
PHE Management Culture – Organisational Culture (Deal & Kennedy 1982 / Handy/ Schein (2010). Commercial culture.
Subcultures –faculty/subject culture (Becher, 2001)
Academic - Teaching/Research culture
Learning Culture – Teaching / research (Watkins, Marsick, Yang, 2005)
Leadership development / Learning to lead (Kemspter, 2000/ Shulman & Shulman, 2004) Situated leadership
Professional learning communities (Knight, P, 2006 / Lave and Wenger 1991) Learning theory (Wenger)
Communities of practice (Lave and Wenger)/ Social learning theory (Vygotsky)/ Situated learning / Social learning (Floyd, 2009/ Bandura)
Knowledge – (Fenstermacher, 1994 / Vygotsky, 1980) / Tacit knowledge
Reflection in action (Schon, 2017 / Moon, 2013)
Manager identity (Gmelch, 2004 / Jenkins, 2014/ Giddens 1991)
Career trajectories, aspirations of managers in PHEI (Floyd & Dimmock, 2011)
Socialisation and identity (Henkel, Floyd, Morrison 2014). Professional identity/Social identity
Purposive/
Selective Sampling
Convenience Sampling
One to one semi-structured Life History Interviews with private higher education managers (18 managers)
Interview Data Analysis -Thematic Analysis
Lichtman, M 6 step analysis
Coding – Nigel King

Appendix 2: Interview schedule

What are the perceptions and experiences of managers working in the PHE sector?

Interviewee…… Date…….

Research Question	***Interview Themes/Questions***	**Discussed**
Introduction	***Study background and aims***	
		☐
	Participant Prerogatives	☐
1. Who are the managers working in private higher education (PHE), both personally and professionally?	***General background***	
	Place, date of birth, family background, etc.	☐
	Academic background Schooling in the UK or not? Which courses completed in school and HE? Which subjects were of interest? What are some of your most significant achievements?	☐
	Career history Work history, changes of job or sectors, types of jobs?	☐
	Reasons for career decisions	
	Why did you choose to work in PHE?	☐
	What are some of the factors that influenced your career decisions – personal and professional?	
	What were the motivating factors to work as part of the management team?	

	Reasons for becoming a manager Are you currently in a permanent management position? Tell me how you reached middle/senior management, what were some of the most significant factors that led you to this position? What experience do you have that led you to take up a management position? What were the challenges of reaching this management position, how did you overcome these?
2. What is the organisational culture of working in a PHEI? How does this affect the management style? (Decision making, values and ethos, subcultures across campuses and faculties).	***What is your perception of culture within this private higher education institution, and how does this fit with academic culture?*** Tell me what you understand of an academic culture? (Behaviours in society) Tell me about the department you work in? How would you describe the practices and procedures of this private higher education institution? What are some of the factors involved in deciding how you make decisions? How does this organisational culture fit within academic working practices? What are your views on the organisational culture? ***How do management influence the organisational culture?*** Tell me how management influence the organisational culture through their decision making? As the institution moves into faculties have you recognised any change in the culture? If so, explain this with some examples. What are some of the difficulties of applying the organisational culture within your faculty and staff?

3. What career professional development (CPD) have managers in PHEI's undertaken to take up management posts?	***What does being a manager in PHE mean to you?*** In your role as a manager tell me about what you feel is the key to making the role successful? What do you see to be the purpose of management within your role? ***What was it like when you first became a manager?*** When starting this management position how ready did you feel? How have you learnt how to manage? (*Reflection on your position as a manager?/ observation or qualifications?)* How do you know if you are a good manager? Can you tell me how might you have been better prepared when you started this management role? ***What training and development have you completed and how does this fit with the requirements of your management role?*** In your role as a manager how does learning take place? (Does this need to be separated from activities?) What do you believe are the most significant training and development areas required within you role? How do you feel about professional development courses? How do these courses align with your needs as a manager? How was the professional development, which you completed useful for the educational context and specifically for your role?

	How do you think the professional development could have better prepared you for this role? ***Situational learning*** Can you tell me about any situations where you have "learnt by doing" within your management position? What are your views on this type of learning? ***Observational learning*** Who are the most notable people you believe helped you learn as a manager? (Did you have direct contact with these people or was it more of an observational method of learning?) How do you believe as a manager you learn most effectively, through people, observing others or being a particular situation? **CoP (Communities of Practice)** ***Who are your key networks within the institution?*** Who in your opinion are some of the most significant groups that you work with? Why? How have these collaborations come together? (formally or informally? (Coaching and Mentoring?) How valuable do you find it when working with these groups? Why? How has working with these group/individuals contributed to your learning? How do you share knowledge amongst management groups? How effective do you find these methods? *(Across the profession including management/classroom/research and subject)* How has this knowledge contributed to you growing within your role?

	Future training and development What training and development would you like to see to help develop this management role if any? For new managers moving into management positions similar to you, what professional development would you recommend to them that would benefit them? ***Career aspirations*** What are your future career aspirations? ***Management career*** How do you see your management experience contributing to your future career aspirations?
4. How have managers in PHEI's formed their professional identity? What are the key factors that shape a manager's professional identity working in a private institution?	***Individual identity of middle managers*** What are the key changes that have influenced you personally since you became a manager? How has being a manager impacted your family? ***Professional identity of being a manager in PHEI*** How would you describe your professional identity? How has working in a PHEI affected your professional identity? What do you believe are the key factors of working in a PHEI that influence your professional identity? *(e.g. qualifications, research time, organisational culture, learning for managers, expectations of managers working in PHEI?)* How has your identity evolved since you have worked at this PHE institution? ***Professional identity and learning*** How does the organisation promote learning for managers? Tell me how you believe learning within the institution affects your professional identity as a manager?
	Any other comments?

	What will happen to data?
Conclusion	***Follow up meeting/respondent validation*** ***Thank interviewees***

Appendix 3: Information sheet

Researcher:

Name: Beljeet Daffu

Email: b.k.daffu@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Supervisor:

Name: Dr Alan Floyd

Phone : +44 (0) 118 378 2720

Email: alan.floyd@reading.ac.uk

INFORMATION SHEET

Research Project: Exploring the role of leadership and management, a case study of a private higher education institution (PHEI).

Dear Participant,

I am an EdD candidate at the University of Reading, UK. As part of the data collection stage of my dissertation, I am writing to invite you to take part in a research study of managers working in PHE. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the study?

The aim of this study is to understand senior, middle, and emerging leaders' experiences of working in a PHEI and explore their professional identities. This will be done by undertaking life history interviews with leaders and managers working in the institution across faculties. It is proposed that the sample will contain male and female staff in a range of ages and experience.

The aim of the study is to improve practice; it hopes to make recommendations regarding how we can best help managers in private higher education further develop in their roles and their careers in the sector.

Why have you been chosen to take part?

You have been identified as a senior, middle, or emerging leader in line with the aims of the study.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether you take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time without any repercussions by emailing me on the email address below.

What will happen if I take part?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in an life history interview with the researcher, lasting 1-1.5 hours. life history interviews are used in exploring an individual's past and present lived experiences. The interview will be recorded and transcribed with your permission. The transcription will be shared with you in order for you to check its accuracy and to confirm that you are still happy for its contents to be used. The information gathered will be used by the researcher for data analysis.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

The main benefit for the individual will be an opportunity to reflect in detail on their career trajectory (past, present and future). The proposed use of the life history approach has been identified as a method which has considerable potential for personal and professional development. Previous participants in similar studies have commented on how useful they had found the process. While there will be a time commitment required from participants, it is felt that the benefits of involvement will outweigh the costs.

This study will also help in furthering the academic community's understanding of management's career trajectories. A more thorough understanding of management's career trajectory (past, present, and future) is important for policymakers, managers and researchers in the leadership and management of universities. Such research, for example, could help predict and address the possible future potential selection process of new managers wanting to enter private higher education, predict and address the possible future supply and demand imbalance in the profession, allow for more informed career advice for managers (potential and in post), and help tailor specific training, development and support for them.

What will happen to the data*?*

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence (subject to legal limitations) and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you or the school to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Participants will be assigned pseudonyms and will be referred to by that pseudonym in all records. The institution name will also be changed. Research records will be stored securely on a password-protected computer, and any hard copy documents will be stored in a locked filing cabinet.

In line with University policy, data generated by the study will be kept securely on paper or electronic form for a period of five years after the completion of the research project.

What will happen to the results of the research?

All interview data will be transcribed and subjected to the respondent validation where each participant will be provided with the transcription and account of the findings to check that the participant agrees with the researcher's interpretation of their life history. This data will then be used in future publications in appropriate academic journals and /or books. All participants will be able to have access to a copy of the published research on request.

Who has reviewed this study?

This application has been reviewed by the University of Reading Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request.

Name and contact of Researcher

If you would like more information, please contact the researcher Beljeet Daffu

Email: b.k.daffu@pgr.reading.ac.uk

We do hope that you will agree to your participation in the study. If you do, please complete the attached consent form and return it via email to b.k.daffu@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Signed: Beljeet Daffu

Date: 13/09/2019

Appendix 4: Consent Form

Project title:

Exploring the role of Leadership and Management, a case study of a private higher education institution (PHEI).

I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.

I understand that I will be interviewed and that the interview will be recorded and transcribed.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project any time, without giving a reason and without repercussions.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

Please tick as appropriate:

I consent to being interviewed: YES { } NO { }

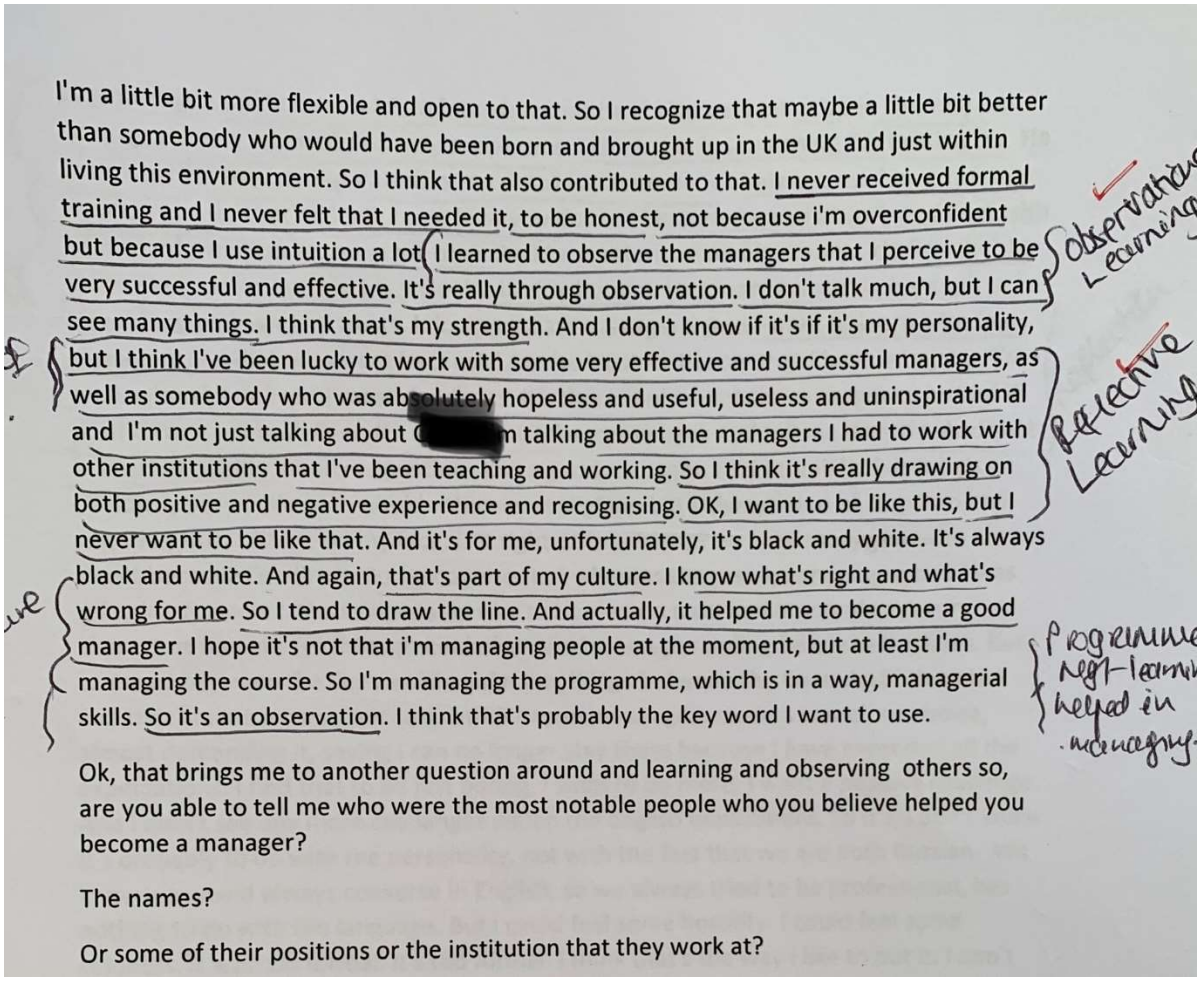
I consent to this interview being recorded: YES { } NO { }

Name: ……

Signed: ……..

Date: ……

Appendix 5: Interview transcription and coding sample



I'm a little bit more flexible and open to that. So I recognize that maybe a little bit better than somebody who would have been born and brought up in the UK and just within living this environment. So I think that also contributed to that. I never received formal training and I never felt that I needed it, to be honest, not because i'm overconfident but because I use intuition a lot. I learned to observe the managers that I perceive to be very successful and effective. It's really through observation. I don't talk much, but I can see many things. I think that's my strength. And I don't know if it's if it's my personality, but I think I've been lucky to work with some very effective and successful managers, as well as somebody who was absolutely hopeless and useful, useless and uninspirational and I'm not just talking about [redacted] talking about the managers I had to work with other institutions that I've been teaching and working. So I think it's really drawing on both positive and negative experience and recognising. OK, I want to be like this, but I never want to be like that. And it's for me, unfortunately, it's black and white. It's always black and white. And again, that's part of my culture. I know what's right and what's wrong for me. So I tend to draw the line. And actually, it helped me to become a good manager. I hope it's not that i'm managing people at the moment, but at least I'm managing the course. So I'm managing the programme, which is in a way, managerial skills. So it's an observation. I think that's probably the key word I want to use.

Ok, that brings me to another question around and learning and observing others so, are you able to tell me who were the most notable people who you believe helped you become a manager?

The names?

Or some of their positions or the institution that they work at?

Appendix 6: Interview diary notes

Interview One - 19.09.2019

Interviewed on the 12th floor in a meeting room. A quiet floor with no distractions, allowing interviewee to open up and freely talk about his experiences.

Key thoughts which came to mind at the time of interviewing:

Interviewee has a strong background of working in the private sector, therefore moving to a private HE sector was not a faster pace for him as he was already use to working at this

Pace, there were not a lot of key differences and changes.

His family values taught him to work hard and do the right thing.

He was quite relaxed and open in some cases, however I think often he struggled to talk about himself and instead at times there was a lot of focus on the processes and policies.

And more was needed on him as a person and how he has developed, there was some of this although often this required a lot of prompting.

Interview Two - 23.09.2019

Interview took place on the 12th floor in the meeting room. A quiet floor with no distractions.

The interview felt pretty rushed and I felt that the interviewee was not always going into the detail, but often rushing over many of the answers. Therefore, sometimes I had to drill a little deeper and eventually got there.

Questions were answered although more detail would have helped.

Overall he seemed quite busy in his day job and didn't fully open up, but also it came across that he was worried that he didn't want to really say that he didn’t have the experience or the knowledge and understanding.

I noticed all the answers in professional identity were based on conferences and publishing papers and literature, there were no other related areas.

Although he was honest and did say in places where he maybe struggled or found there were lots of challenges, but maybe more could be said on how to overcome these.

Interview three - 07.10.2019

The interview took place on the 10th floor in a smaller room than that was anticipated. Interviewee talked very openly throughout the interview and often even said "I hope this is anonymous", therefore was not afraid

To share his thoughts. A number of questions were not directly asked and not very much prompting was required as naturally the conversation led from one point to the next. It was very clear that the interviewee was in his role primarily for the financial rewards as opposed to the motivation to be a leader or a manager. His motivations were to make more time for research and writing, however he has ended up in this management

Role due to family needs.

Interview four 10.10.2019

The interview took place in the welfare room on the 5th floor, there were no disturbances, and the space was generally quiet.

The staff member is quite young however seems to know the education sector since a young age, mainly due to his dad working as a senior manager in another institution. Although he did give away some information as to how he felt about being a manager and a leader, there were times when this was quite superficial, and he started to move into explanation. His career aspirations are to be an Executive Dean.

Interview five 29.10.2019

Interview took place on the 12th floor, there are no HE students there, the floor is dedicated to Learning.

The atmosphere when starting the interview seemed formal, it took some time to start to break the ice a little to get the interviewee to focus on the topic. She had a meeting right after the interview, so at times I felt the answers were being rushed.

However, as time went on the questions were answered and several themes were covered. Interviewee did not say very much on her family, I felt that she was avoiding this area a little, she mentioned that her dad was working although there was nothing on her mother or her siblings.

Interview Six - 05.11.2019

The interview was held at the Birmingham Campus on the 10th floor in the meeting room. The space was quiet and allowed for interviewee to share her thoughts in a peaceful environment. She spoke openly about her childhood and her role as a HOD. Again, being quite new to the role I felt that she was raising some similar themes as others including learning about people and situations by doing.

Interview seven - 07.11.19

The interview took place in the welfare room on the 5th floor. Interviewee was honest I felt throughout the interview, she was open and willing to share information regarding family as well as situations at work. As an emerging leader she said a lot about CPD and training and was also very honest about how much training and CPD is needed for managers working within a PHEI.

Interview eight - 12.11.19

The interview took place in a teaching room on the 5th floor at the Birmingham campus during reading week, therefore the classrooms and the 5th floor were particularly quiet, this allowed the interviewee to share his thoughts and answers questions.

Interview nine - 14.11.19

The interview took place in room 204 London Roseberry Avenue, a quiet classroom. A great interview which was heavily focused more strategic decisions and was quite different to where it was pitched compared to the middle managers. I felt the interviewee was quite open and happy to share his thoughts about his background and career route. He also shared his career aspirations and was honest about where he wants to get to and his professional identity. At the end of the interview, he wanted to add more, once I switched off the recording, he also asked that I add notes about him being an external examiner and how this helps shape this identity.

At times I did have to steer the conversation back onto track and move on.

Interview ten- 14.11.19

The interview was held in room 204 London Roseberry Avenue, a quiet classroom. Interviewee was open and shared a lot of information, however I felt the interview really had to be steered and she often was talking about a lot of factors but sometimes not answering the question. I do think the interviewee was honest and did try her best to say what she believed about the key themes around the questions of the study. However, still being somewhat newer to the role, it came through within the interview. It was evident that the level of experience was still in the early days, and she was still learning through the different situations.

Interview 11 – 5.12.19

Got quite emotional when I asked how the family influenced her career, so I didn't continue to probe any further, she had water in her eyes. I felt the interview was disorganised in terms of she was really struggling to answer a few the questions. She did ask me for the interview questions prior to the interview which I did not share, and again when we went into the interview she said, " you didn't send over the questions". I think there were some good discussion points however she did tend to go on quite a bit onto unrelated areas, I didn’t want to keep stopping her in case there was some useful data, but sometimes I had

to steer her back on track just to ensure I capture discussion around all the themes of the study.

Interview 12 10.12.19

The interview was booked for an hour and a quarter, however there were some logistical issues with finding a quiet room space and the interviewee was in a rush, I offered to rebook this at a more

convenient time however I think she just wanted to get it done. The interview took place in a quiet meeting room on the 1st floor of Rosebery Avenue London. I felt that because she was in such a rush there was quite a lot of rushing of the answers she was giving too, ideally, I would have like to delve deeper into the answer she gave to gain a more in depth understanding, however, even with the 30 minutes of time which she gave me allowed to gain a good understanding of her role and the key themes I was hoping to explore. She also dropped suddenly right at the start of the interview that she has just been promoted, although this is very new news, this allowed me to further explore her new role and how ready she feels taking this on. She doesn't really seem to have any line management experience although has been promoted to the role of HOD, therefore this allowed some good discussion around CPD and areas of development which she is hoping to undertake.

Interview 13 16.12.19

The Interview took place in London at Rosebery Avenue, it was a particularly quiet period before the Christmas break 2019. I felt the interviewee was very open and shared the information required for the interview, she was happy to tell me about her life history her parents and siblings, she then went onto to tell me about all the other areas of her professional life.

Interview 14 16.12.19

Interviewee answered all the questions, was open and considerate in trying his best to provide relevant information.

Interview 15 16.12.19

Interviewee was poorly and had a fever, he did answer all the questions asked with a couple of short breathers.

Interview 16 18.12. 19

The interview took place at the Birmingham campus in a teaching room at a very quiet period just before the Christmas break 2019. Interviewee seemed quite nervous and reserved throughout the process. Although he did answer the questions which were put to him, he was reserved in the sense that he didn't share any details for example which institutions he attended for schooling, FE and HE. I think there was some issues around insider knowledge, and he was worried about what he was sharing. I did reassure him to let him know that any of his comments used in the thesis would not be able to identify him in

the study, I also explained that I would transcribe the audio and send this over to him and if there was anything which he felt uncomfortable with I could remove.

Interview 17 23.01.20

The interview was held at the Birmingham campus in the meeting room on the 10th floor. Interviewee was quite open with his family background and his experiences of working at a public and private institution. The interview was quite relaxed and if I needed more information, I asked for this, and the interviewee was happy to share. The general feel was that he had come from teaching at a public institution and seems to have a lot of experience working for different institutions whether that is as a lecturer, consultant, or manager, working within a PHEI seems to be bringing challenges of being checked up on and some restrictions e.g., 9-5 and more of a controlled way of working as opposed to the democratic way of public institutions.

Interview 18 23.01.20

The interview was held in Birmingham campus on the 10th floor. The interviewee was open and really wanted to share their thinking around the key themes, they share examples.

Appendix 7: Ethics approval form

Information Management and Policy Services

DATA PROTECTION DECLARATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

This document can be used to provide assurances to your ethics committee where confirmation of data protection training and awareness is required for ethical approval.

By signing this declaration, I confirm that:

- I have read and understood the requirements for data protection within the *Data Protection for Researchers* document located here:

  http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/imps/Data_Protection_for_Researchers__Aug_18.v1.pdf

- I have asked for advice on any elements that I am *unclear on* prior to submitting my ethics approval request, either from my supervisor, or the data protection team at: imps@reading.ac.uk

- I understand that I am responsible for the secure handling, and protection of, my research data

- I know who to contact in the event of an information security incident, a data protection complaint or a request made under data subject access rights

Researcher to complete

Project/Study Title: Middle Managers in Private Higher Education (PHE), the role of CPD and forming professional identity

NAME	STUDENT ID NUMBER	DATE
Beljeet Daffu		06.08.2019

Supervisor signature

Note for supervisors: Please verify that your student has completed the above actions

NAME	STAFF ID NUMBER	DATE
Alan Floyd		2/9/2019

Submit your completed signed copy to your ethical approval committee.

Copies to be retained by ethics committee.

VERSION	KEEPER	REVIEWED	APPROVED BY	APPROVAL DATE
1.0	IMPS	Annually	IMPS	

University of Reading

Institute of Education

Ethical Approval Form A

Tick one:

Staff project: _____ PhD ____ EdD __X__

Name of applicant (s): Beljeet Daffu

Title of project: Exploring the role of Leadership and Management, a case study of a private higher education institution (PHEI).

Name of supervisor (for student projects): Alan Floyd and Karen Jones

Please complete the form below including relevant sections overleaf.

	YES	NO
Have you prepared an Information Sheet for participants and/or their parents/carers that:	X	
a) explains the purpose(s) of the project	X	

b) explains how they have been selected as potential participants	X	
c) gives a full, fair, and clear account of what will be asked of them and how the information that they provide will be used	X	
d) makes clear that participation in the project is voluntary	X	
e) explains the arrangements to allow participants to withdraw at any stage if they wish	X	
f) explains the arrangements to ensure the confidentiality of any material collected during the project, including secure arrangements for its storage, retention, and disposal	X	
g) explains the arrangements for publishing the research results and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent for this	X	
h) explains the arrangements for providing participants with the research results if they wish to have them	X	
i) gives the name and designation of the member of staff with responsibility for the project together with contact details, including email. If any of the project investigators are students at the IoE, then this information must be included, and their name provided	X	
k) explains, where applicable, the arrangements for expenses and other payments to be made to the participants	X	
j) includes a standard statement indicating the process of ethical review at the University undergone by the project, as follows: 'This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct'.	X	
k) includes a standard statement regarding insurance: "The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request".	X	
Please answer the following questions	X	
1) Will you provide participants involved in your research with all the information necessary to ensure that they are fully informed and not in any way deceived or misled as to the purpose(s)	X	

and nature of the research? (Please use the subheadings used in the example information sheets on blackboard to ensure this).			
2) Will you seek written or other formal consent from all participants, if they are able to provide it, in addition to (1)?	X		
3) Is there any risk that participants may experience physical or psychological distress in taking part in your research?		X	
4) Staff Only - have you taken the online training modules in data protection and information security (which can be found here: http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/humanresources/PeopleDevelopment/newstaff/humres-MandatoryOnlineCourses.aspx Please note students complete a Data Protection Declaration form and submit it with this application to the ethics committee.		N/A	
5) Have you read the Health and Safety booklet (available on Blackboard) and completed a Risk Assessment Form to be included with this ethics application?	X		
6) Does your research comply with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research?	X		
	YES	NO	N.A.
7) If your research is taking place in a school, have you prepared an information sheet and consent form to gain the permission in writing of the head teacher or other relevant supervisory professional?	x		
8) Has the data collector obtained satisfactory DBS clearance?	x		
9) If your research involves working with children under the age of 16 (or those whose special educational needs mean they are unable to give informed consent), have you prepared an information sheet and consent form for parents/carers to seek permission in writing, or to give parents/carers the opportunity to decline consent?			x

10) If your research involves processing sensitive personal data[1], or if it involves audio/video recordings, have you obtained the explicit consent of participants/parents?			x
11) If you are using a data processor to subcontract any part of your research, have you got a written contract with that contractor which (a) specifies that the contractor is required to act only on your instructions, and (b) provides for appropriate technical and organisational security measures to protect the data?			x
12a) Does your research involve data collection outside the UK?		x	
12b) If the answer to question 12a is "yes", does your research comply with the legal and ethical requirements for doing research in that country?			x
13a) Does your research involve collecting data in a language other than English?		x	
13b) If the answer to question 13a is "yes", please confirm that information sheets, consent forms, and research instruments, where appropriate, have been directly translated from the English versions submitted with this application.			x
14a. Does the proposed research involve children under the age of 5?		x	
14b. If the answer to question 14a is "yes": My Head of School (or authorised Head of Department) has given details of the proposed research to the University's insurance officer, and the research will not proceed until I have confirmation that insurance cover is in place.			x
If you have answered YES to Question 3, please complete Section B below			

- Complete **either** Section A **or** Section B below with details of your research project.
- Complete a risk assessment.
- Sign the form in Section C.
- Append at the end of this form all relevant documents: information sheets, consent forms, tests, questionnaires, interview schedules, evidence that you have completed information security training (e.g. screen shot/copy of certificate).

[1] Sensitive personal data consists of information relating to the racial or ethnic origin of a data subject, their political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, sexual life, physical or mental health or condition, or criminal offences or record.

- Email the completed form to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration.

Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.

A: My research goes beyond the 'accepted custom and practice of teaching' but I consider that this project has **no** significant ethical implications. (Please tick the box.)	X

Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers, parents, pupils etc.

For this study to explore and answer the research questions, 18 managers will take part in the study. The breakdown of this sample is as follows:

Senior leaders – six staff

Middle leaders- eight staff

Programme Leaders (Emerging middle managers) – five staff

Total: 19

Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments, and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words noting:

1. **Title of project** - Exploring the role of Leadership and Management, a case study of a private higher education institution (PHEI).

2. **Purpose of project and its academic rationale**

Leadership and Management in Higher Education: while existing research in the public sector is emerging regarding managers and leaders, in the private sector this is almost non-existent. The purpose of this project is to explore senior, middle, and emerging leaders' experiences of working in a private HEI.

3. **Brief description of methods and measurements**

The methods employed for this study are life history interviews. These have been selected as they

will allow the research to appreciate and understand the individual's life history, what they have been

through in their professional life that has enabled them to reach their current managerial position. It is envisaged that these life history interviews will take 1-1.5 hours. Refer to the interview schedule Appendix 1. This schedule is a guide of the topics and areas for discussion, not all questions will be asked to candidates.

4. Participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria

The study will involve a range of managers, including senior managers, middle managers, and emerging managers. These managers will be recruited through convenience sampling via email. To be included within this study all participants must work as a manager (academic) within the selected PHEI.

There is no age, gender, or other exclusion/inclusion criteria.

5. Consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing

A written information letter will be provided to all participants, this will ensure that they are fully informed about the purpose of the study, as well as to inform them of how the data will be gathered, stored, and used. The letter will also provide contact details of my supervisor and myself and information about how they may withdraw, should they wish to do so. All participants will be provided a consent form; this will state how the data will be collected. All participants will be asked to sign the consent form. These will be retained by the researcher. The information letter and consent form are copied below.

Respondent validation - A copy of the transcript will be shared with the participant to ensure this is a true and accurate account of the interview.

6. A clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with them.

All data collected through life history interviews and document analysis will be held in strictest confidence and no real names will be used in this study or in any subsequent publications. The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking the participant or any person or institution to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. The Participant will be assigned a pseudonym and will be referred to by that in all records. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password protected computer and only the student researcher and supervisor will have access to the records. In line with the university's policy on the management of research data, anonymised data gathered in this research may be preserved and made publicly available for others to consult and re-use. The results of the study will be used for an EdD thesis. In addition, the results may be presented at national and international conferences, and in written articles. Copies of these can be provided to the participants if they wish.

Insider Knowledge - This could also be considered as a limitation as participants may not want to disclose information to the researcher because of her power and role within the organisation. **7. Estimated start date and duration of project** Data collection and transcription will take place between October 2019 and April 2020. Data analysis will take place from April 2020 – February 2022.

B: I consider that this project **may** have ethical implications that should be brought before the Institute's Ethics Committee.	N0

RISK ASSESSMENT: Please complete the form below

Brief outline of Work/activity:	I will conduct life history interviews of up to 19 managers working in a private higher education institution.

Where will data be collected?	Data will be collected within the university campus across London, Birmingham, and Manchester locations.

Significant hazards:	None, in excess of normal daily workplace activity.

Who might be exposed to hazards?	No-one

Existing control measures:	Standard health and safety procedures that are in place in educational premises.

Are risks adequately controlled:	Yes

If NO, list additional controls and actions required:	Additional controls	Action by:

C: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

Note: a signature is required. Typed names are not acceptable.

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

Signed: ……Print Name: BELJEET DAFFU Date: 06.08.2019

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed: …… Print Name……Carol Fuller Date…….9th September 2019

(IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)*

* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.